



HEALTH BEAT

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Winter 2003 Vol. 2

DatacardGroup



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Labels have no future in a ‘paperless’ hospital!



Many hospitals have begun migrating to new patient identification and tracking technologies, such as magnetic stories and smart cards. And they have discovered that plastic cards clearly provide the most reliable, effective and flexible platform for their new automated systems.

In fact, emerging applications –ranging from automated registration to portable patient records –are built exclusively around plastic cards because they offer portability and a variety of security features. And healthcare isn’t the only industry creating standards around plastic cards. Organizations that issue driver’s licenses, insurance membership cards, national Ids and financial cards –such as credit, debit and ATM cards –overwhelmingly choose plastic cards over other paper-based alternatives.

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Why are hospitals making the switch?

There are three main reasons why hospitals should use plastic cards instead of labels: labor, future, and cost.



Labor

It's much easier to imprint multiple forms than to put a label on every one. Managing hundreds of labels takes a lot more effort than managing one card, especially in such a busy environment. All the additional effort needed for a label solution takes time away from providing patient care.

Other reasons include:

- Misapplying labels (applying to the wrong patient form)
- room for error, a form with no label is useless (staff is constantly interrupted, may forget to apply label)
- unknown number of labels required for each person (too many printed, wastes labels, too few printed, wastes time and some documents may go unverified)
- extra labor of applying labels takes time away from providing patient care and increased nursing staff may be needed to handle the manual labor
- legal and liability issues, such as label life: how long will the label stick to a form, a label may smudge, and information on the label may fade over time
- Integrity and security of a document is questionable because a label can be peeled off.

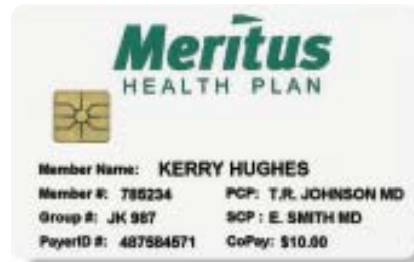
Future

A label solution will not take the hospital to the future vision of a "paperless" environment. The equipment used for the card-based solution can be upgraded with the advanced technologies to which the hospitals will soon be migrating (e.g. magnetic stripe, bar code and smart card) which provides quick and secure access to evolving electronic medical records. The card can be

used in today's paper filled hospital environment and is positioned well for the hospitals vision of an electronic world.

Cost

Customers may have the perception that a label-based solution is cheaper. However, our cost comparison clearly shows that is not the case. The initial cost of a label solution is more than \$15,000 greater than for a card solution. After seven years, the hospital will save over \$133,000 with the embossed card solution. Other costs include: up front costs for equipment, installation, communication interface (most hospitals need to develop an interface for the label printers to communicate



with their host system, the interface already exists for embossers); ongoing, annual costs include, supplies (labels and ribbons), service contract, print heads, waste (make more labels than needed); cost/ time of reprinting additional labels when needed; labor costs of applying labels; and space applying labels to each form increases the thickness of medical records, therefore requiring additional storage space.

What are some other benefits to using plastic cards?

Many hospitals use these cards to retain and increase patient loyalty. Some programs that

hospitals have put together for patient loyalty include:

- 10% discount for area residents for inpatient and outpatient services payable by the cardholder
- Discounts at 80+ local businesses when the card is presented
- Free health screenings and wellness activities
- Discounts on hospital bills, gift shop and cafeteria

Hospitals have also found a card-based system improves customer service by expediting the patient registration process. Not only is the registration process faster, its also more accurate. The possibility of duplicate records is eliminated by swiping a patient card. The image of the hospital is also improved by issuing a well-designed, high quality card to all patients.

Some hospitals that have many patients using Medicaid like the system because it accurately identifies the patient. A photograph can reduce the chance for fraudulent use of hospital services.

The card system can also be used to create employee badges. These badges can be used for positive identification and time attendance. It can also help to track attendance at educational seminars and controlling access to the employee parking lot and restricted rooms within the hospital.

If you would like to find out more information on how to start a card-based system at your healthcare facility, please call (616) 949-1600 or (800) 339-3194. Richardson Business Machines is your authorized dealer for Datacard and Fargo plastic card identification systems.



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Wireless, Low-Cost Link to Hospital Networks

University of Miami School of Medicine Uses Infrared Technology to Improve Efficiency and Satisfaction Levels



The growing popularity of handheld devices among physicians underscores the need to deliver medical information in ways that best fit the changing needs of the healthcare community. With nationally recognized medical facilities and the largest single hospital in the country, The University of Miami School of Medicine needed a well planned and tactfully executed program to effectively integrate the use of handheld PDAs into their patient-computing model.



The University of Miami School of Medicine's studies concluded that 25 to 60% of all costs incurred by their hospitals were associated with maintaining medical records and a minimum of 50% of the nurses' time is dedicated to documentation. Additionally, The Institute of Medicine stated that errors in disbursing medications with adverse effects are approaching 40% nationwide. The organization strongly felt that mobile access to vital information was essential in order to decrease costs, minimize risks and improve patient satisfaction levels.

Clarinet Systems was chosen to provide the secure synchronization hardware to enable unimpeded and instant network connectivity for the faculty physicians on staff. Using Clarinet Systems' EthIR STAR to communicate with handheld computers' built-in infrared port, the medical school is able to provide physicians fast and easy access to patient records, reduce paperwork requirements and help improve patient care.

Previously, all network interaction within the University of Miami Health Services took place on PC desktops and RF (radio-frequency) portable computers. Unfortunately, desktops do not provide the mobility busy physicians need and RF devices are too costly to deploy, pose a number of problems with battery consumption and do not need Federal patient confidentiality regulations set forth by HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996). Unlike RF wireless solutions, EthIR STAR's infrared technology allowed network access for handhelds without expensive software, hardware or cradles and, more importantly, provided an open, secure HIPAA compliant solution.

By conveniently locating EthIR STAR's IR stations throughout the hospitals, physicians are able to access patient medical records within seconds, limiting the amount of time they spend doing paperwork and thus, providing more time for quality patient care. Physicians at The University of Miami School of Medicine are able to record and chart patient census, vitals and test results, as well as consult the most up-to-date medical references and diagnostic aids at the palm of their hands.

"We see a tremendous opportunity for the growth of PDAs and Clarinet Systems' EthIR STAR products within our organization," states Dr. Augenstein of the University of Miami School of Medicine. "Within a year, we anticipate that the number of physicians enrolled in this program will exceed 100, as well as the number of IR point-of-access locations available to them. Once our physician base is actively installed, we will begin to look for other implementations throughout the system and hope to develop a similar program for nursing, our largest employee group."

If you would like to find out more information on the Clarinet Infrared System, please call (616) 949-1600 or (800) 339-3194. Richardson Business Machines is your authorized dealer for Clarinet Systems.

Bush wants care for all, not single-payer system



President George W. Bush addresses the nation on January 28, 2003 at 9 P.M. with the State of the Union address.

President Bush is calling for "high quality, affordable health(care) for all Americans," but he rejected the option of a single-payer system, saying the industry's challenges "will not be solved with a nationalized healthcare system that dictates coverage and rations care." Although Bush's State of the Union address focused mostly on the economy and foreign policy, it touched lightly on the administration's Medicare

reform goals. Bush said he favors a 10-year, \$400 billion Medicare prescription-drug benefit program offered through private healthcare plans. Details of the plan were largely absent, but Bush is expected to provide additional information in a speech in Grand Rapids, Michigan. During his State of the Union address, he also reiterated his call for medical liability reform.



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