

NetMotion Mobility® Helps Allina Healthcare Improve Quality of Patient Care

Allina Hospitals and Clinics were among the first in the nation to use Electronic Medical Records to deliver seamless, coordinated care. The system includes 11 hospitals, four ambulatory care centers, 97 clinics and a home-care division named one of the top in the country three years in a row. However, the group's home nurses were regularly losing connectivity in the field. Allina implemented NetMotion Mobility® Mobile Performance Management software to keep nurses connected throughout the day. With better connectivity, nurses were able to see an additional 3-4 patients per day while connectivity helpdesk tickets fell from 90 to zero.

Enhancing Quality of Patient Care

The home care division is a new and thriving unit at Allina. More than 300 nurses serve the group's patient population throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin. But nurses were often prevented from assisting patients due to difficulty accessing online records. Logged out of applications without warning, the nurses were forced to log in again and re-enter the data lost from their previous session. When the IT group tied 90 helpdesk tickets to this issue, management stepped in to find a better solution.

The Allina home care and hospice nurse team carries a range of laptops and devices from Lenovo (X60 series to X200 series). The laptops use Sierra Wireless AirCards to connect to cellular networks from Verizon and Sprint. Cerner RoadNotes, a point-of-care online document system for home care, allows nurses to review patient medical history, update care plans, enter new diagnoses and complete EMR documentation.

The EMR application requires field devices to sync with the central database. But as the scale of data transfer grew, nurses could no longer wait until the end of their shifts to sync from an office or at home – synchronization sessions were taking as long as a half-hour. Initially, Allina tried the approach of having nurses sync via cellular data networks throughout the day after each patient visit. While this had the added benefit of providing real-time EMR updates for better patient care, it didn't solve all the issues nurses were having.



INDUSTRY:

Healthcare

OBJECTIVES:

Solve dropped connection issues

SOLUTIONS:

- NetMotion Mobility
- Lenovo laptops and tablets
- Sierra Wireless AirCards
- Cerner RoadNotes

RESULTS:

- Patient visits increased by 3-4 per day
- Eliminated helpdesk connectivity tickets
- Decrease in employee turnover
- Mobile deployment extended to more workers and divisions

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Clyde Daisley | System Engineer

“Our Cisco IPsec clients didn’t work well with high-latency connections and coverage drops,” said Clyde Daisley, System Engineer. “Nurses would try to sync, get kicked off their connection which would corrupt their database, then have to call the helpdesk. The support staff had to fumble through the database to try and repair it.” If the team couldn’t, they would extract a new copy from the central database and replace the corrupt one. It took nearly half a day to fix and make repairs, and the nurses would lose whatever work they had done.

The problem was so bad that several nurses quit in frustration. Finally, an internal recommendation led the company to reach out to NetMotion and learn more about Mobility.

Increasing the Number of Patients Served

Allina started with a small pilot to test Mobility with 25 of the nurses who experienced the most issues. When their communications issues went away, Allina decided to deploy Mobility to its entire home care team. Within six months, nurses had increased their average patient load from five or six to nine. Mobility made it easy for nurses to access Wi-Fi at home or on the go using the secure connection.

Mobility’s analytics capabilities helped Daisley and his team to identify and resolve potential problems before they can impact the quality of care. “We get email alerts, so I can tell the technician, ‘OK, your user just entered bad entries for a password and their account is locked.’” Allina has also been able to expand their home care group and give others in the organization reliable enhanced field performance.

“We’ve doubled our home care staff and Mobility played a huge part because it fixed our biggest problem, which was remote connectivity,” said Daisley. “And since then, we have expanded the user base quite extensively. As word got out, people proactively signed up for it. Now we have nurse practitioners, managers, directors and medical doctors using it.” It’s also now standard for anyone with a slower connection or latency higher than 100 milliseconds.

Delivering Peace of Mind

Having an all-day connection has given the Allina home care team the ability to better focus on their patients. Nurses are no longer frustrated with their mobile technology and are now able to see an additional three patients each per day. The IT team is pleased that connectivity-related tickets have effectively been eliminated.

The Mobility icon in the system tray has become the indicator that the mobile deployment is working properly. “If it’s not on, then you need to talk to someone; that’s the nurse’s rule of thumb,” said Daisley. Mobility has proven to be a nurse’s most valuable instrument.