

CASE STUDY: Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital

USING SEND WORD NOW® TO SUPPORT TIMELY DIAGNOSTIC DECISIONS TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE



Trauma centers are highly regulated at the state level under the guidance of the American College of Surgeons to ensure that facilities are equipped to manage high patient volume and provide comprehensive medical services to treat severe injuries. The State of California and its local Emergency Medical Service Agencies encourage centers to maintain state-of-the-art equipment and require them to implement a communication system such as Send Word Now to enhance communication and coordination processes.

The Hospital

Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, a 408-acute bed teaching facility, is committed to patient safety and to providing the highest quality health care to the growing communities of greater Santa Barbara. With annual admissions of more than 19,000 patients,

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-Salvador Becerra
Trauma System Analyst

40,000 emergency room visits, 1,700 trauma activations and 2,800 births, the hospital is renowned for its comprehensive maternal-child services, cardiac, neurosurgical, and oncology programs, and

Level II Trauma Center. The hospital's distinction as a Level II Trauma Center can be accredited to the hospital's availability of qualified specialists and investments in cutting edge technology. Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital's trauma center provides complete adult and pediatric trauma care, and is the only comprehensive trauma center between Los Angeles and San Jose.

The Issue

Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital believes that evaluation and treatment are critical

to a patient's well being during the initial hours of trauma care. Timely diagnosis decisions are supported by the rapid and accurate transfer of information throughout the organization.

Prior to adopting the Send Word Now communications platform, the hospital used its mobile (SMS) carrier server as a means of delivering information. However, the server lacked the infrastructure to support the delivery of multiple messages throughout the day to various members of the team. The contents of the messages were not always accurate and sometimes they were not delivered at all.

The technology available to the hospital therefore was clearly inadequate to meet its vision and needs. “Having an alert notification system in place to provide information about incoming trauma patients is key to helping surgeons respond in a timely manner to the trauma activation” said Salvador Becerra, Trauma System Analyst.

The Solution

The hospital recognized that it needed to invest in a robust platform that could withstand the high activity of a trauma center. “After conducting extensive research on available alert notification systems, we chose Send Word Now because the service is fast and reliable,” said Becerra.

The trauma team now utilizes the Send Word Now communication system for the instantaneous delivery of messages during time-sensitive events. When an incident occurs, emergency responders send out alerts to the rest of the response team indicating the type of injuries sustained and the level of trauma. This provides physicians and allied health professionals with critical information and updates about their patients anywhere, anytime, on any device, before they are admitted to the hospital, so the team can develop a treatment plan in advance of the patient's arrival.

Although the implementation of a communication system for communication and coordination processes was mandatory, Send Word Now's feature rich offering inspired the team to use the service for other purposes.

The Emergency Department Management Team routinely uses Send Word Now when nurses, patient care technicians, or department unit clerks call in sick. The management team also uses the service to inform their employees of a shift that needs to be filled.

"Before Send Word Now, all calls were done manually. You could spend a whole day trying to locate a replacement for a shift, and heaven forbid another sick

call came in while you were still working on the first one," said Dianne Oney, Administrative Secretary for the ER. "Send Word Now enhances the rescheduling process, allowing our staff to focus on more important issues of direct patient care."

The Result

Send Word Now serves as an everyday communication platform for Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital and is a foundation for the organization's best practices. Health care professionals use the service to send out alerts about patients, trauma and neuro activations. Using the service to streamline communication throughout the organization has resulted in improved business continuity and patient care.

