



CASE STUDY

MERCY MEDICAL CENTER

Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines is a not-for-profit Catholic healthcare provider. The system comprises several Iowa facilities: Mercy Medical Center-central campus, Mercy Medical Center-West Lakes, Mercy Medical Center-Centerville, Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics, and Skiff Medical Center in Newton. Mercy is served by approximately 7,000 staff members, along with about 1,200 physicians and allied health professionals, making it one of Iowa’s largest employers and among the Midwest’s largest referral centers. Mercy Connect provides a streamlined process for transferring patients from a broad range of facilities and internal departments to a higher level of care at Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines.

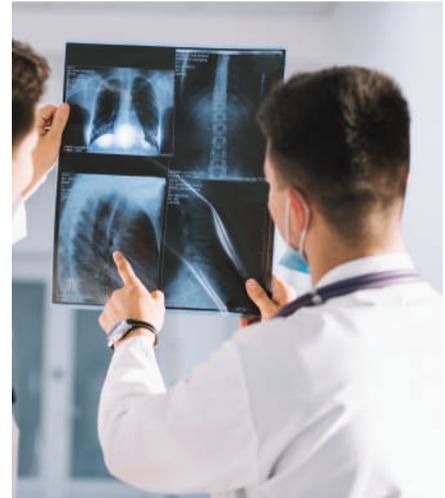
Challenges and Opportunities

In search of an easier way to move patients like many large referral facilities, Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines needed a centralized, streamlined way to handle thousands of patient transfers every year. As these volumes grew, so did the risk for inefficient patient transfers, increased operational costs, and missed revenue opportunities. Initially, Mercy used an outsourced transfer center. However, the organization’s leadership eventually determined that an internally managed solution would better meet the needs of the medical center’s staff, physicians, patients, and referring sites.

The Solution

Comprehensive, seamless, and easy to use

In 2014, following a thorough evaluation, Mercy Medical Center chose Central Logic Transfer Center® and Central Logic On Call Scheduling™ to power Mercy Connect. This fully integrated, SaaS-based solution helps ensure timely and efficient patient transfers, while capturing critical details of a patient’s movement in real time. It also centralizes and distributes provider scheduling and calendar data, enabling the transfer center to connect with the right physician on the first try. With Mercy Connect, referring facilities need to call only one number (877-88-MERCY) to arrange patient transfers. “This gives us a way to connect better with our referring facilities,” states Director of Referrals at Mercy Medical Center Robert Gavora, who adds: “We have nurses and mid-level providers answering the phones, which creates a better understanding of each case. We can work with referring facilities to ensure that their patients experience an easy pathway to a higher level of care.” Mercy Connect staffer Jody Gordon, RN, wholeheartedly agrees. She especially likes having complete information from any case at her fingertips. “It makes documenting incredibly easy, and having all this information in a centralized location makes it easy to answer follow-up questions.”



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Robert Gavora
Mercy Medical Center



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Documented Value with Central Logic

The big “win” for Mercy, its patients, and physicians has been the growth in patient transfers. During the first year following go-live with Central Logic, patient transfer volume grew by 13.1%. Year two results were almost as impressive, yielding an increase of 9.3%. From implementation through the end of 2017, patient transfers have risen by an average of 9% per year, and this growth trend continues to the present day. “While we expected growth during the first and subsequent years after deployment, Mercy Connect has grown more quickly than we originally estimated,” says Gavora. He attributes this to a number of key factors, including the speed and ease with which transfer center staff can work through a patient transfer. “This has helped make referring sites more loyal to Mercy Connect. Also, they like that we have one number for all calls – regardless of your issue, we’ll get your call where it needs to go or transfer your patient to Mercy for a higher level of care.” Another contributor to the growth in calls and transfers is the flexibility of the Central Logic solution, according to Gavora. “It has helped us diversify the types of transfers we take. We use it for ED, inpatient, and even outpatient transfers to Mercy Medical Center. In addition, we’ve started accepting transfers from clinics and other outpatient sites across Iowa, directly admitting these patients and bypassing the emergency department.”

Making the Most of a Transfer Center Solution

Mercy Medical Center deserves a great deal of credit for its transfer center successes. For example, Mercy Connect instituted a staffing system in which mid-level providers physically sit in the transfer center and collaborate with other clinical staff to “auto-accept” certain types of patients, such as someone who’s suffered

a heart attack. This has helped expedite patient transfers – and patient care – while making a positive impression on referring physicians. Mercy also has capitalized on a wealth of information available through the Central Logic solution’s reporting tools. “The quality and specificity of the data we get from Central Logic really help us drive the strategy for our transfer center. We can see where patients are coming from and which physicians referred them,” says Gavora. “This data helps us do case reviews of transfers that were lost or denied; we can walk through them to determine the appropriateness of the transfer and whether there was anything more we could have done to make sure the patient was transferred here.” In addition, readily available data enables prompt, informed action on time-sensitive issues, he adds. “For example, I recently received a call from the emergency department manager at one of our referring sites. She had a question about a patient who was referred to us. Within about five seconds, I looked up the case notes, and within 30 seconds, I was able to answer her question. That’s a beautiful thing!”

13.1% GROWTH IN PATIENT TRANSFER VOLUME DURING FIRST YEAR POST IMPLEMENTATION



Central Logic as a Partner

Beyond the typical vendor-customer relationship Central Logic, the company behind Mercy Connect technology, has earned high marks, too. Gavora recalls an instance in which he needed assistance with recreating a report. He called the Central Logic customer service number. “Someone picked up the phone in about five seconds and walked me step by step through what I needed to do. It was nice to speak with somebody who never made me feel rushed...really took the time to work with me and answered all my questions.” “That’s the customer service you would obviously prefer and hope to have. In Central Logic, we have a vendor and a partner, and that’s what we’re looking for.”



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Executive Summary

For many health systems, patient transfers represent a significant source of sorely needed revenue. But ensuring a consistently robust incoming flow of patients in an efficient, cost-effective manner can prove to be highly challenging. Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines relies on Central Logic Transfer Center® and Central Logic On Call Scheduling™ to power its Mercy Connect patient transfer center. Following are key outcomes:

Benefits for Mercy Medical Center

Growth in patient transfers to Mercy Medical Center since Central Logic deployment in 2014:

- 13.1% in the first year
- 9.3% in the second year
- 9% from implementation through the end of 2017
- A 39% increase in calls to Mercy Connect since Central Logic go-live
- Diversification in the types of transfers handled by Mercy Connect
- Enhanced ability to pinpoint missed patient transfer opportunities and take corrective action

Benefits for Mercy Connect staff

- Multiple components that work together seamlessly on a single platform
- Easy-to-use, customizable home pages tailored to different roles and responsibilities
- Consistently able to connect with the right physician on the first try
- Quick look-up of real-time information about transferred patients

Benefits for referring facilities and their patients

- One phone number to call for all patient transfers and related inquiries
- A knowledgeable team – nurses and mid-level providers – handling calls and ensuring the most appropriate resolution of each case
- A smoother, faster pathway for patients to a higher level of care

About Central Logic

Central Logic's paramount objective is to get the patient the right care, at the right place, without delay. For health systems, managing patient transfers is a live-saving endeavor. Central Logic is a pioneer in the space and was founded in 2005 solely to support this mission. Our flexible, purpose-built solutions provide superior real-time visibility and unmatched business intelligence to optimize the operations of health system patient flow command centers. Clients count on Central Logic to deliver strong growth, find new ways to improve patient outcomes and make their operations more effective, today and into the future. Based in Utah, Central Logic is an industry leader with a 95% customer retention rate. For more information, visit www.centrallogic.com.



CentralLogic

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