



Aged Care Plus

Aged Care Plus: Implements Hands-Free Wireless Communication Devices to Improve Resident Care, Efficiencies, and Staff Retention

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Operations Manager
Aged Care Plus

About Aged Care Plus

Aged Care Plus is a division of the Salvation Army focused on delivering quality aged care services that are accessible by all people. Today, Aged Care Plus operates 22 centres across NSW, ACT, Qld, Vic, and Tas and a range of services including residential aged care, retirement living, community care packages, counselling and respite.

Challenge

The Cairns Aged Care Plus Centre was opened in 2011 to cater for the growing aged care needs of older people living in and around Chapel Hill, Brisbane. The multistory, state-of-the-art facility provides low to high care for up to 126 residents, and includes a secure dementia ward catering for up to 24 residents. Given the complexities of aged care, the four-floor facility imposed inherent communication challenges upon the staff. Aged care staff often care for residents behind closed doors, alone or in teams of two people. Residents with early dementia are particularly challenging as they become especially anxious if calls for help aren't answered quickly—and then greater assistance is necessary afterwards to reassure them.

The nursing staff reported they were spending a significant amount of time on cell phones and physically running floor-to-floor searching for colleagues, as well as waiting for other staff to provide help with responding to resident calls of varying levels of priority and finding equipment or materials for residents. In urgent cases when multiple medical professionals were needed at once, the charge nurse was sometimes forced to navigate around the facility to find assistance. The nursing staff reported these activities were time-consuming, frustrating, and impacted accountability.

Solution

The Cairns Aged Care Plus Centre examined several solutions, including walkie-talkies, pagers, a wireless nurse-call system with pager integration, and finally, the Vocera solution. “With Vocera, we can get the operational efficiency that other systems cannot provide,” said Luke Greive, Operations Manager, Aged Care Plus.

Vocera allows one-to-one and one-to-many communication and functions as a hands-free phone extension. Aged Care Plus immediately recognised the benefits of the system and deployed the Vocera Badge to nearly all staff, including nurses, housekeepers, and launderers. As a result, they can now reach each other with the touch of a button and simple spoken commands.

Results

“Vocera has revolutionized the environment at our Cairns Centre,” says Greive. “The teams at our other facilities want to know when Vocera is coming to their centre.”

Mr. Greive’s staff at Cairns likes using Vocera so much, it has become a retention tool. “Our staff do not leave now because they can not imagine working somewhere without Vocera—that’s how much it has transformed our centre and the care we provide,” Greive explained. In a recent survey, 99 percent of the staff at Cairns reported they could not perform their responsibilities without Vocera and would not be without it. The staff reports Vocera has also reduced workplace stress as they no longer have as much frustration in locating personnel or waiting for resources.

These improvements also enable the staff to devote more time to caring for residents, dramatically improving patient care. Response times to residents’ needs have improved significantly, and resident anxiety reports and family complaints have decreased. Mr. Greive believes Vocera has helped improve residents’ quality of life, and suggests the happier the residents are, the healthier they are as well.

Today, the Salvation Army has an on-going relationship with Vocera, with the solution implemented across 18 facilities, with 4 more planned in 2018 and 2019. Future plans included additional facilities in Victoria and new constructions in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania.

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