



Q&A with Orlando Health's VP of Nursing, Anne Peach, and M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Orlando's COO, Beth Rudloff

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Beth Rudloff

Chief Operating Officer
M.D. Anderson Cancer
Center Orlando

ABOUT ORLANDO HEALTH

Location: Central Florida

Beds in System: 1,780

Affiliated Physicians: 2,000+

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Orlando Health recently selected PerfectServe to help improve communications among its caregivers. During a recent conversation, Anne Peach, vice president of nursing at Orlando Health, and Beth Rudloff, chief operating officer at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Orlando, discussed why improving clinical communications is key to increasing nurse time at the bedside, nursing satisfaction, and documentation.

Orlando Health is a \$1.7 billion not-for-profit health care organization and a community-based network of hospitals and care centers in the Orlando region that serves more than 1.6 million patients annually. The health system includes the 808-bed Orlando Regional Medical Center and the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Orlando, the first affiliate of one of the nation's premier cancer centers.

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Anne Peach, VP Nursing, Orlando Health

Q: Can you discuss the difficulties and challenges with nurses trying to reach physicians at Orlando Regional Medical Center?

Rudloff: We have found at Orlando Regional Medical Center, each physician has different ways they like to be contacted. Since there are so many different ways you can communicate with doctors—texting, cell phone, sending a message through a Web site—we had many different numbers and preferences for physicians. It was hard for the nursing staff to keep it updated and accurate to know how to get a hold of any physician.

We also didn't have a consistent way to send a message that would mark it as urgent versus something more informational. A doctor would say "page me if you need me," but you didn't want to page them unless it was an emergency. But if a nurse just wanted to give them some information, it was hard to understand how to do that without interrupting their day.

Our nurses also had issues with answering services being able to reach physicians or understanding the urgency of an issue.

Q: Can you discuss all the ways physicians wish to be reached, and how that has impacted patient care?

Peach: I've been a nurse for over 30 years. In the old days, every physician had a pager, and you had their pager number and maybe their home number and that was it.

Now, there's so much technology, it's really a challenge to reach a physician because every physician does something a little different. And that doesn't work using a traditional system with an operator.

As an organization that embraces technology, we know how technology can dramatically impact patient care. We also know that technology can create an environment that is actually safer for patients. And we see this technology, PerfectServe, as one that will enhance patient care.



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Anne Peach
VP Nursing
Orlando Health

Q: Before PerfectServe, how hard was it for nurses to reach physicians?

Rudloff: It was highly variable. Sometimes nurses could reach a physician very quickly.

Other times, the call schedule had changed and we weren't aware of it, or other things happened. It was different every time.

And with PerfectServe, it's not going to be different every time. It will be the same way every time. So there's a lot more reliability in the system.

Q: Do you notice the impact of the various options for contacting physicians? Has it changed noticeably on the amount of time nurses spend and the potential for error?

Peach: In the old days, there might be one doctor taking care of a patient. Today, a patient might have five or six doctors in the hospital.

Everyone has a different version of how they want to be reached, and we don't always know all their contact rules, because the rules change.

It's incredibly time consuming in our old system to contact physicians. And then you have to be readily available for when they do respond. PerfectServe allows clinicians to be in touch with each other faster. From a nursing standpoint, it's wonderful because the amount of time staff will take trying to locate physicians is much shorter.

That has a tremendous impact on patient care and how quickly you can get answers, particularly when time is of the essence.

Q: How do you expect PerfectServe to address some of the communication challenges your nurses have in contacting physicians?

Rudloff: With PerfectServe, there is only one number to remember, and that's very important when nurses need to get in touch with any physician.

Preferences for the physician are all pre-programmed into PerfectServe, so a nurse doesn't have to remember them, or they don't need to be written down. And when changes occur, they occur within the system.

So if a physician isn't taking call on a certain night, that information doesn't have to be sent out to everybody, it's already pre-programmed in the system.

So that will simplify all those many details and changes our nurses were trying to keep track of every day.

Q: What impact do you see PerfectServe will have in efficiency and productivity?

Rudloff: The big thing is accuracy. PerfectServe will eliminate the need to call multiple times or re-check. It's really going to streamline the effort for nurses to get a hold of physicians.

The information will be more accurate too. PerfectServe provides faster, more accurate communication and it will allow the caregivers to spend more time with the patient.

Q: Could you discuss the documentation aspect of PerfectServe and how it will benefit nurses?

Peach: I think documentation is one of the greatest benefits of PerfectServe. Right now, we have scenarios similar to “he said, she said. I called. No, you didn't.” It can be very frustrating for a nurse.

PerfectServe will be a great way to do some peer review and quality assessment of communication, especially since communication in healthcare is one of the number one issues in terms of safety and quality.