

THE CHALLENGE

The customer service department for a leading Illinois healthcare institution wanted to improve methods for documenting and resolving patient relations inquiries. With only one customer service coordinator, it was challenging to effectively address patients' calls, letters, surveys and walk-in comments that spanned from complaints to compliments to general requests. The customer care coordinator was responsible for keeping track of the paper work, its distribution and the resolution of the patient issues through an Excel spreadsheet. This proved to be time consuming and inefficient. With the clutter and confusion of manual reports, significant internal follow up, often times with multiple departments on a single issue, coupled with emails and phone calls seeking resolution, the necessary correspondence with patients and appropriate timeliness was nearly impossible. Further, any regulatory inquiries often took hours and additional resources to research volumes of paper files.

Due to the importance of patient issues, the increasing regulatory scrutiny of these issues, and the client's focus on superior patient relations, the client believed that utilizing manual resources to appropriately document, track and resolve each case was ineffective.

The client needed a system that would allow them to better document patient relations inquiries, streamline means of response and resolution, provide tools to highlight potential safety risks in advance, while maintaining an overall hospital-wide customer service focus.



THE SOLUTION

The client selected Sentact's Customer Care Module. Working with Customer Relations, senior management and nursing staff, Sentact was tailored to capture all inbound and outbound correspondence, work history, documents and staff participation relating to patient complaints and compliments. Implemented in 45 days, the system created a centralized communication tool for the hospital staff to monitor and manage resolutions, while meeting strict HIPAA compliance. With Sentact:

- Master Ticket/Sub-Ticket files are created to enable the patient relations coordinator to easily manage multiple complaints from a single patient under one case file.
- All hardcopy correspondence (inbound letters, survey cards) is scanned and attached to each inquiry, enabling one-source viewing of all related correspondence.
- "Responsible parties" are automatically identified and notified when an inquiry is entered into the system, eliminating time consuming administrative processes.
- All communication via email and pager is processed through the system, with time/date stamps, tracked by a detailed work log.
- Customized form letters are automatically generated, including patient name, address, inquiry number and inquiry details. Letters are processed via email or printed onto hospital letterhead.
- Alerts and reminders are generated via email and pager when designated service goals are in jeopardy.
- Quick-search functionality is utilized to generate immediate response to status checks by simply entering a name, ticket number, or problem type.
- Escalation to senior staff is automated for specific issues identified by the system as requiring immediate management attention.

THE RESULTS

- Better customer care - Eliminating numerous manual tasks enabled the customer care coordinator to focus significantly more time analyzing inquiries, communicating with patients and ensuring resolution.
- Proactive analysis - Capturing, reporting and trending patient inquiries allowed hospital staff to address root cause issues. Patient complaints were reduced and risks are identified before they become safety incidents.
- Improved resource utilization - One customer service coordinator now processes all patient complaints and compliments, interpreter requests and something.
- Regulatory compliance - Sentact was utilized as the "plan of action" to address JCAHO compliance issues and more easily support new Tracer requirements.

To learn more about Sentact's products and services, or to request a free demo, please visit our website at www.sentact.com
Email info@sentact.com, or call **847.439.1700** for more information.