



CASE STUDY:

BLANCHARD VALLEY HEALTH SYSTEM (BVHS)

At a Glance:



Situation:

- Legacy, multivendor communications system was difficult and expensive to manage
- BVHS needed a single-vendor solution that could be managed in-house
- The COVID-19 pandemic forced BVHS to modify their communications system on the fly

Solution:

- Mitel MiVoice Business
- Mitel 5300 Series IP phones
- Mitel 6900 Series IP phones

Results:

- Eliminated costly vendor maintenance contracts with one easy-to-manage solution from Mitel
- Was able to quickly adapt voice communications and call centers to handle the COVID-19 health crisis
- Scalable, reliable communications platform allows BVHS to support growth strategy seamlessly and efficiently

Summary

With the uncertainty brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, communication between healthcare workers and their patients was never more critical. With a new Mitel communications system in place, Blanchard Valley Health System was able to truly be there for their patients, even when “there” was from home or a temporary triage tent.





About Blanchard Valley Health System

From its small beginnings as a women's and children's hospital at the end of the nineteenth century, Blanchard Valley Health System has flourished to become a regional health network of hospitals, outpatient clinics and assisted-living facilities. Today it provides a continuum of care to residents in eight counties of the Northwest Ohio region. As communications technology has evolved, the telecommunications platform at BVHS has evolved with it to provide physicians, other healthcare providers, patients and associates with the tools they need to stay connected and informed, even in the midst of a global pandemic.

Situation

Jeff Kelley, the telecommunications supervisor for Blanchard Valley Health System (BVHS), describes his role with disarming candor: "If it talks," he explains, "I handle it." Jeff's hands-on approach is a perfect fit for an organization that has had to adapt to a variety of unforeseen communications challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When Jeff initially arrived at BVHS almost 10 years ago, however, his first impression was that things had gotten out of hand with their existing communications vendor. The voice system had clearly been neglected, yet BVHS was still paying a small fortune to the vendor as part of its annual maintenance contract. "We simply weren't getting our money's worth," Kelley recalls.

Kelley's first move was to contact other vendors and research a better solution for BVHS. After evaluating what each had to offer, BVHS chose Mitel's MiVoice Business solution. While Mitel's system offered better scalability and price/performance, what really attracted Kelley to Mitel was its ease of management. "With MiVoice (Business), I could manage everything myself and cut the cord on those expensive third-party maintenance contracts," Kelley says.

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**Jeff Kelley, Telecommunications Supervisor,
Blanchard Valley Health System**

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Solution

The new communications platform rollout was ambitious in scope, involving dozens of locations and 1,200 end points that would be served by a centralized virtual solution. Mitel's local sales team enlisted the aid of Mitel engineers to help plan the migration and rollout over a series of meetings with Kelley and his team. "Going into a virtual environment at that time was a new venture," Kelley explains, "so it took several meetings to map out everything in terms of planning for survivability and resiliency."

Today, the Mitel solution is still running strong and serving almost 3,000 unique end points. The solution's original design has held up well over the years, with built-in redundancy for everything from physical controllers to dual power supplies—critical considerations for a communications platform on which so much depends. "When people talk about the need for 99.9 percent uptime," Kelley says, "I tell them we're already there."

That reliability is critical, because change is a constant in the healthcare industry. As new facilities are added or acquired and call center demands grow, Kelley and his team have been able to scale their communications system without leaning on outside vendors for support.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in early 2020, BVHS—like so many healthcare networks around the world—found itself under siege. Call volumes soared and call center options had to be completely reconfigured to handle requests related to the pandemic. “We had to put together a call center for testing appointments in a matter of days,” Kelley recalls. “At the worst of the pandemic, we had staff working in outdoor tents using Mitel phones with Mitel WLAN adapters strapped to their bases. We were very fortunate that the Mitel equipment was flexible enough to adapt on the fly.”

Results

While BVHS adjusts to a new kind of normal for the time being, Mitel has helped them adapt with less disruption. The health system has been able to reconfigure its call center capabilities to address the concerns of the day—from finding testing facilities to scheduling vaccinations—and ensure that patients are routed to the right experts. At the same time, BVHS has been able to shift much of its workforce to remote teleworkers more easily through the Mitel system.

Though Jeff Kelley couldn't have predicted the future, he prepared BVHS for it with the MiVoice Business platform. “I would recommend Mitel in a heartbeat,” Kelley says. “We don't have room for failure in our communications system. With Mitel, I've never had to second-guess whether our phones will work for whenever or whatever we need them.”

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When things settle down, Kelley has plans to look into new features such as chat and screen pops for their call center. Like so many companies, those plans have been put on hold for now as BVHS waits to see what the future brings. In the meantime, whatever the next decade has in store, the patients of BVHS know that knowledgeable, friendly care will never be more than a phone call away.



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