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Healthcare Television Solutions

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It's Not About the TV, It's About What's On the TV that Matters

By David Prickett

Although they have been fixtures in nearly every hospital room in the country for decades, hospital televisions remain a largely untapped patient care resource. Their virtual omnipresence in hospitals and ability to capture the attention of patients and their caregivers for hours every day during a hospital stay gives them great potential as a platform for connecting with patients in many meaningful ways, including delivering content and capabilities that can help hospitals address important emerging healthcare initiatives and reap the associated reimbursements. Yet, that potential is often overlooked because little consideration is given to what patients see on them.

So, what do patients see? Well, that depends on the hospital. Some patients see limited programming on old CRT units, others see the same limited programming on nice new HDTVs that lack the supporting distribution system to deliver the appropriate signals or signal capacity needed to provide the vivid HD picture quality and programming they expect and desire. But there are other patients who enjoy an at-home experience with stunning HD clarity and extensive programming that is easily accessed via intuitive onscreen programming guides.

Fuzzy Picture?

Now the question becomes, what determines what patients see? Certainly there is the television itself; TV technology has advanced to a point where they are bigger, better and less expensive than ever, and their picture quality can be striking. However, none of that really matters unless there is a quality supporting infrastructure. Even the newest and best HDTVs won't look any better than the old CRT units they replaced without a sufficient distribution system (i.e., satellites, headends, modulators, cabling or data lines, etc.). Time and again I've seen hospitals buy new HDTVs only to be disappointed by the lack of clarity they expected. It's because they didn't plan from a system level. Hospitals would benefit greatly if they coordinated with experienced television solution experts to conduct an evaluation of their TV distribution system to ensure it has the capacity to deliver the signal levels needed to drive a robust hospital television network.

Control the View

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Then there is the content. This is where hospitals can make tremendous strides in distinguishing their facilities in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Great picture quality is important, but relevant programming is essential in maximizing the capabilities and benefits of a hospital television solution. Providing patients with access to *Judge Judy* or reruns of *Friends*, even when they are presented in stunning HD clarity, can only do so much to enhance the patient experience. High-performing hospital television solutions, replete with HDTVs and high-capacity distribution systems, can not only provide outstanding patient entertainment programming, they can

deliver condition-specific patient education, hospital marketing and informational content, and other customized hospital channels. Beyond that, hospital televisions are an ideal portal for interactive patient engagement systems that address staff workflow, clinical care and service recovery capabilities.

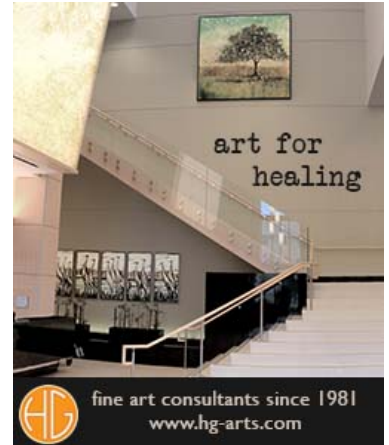
Some hospitals already have upgraded their hospital television systems to take advantage of the many patient satisfaction and clinical care features and benefits they can provide. Most hospitals, however, have not. Still, there is a growing awareness that with increasing competition, mounting healthcare mandates and tight budgets, hospital are being charged with making the most of their available resources. So, they are looking anew at their hospital televisions and wondering what it is they want their patients to see on them.

About the Author

David Prickett is marketing manager for healthcare television solutions at *TeleHealth Services*. He has more than 20 years of marketing and communications experience in various industries, including manufacturing, engineering, healthcare and government. With many hospitals facing increasing competition, emerging government mandates and advancing technologies, he helps them discover solutions to these challenges via the latent capabilities of their patient-room television systems.

Date: October 31, 2013

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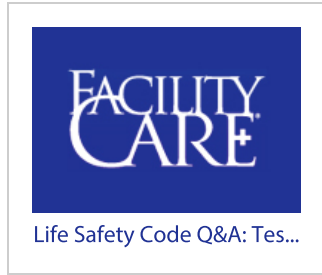
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