

Entertain Your Patients...and More!

By Phyllis Carlin, MD Buyline Analyst, January 15, 2008

Video on Demand (VoD) technology isn't just about entertainment. In addition to providing patients with television stations and first-run movies, many hospitals are utilizing VoD and interactive patient communication solutions to provide various options that may include:

- Interactive television
- On-demand movies
- High-speed Internet access
- Welcome videos
- Patient education
- Real time patient surveys
- Automated service requests
- In-room dining services
- Clinician access for updating patient charts, entering or checking vitals and I/O statistics, updating care plans, accessing clinical information systems, etc.

By extending VoD services, hospitals hope to accomplish more than generate extra revenue and make their patients feel at home.

"It is vitally important to us to help our patients adjust to being in the hospital," commented James O'Connor, Executive Director, St. Charles Hospital.

"We want all our patients to feel welcome and familiar with their surroundings and feel this initiative will have a positive impact on their recuperation."

As a customer of TeleHealth Services, St. Charles Hospital, a 289-bed community hospital located in Port Jefferson, NY, upgraded its patient rooms with flat panel LCD televisions and expanded channel selections in 2006.

How can a hospital benefit from VoD? There are several possibilities, including:

- Reduced service demands on clinical staff
- Enhanced staff productivity
- Increased revenue
- Promotion of hospital services and brand
- Strengthened financial performance

What about technology? Various platforms are utilized with interactive patient entertainment and communication systems, including Ethernet network, narrowband and broadband RF (cable), fiber optics, broadband LAN/VLAN networks. Some solutions are network independent. Security features typically include content filtering and firewall and router technology. Digital pillow speakers, remote controls and wireless keyboards allow users to make selections.

The following vendors offer VoD and patient entertainment/communications solutions:

Allen Technologies (www.allentek.com)
GetWellNetwork (www.getwellnetwork.com)
LodgeNet (<http://lodgenet.com/healthcare>)
MagNet Health (www.magnethealth.com)
Skylight Healthcare Systems (www.skylight.com)
TeleHealth Services (www.telehealth.com)
TVR Communications (www.tvrc.com)

