



CONNECT THE DOTS: NURSING

3 Ways to Enhance Workflows for Nurses With
an Enterprise Healthcare Communications Platform

INTRODUCTION

As the nursing profession continues to evolve rapidly and nurses take on more duties, adapt to changing technologies, and continuously confront the growing complexities of their roles, nurses are “changing our very notion of modern medicine and healthcare delivery.”¹

These new demands, triggered by shifting regulatory requirements, financial pressures, the increasing need for collaboration, and the rapid pace of technology have expanded the role and influence of nurses significantly.

54% of nurses are dissatisfied with current communication methods outside of the EHR.²


To meet these challenges, the healthcare delivery model is changing, too: Nurses are now essential partners on interdisciplinary healthcare teams, and must juggle even more competing priorities, on top of their highest: spending as much time as possible with their patients.

This is where technology can help make an important impact, in the form of an enterprise healthcare communications platform. The right technology, such as Spok Care Connect®, can offer innovative options for helping to manage those competing priorities and affording more time with patients at the bedside.

We'll explore several communication strategies, including use case examples for:

- Care Team Communication
- Patient Care Coordination
- Workflow Efficiency





In a recent study, healthcare workers described teamwork and communication as among the most important factors in improving clinical effectiveness and job satisfaction.⁴

1 IMPROVE CARE TEAM COMMUNICATION

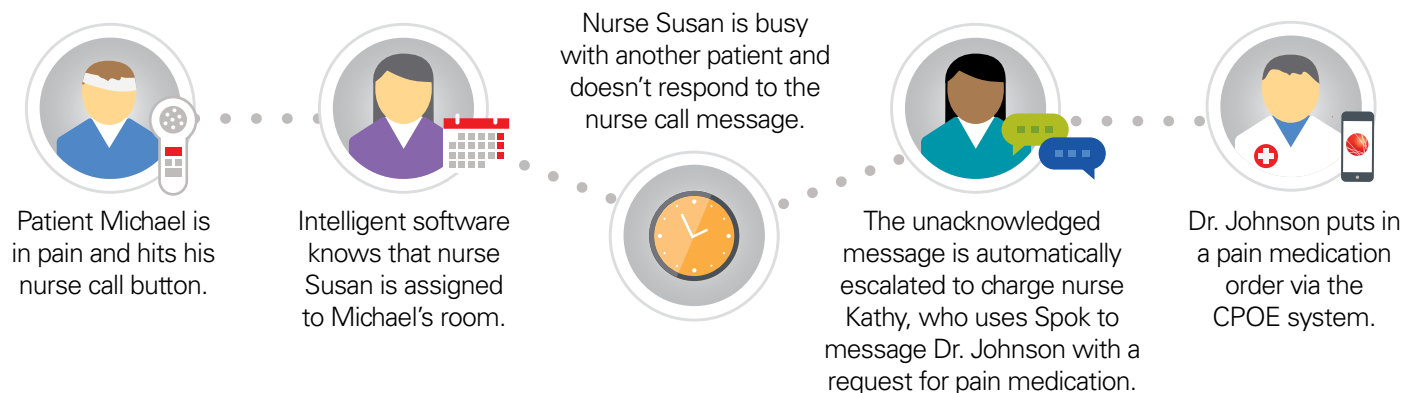
From doctors, specialists, and pharmacy staff to dietitians and nurse practitioners, care teams are dynamic and varied. Staying connected isn't easy, especially when everyone is constantly on the move. The ability to connect with any member of the care team quickly and easily from wherever they happen to be, and be able to exchange detailed, confidential information securely, is critical to improving patient care and outcomes.

Nurses walk an average of 4-5 miles during a 12-hour shift. Most Americans walk just 2.5-3 miles during the course of an 18-hour day.³

USE CASE #1: MOBILE MESSAGING

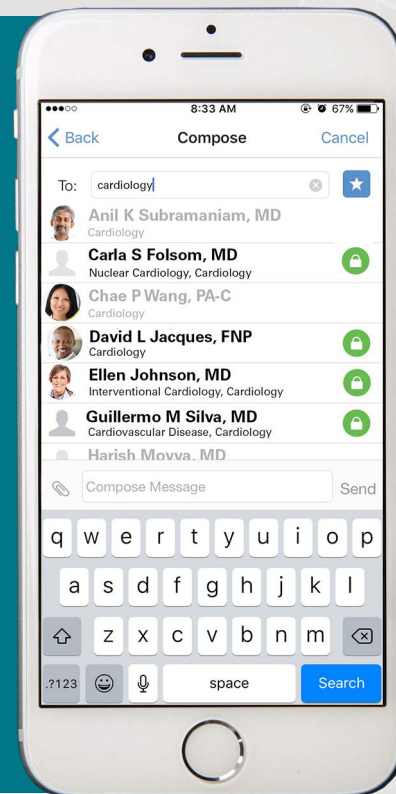
The ability to send mobile messages on a variety of devices provides some obvious advantages for nurses. The secure messaging app that is part of the Spok Care Connect platform is HIPAA-compliant and allows key staff members to exchange messages and conduct consultations from the device of their choice. The intuitive app allows users to send text, images, and videos to smartphones and other devices. Messages can be easily created from predefined templates, simplifying the process for frequently used types of communication. This app helps avoid phone tag because updates, consult requests, and test results can be easily texted, and the app logs communications to ensure security, traceability, and reliability.

With Spok Care Connect:



USE CASE #2: LOCATE THE RIGHT PERSON

Nurses are constantly communicating with members of the patient care team, including individuals working both inside and outside the hospital. Schedules and contact information vary and can change often. There might be a quick question for a doctor on a medication change, or the need to check on a physical therapist's schedule for the day. If a phone number has to be tracked down by walking to the nurse's station and looking through a binder, or several messages have to be left trying to locate someone, that's valuable time wasted. Even worse, when personnel and schedule information is inaccurate or not readily accessible, critical messages can go to the wrong person or to the wrong place—an office phone instead of a smartphone. Nurses may also not always know who they need to contact by name—only by role. Spok® allows for role-based look up, so for example, a nurse can type "cardiologist" and quickly locate the on-call cardiologist at that particular time. The Spok secure messaging app links to a powerful communication system allowing users to access the hospital's full, web-based directory of up-to-date contact information on their devices. Nurses can log on anywhere, anytime to access contact information and on-call schedules, search the directory, and send important messages.



2 SUPPORT BETTER PATIENT CARE COORDINATION

Today's increasingly complex patients require coordinated, multidisciplinary care that involves teams working in concert with an array of technology. Multiple monitoring systems provide staff with a constant stream of information about patients. All this data offers tremendous benefits, yet the sheer volume of it can be a problem. Effective management of the information from these systems is key to determining which information is actionable and delivering excellent patient care.

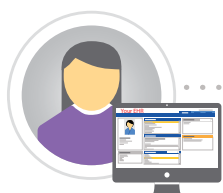


USE CASE #1: CLINICAL ALERTING

Throughout a shift, nurses are always on the move: They need to attend to several patients at once, and that includes all of the systems monitoring the patient that go beep and buzz throughout their shift. An alarm system analysis at Johns Hopkins indicated there were an average of 350 alerts per bed per day.⁵ Being able to receive important alerts and alarms on their phones with enough context to act allows nurses to monitor patient situations from wherever they are. Spok Care Connect clinical alerting sends system-generated alarm notifications directly to mobile nurses to support fast triage of critical patient conditions. The solution integrates a variety of patient monitoring systems with wireless telephones, smartphones, voice badges, and/or pagers. Different audible tones allow nurses to identify critical alerts right away. Alarms from patient care devices such as infusion pumps, pulse oximeters, and ventilators can be integrated as well. Sending all of these alerts and alarms directly to nurses' mobile devices helps combat alarm fatigue and makes it easier to prioritize patients' needs.



With Spok Care Connect:



A nurse enters patient vitals into the EHR.



Patient vitals trigger an elevated MEWS score. The nurse confirms the MEWS score in the EHR, which initiates a rapid response team alert.



Spok automatically notifies all rapid response team members of the alert on their mobile devices.

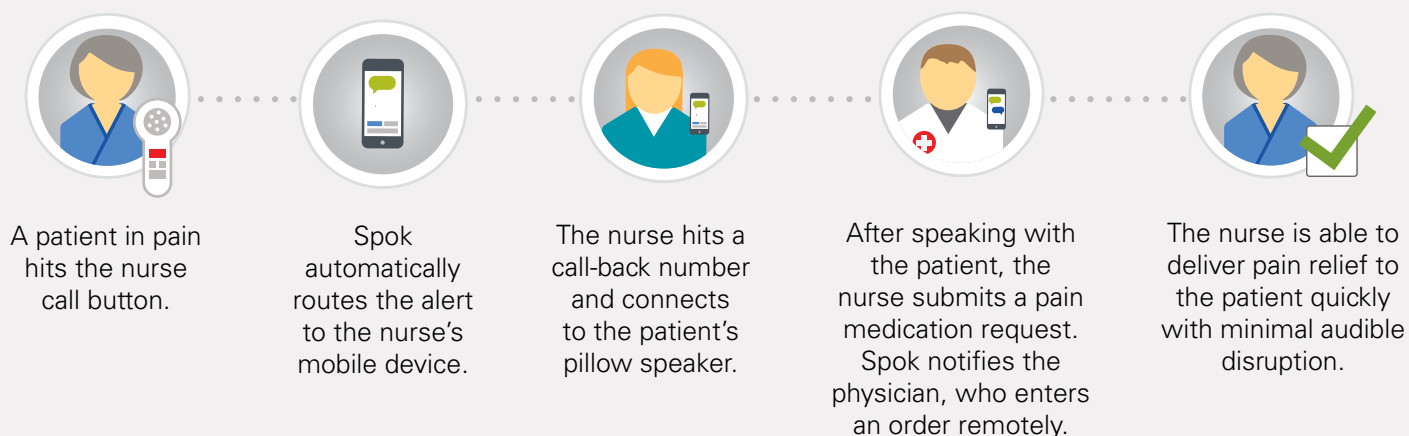


The patient receives life-saving intervention quickly.

USE CASE #2: NURSE CALL INTEGRATION

Managing a steady stream of requests and interruptions means nurses are constantly walking, or even running, from room to room. The ability to get detailed information about their patients' needs on their secure mobile devices could save a lot of time and effort. Spok Care Connect can integrate with nurse call systems to deliver alerts directly to the appropriate caregiver. Patient requests requiring a nurse's knowledge and skills, like more pain medication, will go to their assigned nurse. However, simple requests like those for a glass of water or an extra blanket can be routed to an orderly, supply technician, or other staff member. This can help free nurses to concentrate on those duties that are most important: They can coordinate quick responses to every patient request, but aren't pulled away for duties better handled by someone else. This technology also helps support "quiet hospital" or "silent hospital" initiatives, since routing these requests to mobile devices reduces the need for overhead paging and audible conversations at the nurses station and in hospital hallways. By converting these announcements and conversations to messages, patients have the quiet environment they need for rest and healing.

With Spok Care Connect:

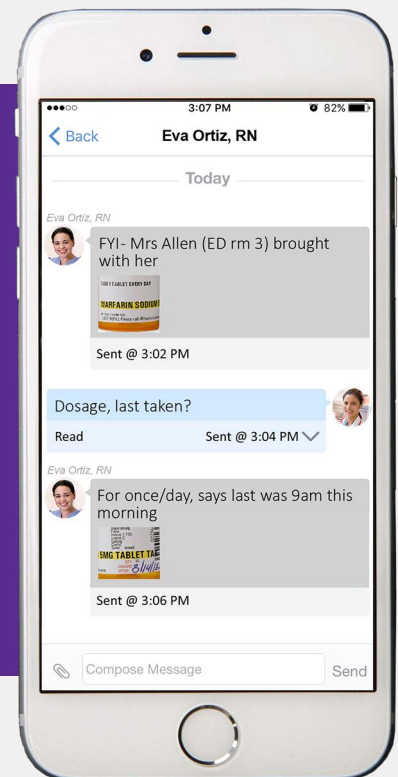


3 ENABLE EFFICIENT WORKFLOWS

Healthcare environments can be chaotic. Phone calls, pages, alarms, alerts, equipment failures, and the needs of patients and their families can distract and overwhelm even an experienced nurse. Too much incoming information and disruption can add to the workload, and leave less time for patient care. Finding ways to simplify the routine tasks that nurses handle every day can make a big difference in workload, stress management, alarm fatigue, and staff satisfaction—and give nurses back more time to spend at the patient bedside.

USE CASE #1: PHYSICIAN COMMUNICATION IN REAL TIME

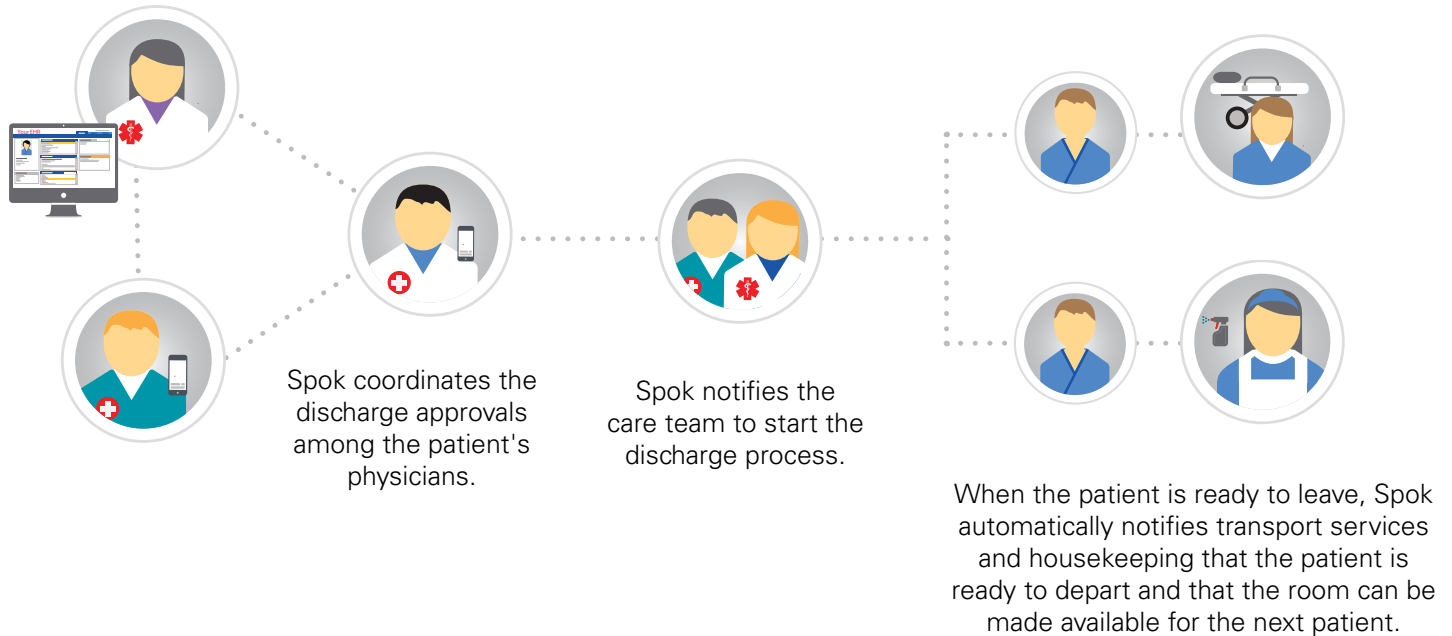
Consulting with the right physician in real time, exactly when the information is needed, can make a huge difference in patient care and in nurses' ability to do their jobs. Delays caused by inaccurate contact information and time wasted playing phone tag can lead to staff frustration and lower the quality of patient care. The Spok Care Connect platform allows users to quickly locate the right contact information for the on-call physician on their phones. The web-based system has device preference information, so that nurses can identify whether the provider they need to connect with prefers to receive a text message or a phone call. Messages are automatically escalated to another doctor if necessary to minimize any waiting or uncertainty.



USE CASE #2: PATIENT DISCHARGE PROCESS

Delays in the discharge process can cause frustration for patients and staff alike. Hold-ups are not only inconvenient, but they could also affect the hospital's bed turnover rate and its ability to accommodate incoming patients. The Spok Care Connect platform can speed up the process by allowing for automated messaging among staff needed during discharge, resulting in more efficient use of resources. Once a physician enters a discharge order into the EHR, an automated message system can alert nursing, transport, and housekeeping, as well as other necessary departments such as infection control and the pharmacy, to coordinate the entire process. Hospital staff can start preparing the room for a new occupant, and the discharged patient can leave sooner to begin their recovery at home.

With Spok Care Connect:





EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS CAN HELP NURSES IMPROVE PATIENT CARE:

Today's healthcare environment calls for tools that can help nurses connect with other providers, respond appropriately to patient requests, and ensure no patient in distress goes unnoticed. Spok can help make improvements in each of these areas:

- **Solve the nurse call challenge:** Nurses need to receive detailed information on a secure mobile device so they can respond to patients quickly and effectively. The right technology can also recognize those alerts that don't need immediate attention and route them elsewhere so that nurses aren't interrupted.
- **Minimize alarm fatigue:** Avoiding unnecessary alerts and messages can help nurses respond quickly to the patients who need them most.
- **Receive patient monitoring alerts quickly:** When nurses can get information delivered to their mobile device directly from patient monitoring systems such as heart monitors and respirators, they can take the necessary action right away.
- **Coordinate communications effectively:** Quickly reach the right people on the care team when they are needed.

CONCLUSION

The complexity of our healthcare system will continue to grow, placing more demands on caregivers. In the next few years, nurses will confront transformative technology in an increasingly complex hospital environment. But their guiding mission will remain the same: to advocate and care for patients. To do this, health systems across the country need to provide them with the right tools and technology to optimize their workflows and their care. No matter the size or shape of your organization, Spok can support the workflows which speed care team interaction, communicate test results, coordinate response, and improve patient satisfaction. Let us become your partner for healthcare communications.

Visit www.spok.com to learn more.



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Presbyterian Healthcare Services

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ANSWERED MORE CALLS WITHOUT
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**1,400 MESSAGES
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VCU Health

LOWERED OPERATOR TRAINING TIME FROM 5 DAYS TO

< 20 MINUTES



SAVE Training Time

References:

¹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/charles-tiffin-phd/nursing-school_b_1384285.html

² <http://www.spok.com/infographic-chime-survey-2017>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16999182>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2637/>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3928208/>

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