

Technology Powers Onsite Health Center

What

How much effort does it cost you to see the doctor for a sore throat, visit the dentist for a toothache, or take your child to an annual checkup? For most us, just getting an appointment can take days. On appointment day, traveling to and from the provider's office cramps schedules, creates stress, and produces greenhouse gases. Imagine the relief if you could schedule a same-day appointment online and walk to a health center at your workplace.

Cisco employees don't have to imagine it. At our three largest campuses—San Jose, California; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Bangalore, India—employees enjoy an integrated healthcare experience on campus. "The Cisco LifeConnections Health Center provides world-class healthcare on campus, enabled by technology and exclusively for Cisco employees and their families," says Tara Fortier, senior IT manager for finance and employee services.

The LifeConnections Health Center embodies Cisco's cultural values: "innovate everywhere, connect everything, and benefit everyone." Employees can access all the services they need in one place. The 24,000-square-foot medical clinic on the San Jose campus contains 15 private care suites, a laboratory, X-ray room, full-service pharmacy, and high-tech vision and dental centers. Physicians take a holistic approach, often recommending chiropractic treatments or acupuncture to complement traditional medicine. "The same building also houses a large contemporary fitness center and comprehensive child-care center, fully connecting the life experience," says Katelyn Johnson, Cisco's manager of integrated health.

We provide the facility and the technology, while well-known healthcare organizations partner with us to deliver healthcare services. Our partners in San Jose include Stanford Health Care, Kaiser Permanente, and Walgreens.

Medical-Grade Network

Cisco IT provides all network services for the building. The foundation is a Cisco Medical-Grade Network, used in leading hospitals globally. The network is designed to transmit sensitive medical information such as patients' electronic medical records (EMRs). Resilient and highly secure, the Cisco Medical-Grade Network is the foundation for all other technology services in the LifeConnections Health Center.

No personal health information (PHI) is housed in the building. "When we selected our healthcare partners, we made clear that they could not store PHI on our premises," says Asha Patidar, Cisco IT program manager. Instead, each partner ran a high-speed fiber line from their data center to our building.

Wireless Access to EMRs and Other Information

Clinicians can access the EMRs stored in their own data center from anywhere in the LifeConnections Health Center, using wireless laptops and mobile devices as allowed by their policies. "For security, each healthcare partner has its own Cisco wireless access points, which Cisco IT manages," Patidar says. Patients can connect over Cisco's own wireless network to keep up with work while waiting with a spouse or child, for example.

After patients check in, a health ambassador escorts them to a patient care suite, which includes a comfortable consult room, a separate exam room, and a private restroom. A digital display in the consult room shows the patient's EMR, which is projected wirelessly from the physician's laptop or tablet through a third-party appliance. Seeing the medical record while meeting with the doctor helps patients feel more engaged in their care.

Digitization: Creating Value from the Internet of Things

The wireless network does more than connect people to people and people to systems. It also connects building systems such as the refrigerators used to store medications and vaccinations. Monitoring refrigerator temperatures is required by regulations, and we've automated the process by affixing RFID sensors that regularly transmit the readings.

Rich Communications with Care Teams and Patients

Clinicians, staff, and patients communicate using Cisco® Unified Communications. Callers can dial one phone number to connect to any department. Human operators, trained in triage, answer all calls and direct them to the appropriate partner. Clinicians can answer calls from anywhere in the facility on their Cisco wireless IP phones.

Follow-up Appointments with Telepresence

For follow-up appointments, patients can meet conveniently with onsite health coaches using Cisco TelePresence®. High-resolution video and high-quality audio create an in-person experience. During a nutritional consult, for example, the health coach can show healthy meal portions. Health coaches join the session using Cisco TelePresence DX80 units, and patients can join using any video endpoint. "The high-quality video experience provides better communications than a telephone consult," Johnson says. For example, providers can observe facial expressions to detect if a patient is confused, frustrated, or seems to be in physical or emotional pain.

Engaging Patients with Digital Signage

When patients enter the lobby, their attention is immediately drawn to two colorful displays on the wall, both powered by Cisco digital media players. One display shows news, such as flu shot availability, cholesterol or diabetes screening events, wellness seminars, limited-time promotions, and health center operating hours. The other display plays quotes intended to inspire and calm patients.

Why

We built the LifeConnections Health Center to improve employee health and wellbeing, help attract and retain top talent, and lower healthcare costs. Like many large technology companies, Cisco is self-insured. "When employees receive care under their Cisco benefit plan, we pay the majority of the bill," Fortier says. "Healthcare costs are rising, and opening our own on-campus medical center helps to keep costs down. Our healthcare partners agree to charge us favorable rates because they are extending their brand to more people." When a patient needs a specialist, the advanced primary-care physician at the LifeConnections Health Center makes a referral, collaborating with the specialist to provide continuity of care.

Finally, looking out for the wellbeing of the workforce is a cornerstone of Cisco's culture. It's also good business. Research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that healthy employees are more productive.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco LifeConnections: <http://www.ciscolifeconnections.com>

To learn more about Cisco Medical-Grade Network: <http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/industries/healthcare/medical-grade-network.html>

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