

Athens Regional Medical Center

Athens, Georgia

In 1921, Athens Regional Medical Center opened its doors with 100 beds, three medical floors, two operating rooms, a delivery room, and a 24-member medical staff, providing high quality healthcare for northeast Georgia.

Today, Athens Regional Medical Center has grown into a 315-bed referral center. This full-service healthcare facility provides the northeast Georgia area with a vast array of specialized medical, surgical and diagnostic procedures.

Call Center Services

Each year, the Athens Regional Medical Center call center handles about 2.5 million transactions, including inbound and outbound calls. They process between 6,000 to 7,000 calls each day.

After an extensive search for a more reliable system, and one that could easily be connected to their network, Athens selected a 1Call *Infinity* system to enhance their call center. They began taking live calls on *Infinity* in February 2004.

Currently, they answer calls for the main hospital number, provide physician's answering service for approximately 270 physicians associated with the hospital, and also handle code announcements for the hospital, weather alerts, and department-wide or hospital-wide recalls for their various disaster plans.



Vennis Watkins, Telecommunications Trainer at Athens, assists operators with call handling techniques

Simplified Call Handling

The Athens Regional call center operators are delighted with *Infinity's* numerous features. On their previous system, which many of the operators had used for 12 years, "everything was in one central directory, and there really was no good search engine. So the operators had to memorize all 400 accounts numbers and they memorized half of the extensions in the hospital," according to Joe Adam, Telecommunications Coordinator at Athens Regional Medical Center.

Now, Athens uses sub-accounts for each physician to simplify the call handling process. The paging information and messages for each physician are kept in the physician's sub-account, making it easier for the operators to find, reducing errors, and increasing efficiency.

Easing Call Traffic with Automation

To help eliminate calls after office hours, all accounts, with the exception of the hospital's main number, have a greeting that instantly lets callers know the office is closed. This feature alone has eliminated 300-400 calls a day to the operators.

Athens Regional Medical Center also uses automated faxes at scheduled times, helping ensure physicians and staff receive their messages when they need them.



*Training time has been reduced by almost 65% with *Infinity**

Reduced Training Time

One major area of improvement for Athens is training new operators. They've watched their training time go from six weeks on their previous system to only two weeks with *Infinity*. Joe remarked, "I've had some new people come in and train here, and during the second week of training, they'll say, 'This is so easy. I totally understand. Thanks!'"

Improved Statistics

With *Infinity*, operators answer two calls at a time, and they've actually seen their transaction volume go up. They now also offer more services for the hospital, such as dispatching for shift mechanics, telephone repair mechanics, and heating and air conditioning mechanics. They continue to add call handling services for more departments, and add more on-call schedules, "without any complaints from the operators," according to Joe.

Before installing *Infinity*, there were daily traffic peaks at 7-9 a.m., 12-2 p.m., and 4-6 p.m. "We'd have 30-40-50 calls on hold, and if we were short one or two people, it was a nightmare. We'd get physician and staff complaints. Now with *Infinity*, there is no crunch," said Joe.

Reliability has also significantly increased. "With *Infinity*, we've had no down time, and no system errors," Joe commented. He continued, "Working with service has been really, really good. If I have an issue, it's usu-

ally resolved; if not immediately, I get a call back in a couple of minutes."

A Bright Future

Athens Regional Medical Center will soon be installing the new *Infinity* Enterprise Intelligent Series. According to Joe, "It's modular, so we can bring it up slowly. The Intelligent Dispatch feature will reduce our operator

errors (which are currently less than one-tenth of one percent a month), to even half of that, because we can dispatch based on the time of day. The integrated On-Call Scheduling features will make our lives a lot easier. And so will the 'interactive messaging,' which allows us to do branching, questions, and spell check."

Athens is also looking at expanding the services it offers, including adding more physicians, as well as

adding some non-traditional accounts. "I think we'll start seeing a lot more use of the features, like voice mail, and automated check-ins. There is still more we will want to roll out," Joe told us.

To Find Out More...

For more information on all of the innovative 1Call *Great Communications* products, call your 1Call Sales Manager at **(800)356-9148**, or visit **www.1call.com**.

And for more information on the Athens Regional Medical Center, visit their Web site at **www.armc.org**.



Joe Adam, Telecommunications Coordinator at Athens Regional Medical Center

Great Communications begin with

1CALL

A Division of **amtelco**