

## Case Study: Lee Memorial Health System

**The Lee Memorial Health System** serves Lee County in southwest Florida. With 5,700 employees, 2,500 volunteers, 830 staff physicians and 948 licensed beds, it is the largest community-owned health system in the area.

The Lee Memorial staff includes 80 home health workers who bring medical services directly into patient homes. To improve the overall quality of those services, workers needed access to the same tools, information and resources available to them in the hospital setting.

### Replacing a cumbersome batch system

The staff had previously relied on paper records that had to be hand-delivered to the office. In addition, a dial-up batch system transferred case files from workers' laptops to Lee Memorial's Siemens® NOVIUS® Home Care system.

According to Bob Votta, director of network technical services at Lee Memorial, "the batch process didn't work very well. Workers still had to come into the hospital to get the next day's schedule, or depend on an unsupervised telephone batch process, which was problematic."

"Our home health workers can give a better quality of service at the patient's home. The system gives them access to everything as if they were in the hospital."

— Bob Votta  
Dir. of Network Technical Services  
Lee Memorial Health System

### Reliable, real-time access to critical medical data

Lee Memorial had investigated using Wi-Fi hot spots for mobile data access, but determined that such a system could not adequately cover their service area. So they turned instead to a cellular data service.

Each health worker carries a notebook computer equipped with a cellular interface card. And to maintain high security and constant connectivity for patient care, Lee Memorial deployed NetMotion Wireless' Mobility XE® mobile VPN. It allows workers to access their critical medical applications seamlessly. Whenever they encounter gaps in coverage or suspend and resume their devices, Mobility XE maintains a persistent connection to their applications. Once a network is available, Mobility XE reconnects the health worker's mobile device and resumes the applications, exactly where the user left off. Mobility enables seamless, secure roaming and eliminates lost data and application crashes that occur when health care workers go out of range or cross network boundaries. Mobility XE also compresses and optimizes data traversing the wireless link to nearly double the native data throughput of the cellular network. That allows home health workers to focus more time on patients and less time waiting for data refreshes.

### Organization

Lee Memorial Health System

### Industry

Healthcare

### Objectives

- Replace cumbersome dial-up connections and time-consuming paper-based system
- Extend on-demand access to critical medical data directly to bedsides in patient homes
- Enable more informed care decisions
- Document each visit completely at the time of care, for updating medical records and capturing billing detail

### Solution

- Notebook computers fitted with cellular data access cards
- NetMotion Wireless Mobility XE

### Results

- Better quality of service at the bedside
- Additional 16,000 hours of time freed for devoting to medical care
- Cost savings of 20 percent from eliminating previous remote-access system, dial-up lines and attendant support costs

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The constant connectivity offered by the cellular network and Mobility XE gives home health workers complete information at the point of care. “Now they have real-time information and they can search historical patient records,” explains Votta. “They can review medical records, document each visit including care provided, enter clinical notes, update the patient’s medical record and capture the billing detail – all directly from the patient’s bedside.”

### Big gains in productivity and patient care

By eliminating redundant data entry, the mobile solution saves each home health worker at least an hour each day. Health workers are also freed from lost time previously spent logging paper records, initiating dial-up connections and waiting for data uploads to complete. In all, each worker gained 200 productive hours each year – time now devoted to patient care. Annually, that represents more than 16,000 hours Lee Memorial has freed for providing more home-care services.

Eliminating the remote-access system and the costs for supporting it also delivered an estimated 20 percent cost savings -- in the first year alone.

But perhaps the greatest benefit is improved care at the patient’s bedside. Patients recover from surgeries faster when they can receive follow-up medical support in the comfort of their own homes. And the improved patient support enabled by cellular access and Mobility XE is encouraging greater use of Lee Memorial’s home health services. “Quite a few hospitals are offering wireless solutions within the hospital acute care facilities,” declares Votta, “but our home health workers can give a better quality of service at the patient’s home because they have access to everything as if they were in the hospital.”

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