WHITE PAPER

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS ON-CALL FOR HEALTHCARE
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1. Introduction
Improving collaboration and communications is low-hanging fruit on the journey to more efficient and effective healthcare. Unified communications (UC) can improve collaboration among a team of caregivers, allowing healthcare providers to improve patient care, raise patient satisfaction and reduce the cost of care. UC weaves together a rich mosaic of communication methods, including phone, email, voicemail, instant messaging, Web conferencing and videoconferencing over mobile devices and traditional desktops.

2. Enable collaboration among caregivers
Whether in a hospital, clinic or physician’s office, healthcare workers are usually on the move. With UC, clinicians and administrative staff can be reached immediately, wherever they are—and that eliminates missed connections and wasted time. They can quickly connect with others on the care team via a phone call, instant messaging or Web conferencing—and quickly identify who is available at any given moment.

Carson Tahoe Regional Healthcare, a healthcare leader in Northern Nevada, has set new standards in women and children’s medical services, surgical services, outpatient services and oncology. Carson Tahoe Health uses ShoreTel UC to support communications among staff and patients.

With ShoreTel, Carson Tahoe Health employees can manage their emails and voicemails from a single inbox. Calls follow them to their home offices or mobile phones, so they can be productive no matter where they are. “Users like seeing their voicemail and email in one place,” said Tyler Jackson, systems administrator for Carson Tahoe Health. “They’re more productive because they can respond to the right people faster and they can quickly transfer callers to the right destination. ShoreTel has improved communications internally and externally.”

Westside Regional Center, an agency that helps people with developmental disabilities in Southern California, also uses ShoreTel’s business phone system to provide services to clients more effectively. Westside Regional’s social workers meet with clients to understand more about them to provide the right activities and services. The ShoreTel phone system is essential in helping the social workers and administrative staff to quickly and efficiently connect with the right person through email, voicemail or instant messaging—and see if a coworker is available to take a call. “Everyone here simply loves the ShoreTel IP phones,” said Sharon Smyth, director of IT and facilities at Westside Regional Center.
3. Connect patients and caregivers

UC is a powerful tool to help providers connect with their patients—and raise patient satisfaction.

The doctors at Urologic Specialists of Oklahoma (USO) deliver premium care to patients in the Tulsa area. When patients or family members call to schedule an appointment, ask questions or reach a doctor, it’s important that they reach the right person in a timely manner. “We want our patients to have a high degree of satisfaction and confidence when they interact with staff, whether it is in person or over the phone,” said Patrick Bruce, IT director for USO. “USO has first-rate staff that cares about providing the best medical services. We certainly didn’t want the phone system to hinder that.”

Before deploying ShoreTel’s business phone system, patients were waiting longer and longer on hold before they could schedule an appointment. ShoreTel Enterprise Contact Center has enabled USO to cut wait time and be more attentive to patients and their families. “We’ve seen a dramatic decrease in call hold times from an average of 3 minutes to 25 seconds,” said Bruce. Skills-based routing matches the calls to the person best equipped to address the caller’s needs. “Ultimately, we are able to better serve our patients and other callers,” said Bruce.

Carson Tahoe Health uses ShoreTel’s workgroups function to help patients and clinicians reach a live person—and the right person—faster than ever. In addition, using workgroups ensures a consistent level of service and also allows department supervisors to train new employees more quickly. The admitting office, cancer center, imaging department and IT support center all take advantage of ShoreTel’s workgroups for call routing. “Our objective is for all of our callers to get a live person on a 24x7 basis, and ShoreTel enables us to meet this objective,” said Jackson.

4. Reliable and easy

Healthcare providers are under intense pressure to cut the cost of care delivery, and having a business phone system that enables easy communications—while being brilliantly simple to use and manage—is critical.
When Westside Regional Center first deployed a new IP phone system to replace its aging PBX, it was in for a nasty surprise. The new phone system lacked the functionality and support that the agency expected of a modern-day phone system, and to make matters worse, the vendor tried blaming Westside Regional. The agency quickly turned ShoreTel, a company known for delivering high levels of customer satisfaction, and the new phone system was a success.

“We are seeing cost savings in the way we are able to conduct business, the ease with which we can add extensions and groups, or change the setup or scale the system. Today we truly have freedom and cost efficiency with our business communications,” said Smyth. “Run, don’t walk from other competitors. Just choose ShoreTel first to save time and money and frustration.”

ShoreTel’s brilliant simplicity for users and administrators resonated with Carson Tahoe Health, too. “ShoreTel was the only solution that truly worked for us,” said Jackson. “The distributed architecture of the ShoreTel UC system was a perfect fit for our requirements and its centralized management is a mission-critical feature. With ShoreTel, you just manage the whole network, no matter where the switches are located.”

5. Collaboration at the Heart of Healthcare

A brilliantly simple phone system is critical as care teams collaborate more closely to improve the quality and efficiency of patient care. With UC tools readily available, caregivers can work more quickly and ultimately speed the delivery of information that is critical for decision-making.

“Users like seeing their voicemail and email in one place,” said Tyler Jackson, systems administrator for Carson Tahoe Health.

ShoreTel. Brilliantly simple business communications.

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is a leading provider of brilliantly simple IP phone systems and unified communications solutions powering today’s always-on workforce. Its flexible communications solutions for on-premises, cloud and hybrid environments eliminate complexity, reduce costs and improve productivity.