



Covia Speeds Alarm Response, Improves Resident Safety

Staff Responds Faster to Incidents by Integrating the Vocera Platform

Leadership at Covia were looking to improve their ability to respond quickly when an independent or assisted living resident needed help.

Covia's independent and assisted living residents have the option of wearing Wi-Fi-based personal emergency response pendants that allow them to call for help if they fall or need medical assistance. Covia also provides an option to memory care and health center residents who pose a wander risk to wear a wireless bracelet that triggers an alarm if they leave safe areas without being accompanied by staff.

Despite having modern Wi-Fi infrastructures in all of its communities, Covia identified certain operational workflows with fragmented and poorly integrated communications. Some departments relied on aging two-way radio systems that didn't work in all locations; others used a combination of smartphones, intercoms, pagers, and even iPods. The gaps and disconnects between communication tools made it hard for staff members to work together efficiently and serve residents consistently.

Covia, a California nonprofit that operates six life plan and multi-level communities in the San Francisco Bay Area, delivers a range of innovative residential and aging services that promote intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual well-being. It also serves up to 10,000 seniors in the greater community through its Community Services programs. Two of Covia's communities were beginning to plan an expensive radio system replacement when the organization recognized it as an opportunity to implement a more efficient solution throughout all of its communities.

Swiss Army Knife for Communication

"We wanted to use our Wi-Fi infrastructure to improve staff communication overall," says Chris Dana, vice president of information technology for Covia. "Vocera® technology appeared to us like a Swiss army knife for communication. We were really intrigued."

Vocera offers the leading platform for clinical communication and workflow, with solutions that let caregivers text securely with smartphones or make calls hands-free with the wearable Vocera Badge.

"When we saw the Vocera Badge and learned about the technology, lightbulbs started going off in our heads," recalls Karen Kemp, a systems analyst and project manager at Covia. "The Vocera Platform integrates with so much other software that we already have in place. Compared with our two-way radios, it seemed like a huge value-add from a life safety perspective. We all walked out thinking, 'Wow, we really want this!'"



Key Benefits

- Enables reliable staff communication anywhere on campus throughout the community.
- Removes delays once caused by manual dispatching and unreliable radio links.
- Integrates with existing resident life safety system, improving resident security.

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Custom Workflows for Every Community

Covia soon acquired enough Vocera Badges to equip staff in every department at all six communities, signing an enterprise license with Vocera. “Our executive directors saw the benefit and wanted everyone on the system,” says Kemp. “They didn’t want half of their staff to have Vocera Badges and half still carrying radios.”

Beginning in April 2016, Vocera designed custom workflows for each Covia community with help from workflow consulting partner NeTeam Innovations. “Every community is different, so every community gets to decide how they want the system to work,” says Kemp. “We trained every staff member at every community – security, maintenance, housekeeping, clinical, administration, the executive directors. Everyone uses the Vocera system, even IT.”

Integration for Faster Response

Covia moved quickly to integrate the Vocera Platform with its resident safety solution. All alarms now pass automatically to the Vocera system for routing to the designated responder through a community-customized workflow. “An alert might go to security in one community and skilled nursing in another,” says Kemp. “If no one from the intended recipient group answers, the system can escalate to an urgent broadcast. Everyone on staff will receive the message and whoever is closest can respond — even a maintenance worker raking leaves around the corner. While he can’t provide medical care, he can comfort the resident and coordinate with other staff through his Vocera Badge.” Each alert is delivered as both voice and text messages that include the resident’s first name, last initial, and location, and the type of event. All alert data originates in the resident safety system and flows automatically to the Vocera system.

Exclusive 911 System

“The integration of Vocera technology with our life-safety system is like having our own 911 center,” Kemp says. “By eliminating the delays once caused by manual dispatching and unreliable radio links, it lets us respond to urgent resident needs faster and more intelligently. It also improves worker efficiency by eliminating the need to continuously staff a dispatch workstation.”

Improved Communication

The staff has also seen an improvement in routine staff communication; it’s easier to coordinate activities, get information, or summon assistance. “I’m out in the communities all the time, talking with different departments about the badge and how it’s working for them,” Kemp adds. “Over and over they tell me there’s no way they’ll ever give it up.”

“In one community, we have a single clinical team looking after a memory-care unit and two assisted-living buildings. With Vocera, team members can locate each other no matter where they are or what they’re doing, from one end of the campus to the other. They don’t have to walk to the nurse station to check messages. They don’t have to drop what they’re doing to pick up a phone or a radio. They couldn’t live without the Vocera solution.”

Five-Star Experience

Covia is now providing a level of service more often associated with the hospitality industry. “There’s a reason this technology is used in hundreds of acute care settings,” Dana says. “It’s a really effective communication tool. It’s time for senior living to start adopting some of the solutions that work so well in other settings to improve the services we provide to our residents. The people moving into our communities today are looking for a five-star experience. Vocera is one technology that can help us align our services with those expectations.”

Future Connection

Covia is already planning the next big integration project. “We’re getting a new nurse call system for skilled nursing in our Santa Rosa community,” Kemp says. “We’ll be integrating it with Vocera so that calls go straight to the nurses’ badges. The Santa Rosa team won’t go forward without the Vocera integration. They won’t even accept a delay; it’s that important to them.”

“I’ve come to see the Vocera Platform as a way to glue together all the different functions our people perform in our communities every day, and all of the technologies we rely on to complete them,” Dana says. “It improves our ability to keep our residents healthy, safe, and happy. How do you put a value on that? If you ask a family member, it’s infinite.”

Visit [Vocera.com/long-term-care](https://www.vocera.com/long-term-care) for more information about Long-term Care and Assisted Living facilities that count on Vocera solutions.



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More Information

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