



Children's Dental Health Associates

Trained healthcare professionals deliver quality care when their primary focus is on their patients' individual needs. An optimized communications solution—particularly within a private practice—can dramatically enhance patient care, safety and satisfaction.

Children's Dental Health Associates, P.C. is a pediatric dental practice based in suburban Philadelphia, PA. The practice, in conjunction with NEC associate, Agile Networks, implemented a NEC UNIVERGE®360 IP communications solution that streamlined processes, enhanced productivity and improved service to patients.

CHALLENGES

Children's Dental Health Associates (CDHA) provides pediatric dentistry for infants, children and teens throughout the western Philadelphia and northern Wilmington suburban areas. Its seven locations include a main office in Drexel Hill and additional offices in Thorndale, Lancaster, Chadds Ford, Limerick, Jennersville and Harrisburg.

CDHA's legacy communications solution posed a number of challenges for the business. The solution's antiquated design funneled all incoming calls through the front desk. As a result, receptionists were required to divide their attention between in-office patients and incoming calls about an array of issues, such as appointments, insurance, billing and prescription refills.

“One of the headaches all medical practices face is overloading front-desk staff with the duties of covering the phones and attending to patients in the waiting area,” says Dr. Eric Felix. “It is not very personable; and, patients don't receive good customer service.”

The system also required front-desk staff to manually activate the call-forwarding feature at the end of each day. “Someone was always forgetting to transfer after-hour calls to the answering service,” says Dr. Felix. “Even when no one forgot, we only had one call-forwarding line, which meant if we got more than one call simultaneously, only one would transfer, while the other callers received a busy signal.”

CUSTOMER

- Children's Dental Health Associates, P.C.

INDUSTRY

- Healthcare

CHALLENGES

- Incompatible solutions in five locations
- Antiquated solution design
- Limited continuity with after-hours answering service
- Dissatisfaction with legacy solutions vendor

SOLUTION

- Communication framework: NEC UNIVERGE®360
- Communication servers: UNIVERGE SV8100
- Networking solution: SV8100 Series Netlink
- Contact-center environment: UNIVERGE SV8000 Series ACD
- Unified messaging: UNIVERGE SV8000 Series InMail
- Assured Mobility: UNIVERGE MH240 Multiline Mobile Handsets
- Telephones: NEC Dterm IP terminals
- NEC Dealer: Agile Networks (Prospect Park, PA)

RESULTS

- Improved customer service
- Increased staff productivity
- Enabled mobility
- Reduced operational costs
- Enhanced reliability

CHALLENGES (CONT.)

The legacy system consisted of a disparate, incompatible system in five of CDHA's office locations. Since Dr. Felix rotates office locations daily, the receptionists were unable to transfer calls between offices. This not only inconvenienced patients, staff and providers needing to consult with him, it also delayed care.

"Our legacy solution was a nightmare," says Dr. Felix. "Overall, I was frustrated by the design of our solution and the lackluster service we were receiving from our vendor." CDHA needed a proven provider to provide an integrated solution that would connect all office locations and streamline processes so that patients—in office or on the phone—could receive improved, personalized service.

"I love my communications solution now," says the doctor. "I wanted a solution that would let the medical assistants at the front desk provide more personalized service to the patients as they come into the waiting rooms and as they pay and take care of insurance after treatment; and, that's what I have now."

SOLUTION

Dr. Felix discussed his challenges with his local phone carrier who, in turn, referred him to Agile Networks, a NEC Associate in Prospect Park, PA. Jordan Hullman, Agile Networks president, recommended a NEC UNIVERGE360 IP communications solution.

"CDHA clearly needed a single, integrated communications solution and an easier way for employees to communicate" says Hullman. "NEC's UNIVERGE360 solution would not only connect all sites, it would also centralize internal functions like appointment setting, billing and hospital scheduling so that those calls never come to the front desk. This would simplify the front-desk staff's roles and enable them to provide better face-to-face service."

Agile Networks installed a UNIVERGE SV8100 communications server at CDHA's main office in Drexel Hill. They used the NetLink networking application to extend the SV8100's features and functionality to each of the other locations, seamlessly connecting them all as a single entity. "The integrated system allows employees to place or transfer calls to any other employee at any other location using three-digit dialing," says Felix. "We work so much more efficiently now."

Because the SV8100 with NetLink application can scale up to 16 locations, Dr. Felix had very little trouble setting up his office in Limerick shortly after the NEC solution was deployed. The application also provides him room for possible growth in the future.

CDHA's solution also includes the SV8000 Series ACD to improve call routing. Designed specifically for the SV8100, the SV8000 series ACD allows many of CDHA's incoming calls to bypass the front-desk and route directly to the appropriate department. Appointment requests route directly to the contact center. Hospital appointments route to another group dedicated to hospital scheduling. Billing and insurance calls go directly to the billing department. The system also offers callers both English- and Spanish-speaking options.

Because the SV8000 ACD application is also programmable for time of day, CDHA was able to configure the system to automatically transfer all after-hour calls to the answering service. "With one, integrated system, the answering service automatically cuts in so we never miss an incoming call," says Felix. "What's more, I don't have to deal with the phone company anymore, which removes a level of frustration we had with the previous system."

CDHA's solution also included new IP terminals and mobile handsets to improve flexibility and enhance mobility. "All desks have IP phones that run over a T-1 line from the Drexel Hill office," says Felix. "One terminal has your extension, so no matter which office you're working in, all we have to do is go to an IP terminal, log in and have access to our extension and voicemail." Dr. Felix is especially pleased to have this functionality from his home office.

Dr. Felix and his office manager also use the UNIVERGE MH240 Multiline Mobile handset, which provides all their desktop features while they are on the go. "Because we are constantly traveling from one office to another, the MH240 allows us to move freely between offices and still be reached by staff and customers at any time," says Felix. "When I walk into the office, my MH240 automatically connects." Dr. Felix also appreciates that his MH 240 has the same line appearance as his desk phone in his office. "It is another point of simplicity," he adds.

RESULTS

As a result of implementing the UNIVERGE360 solution, CDHA has reduced cost, improved business continuity and customer service. With the legacy solution, Dr. Felix had someone to answer the phones at each location, even on days the office was closed for business. Because the NEC solution allows staff to take calls from a centralized location, Dr. Felix can now forgo the additional staffing and utility expenses associated with keeping those offices open.

The UNIVERGE solution provides both the main and ancillary sites with enhanced survivability and reliability. Should one office have an outage, a system from one of the other offices will provide basic call processing for the duration of the failure, enabling business continuity in all offices.

Dr. Felix is pleased with how the UNIVERGE solution has helped to improve customer service. “I love my communications solution now, says the doctor. “I wanted a solution that would let the medical assistants at the front desk provide more personalized service as patients come into the waiting rooms and as they pay and take care of insurance after treatment; and, that’s what I have now.”

As for his NEC associate, Agile Networks, Dr. Felix says, “I love the service Jordan Hullman has given me. He and Agile Networks have done a tremendous job of going above and beyond to get me exactly what I need. Everyone here saves so much more time now and gets so much more done, I would say the new system will pay for itself in a year or two.”

- [Read more about the UNIVERGE SV8100.](#)
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