LifeConnections Health Center uses Cisco Digital Signs to promote events and deliver personalized patient experience.

Challenge

The LifeConnections Health Center and Pharmacy is an innovative onsite medical facility for Cisco employees and their families. Operated by North First Street Medical Group, the 26,000-square-foot health center delivers holistic care. The full suite of health services includes primary medical care, digital X-ray, laboratory services, physical therapy, chiropractic medicine, acupuncture, and behavioral medicine. Onsite condition-management nurses and health coaches collaborate with physicians and pharmacists to provide integrated care.

The center’s designers and the Cisco health leadership team wanted to take advantage of network technology to personalize the patient experience. “Most hospitals and clinics rely on paper brochures and verbal instructions for prevention and pre- and post-procedure care,” says Sharon Gibson, director of the Cisco Internet Business Services Group (ISBG) Healthcare Practice. “But brochures are easy to lose and quickly become out of date. And patients have a difficult time remembering verbal instructions when they are worried about a procedure or potential diagnosis.”

LifeConnections planners also envisioned delivering fresh, current communications about programs such as wellness campaigns, screening events, and new hours of operation, without sending staff to constantly take down and replace paper posters. “Some hospitals and large clinics have an entire department dedicating to maintaining signage,” Gibson says. “We wanted a more efficient system that would free up employees to focus on patients and keep content fresh, for the greatest impact.”

Solution

The LifeConnections Center found its solution in the Cisco® Digital Signs and Cisco Cast applications, both part of the Cisco Digital Media Suite. More than 40 Cisco Professional Series LCDs throughout the facility are connected to the same IP network that the center uses for voice and data applications.

When patients enter the lobby, their attention is immediately drawn to two colorful displays on the wall. One currently shows news, such as flu shot availability, cholesterol or diabetes screening events, wellness seminars, limited-time promotions, and clinic hours. The other lobby display plays a high-definition educational video on the month’s healthcare theme, such as Take Care of Your Skin, or Healthy Parent, Healthy Child. The colorful, attention-getting videos last three or four minutes, typically the maximum time patients wait in the lobby.
After patients check in, a health ambassador escorts them to a patient care suite, which includes a living room–like consult room and separate exam room, each with a digital display. The display in the consult room shows the electronic medical record (EMR), which is projected wirelessly from the physician’s laptop through a third-party appliance. “Being able to see the EMR while the doctor updates it helps patients feel more engaged in their care and positions the care provider as a partner,” says Gibson. LifeConnections also has the capability to deliver on-demand video over IP in the patient care suite, using the Cisco Cast application.

A remote LifeConnections clinic at Cisco’s Research Triangle Park campus in North Carolina also uses the Cisco Digital Signs application, in conjunction with Cisco HealthPresence. When patients enter the exam room, they meet face-to-face with a doctor in San Jose, California using Cisco TelePresence™ technology, which provides an in-person experience with ultra-high-quality video and audio. Cisco HealthPresence also includes integrated medical equipment that a local nurse operates so that the physician in San Jose can examine the patient. Equipment includes a high-resolution general-examination camera, telephonic stethoscope, ear–nose–throat (ENT) scope, and a vital signs monitor for blood pressure, temperature, pulse rate, and pulse oximetry. “It’s a primary care visit conducted over the IP network,” says Gibson.

**Results**

**Personalized Patient Experience**

“Cisco Digital Signs and Cisco Cast help us deliver a more personalized patient experience,” Gibson says. “Although short in duration, video content played on Cisco Digital Signs makes a bigger, longer-lasting impression than written or spoken content.” As an example, when the center hosted a seminar entitled “Rev Up Your Metabolism,” participants kept talking about the visual image of a cholesterol-laden burger and fries, which prompted some to change their lunch plans.

**Effective Patient Communications**

By playing dynamic, colorful content, Cisco Digital Signs helps draw attention to upcoming seminars and webinars that the LifeConnections Center produces to promote wellness and attract new patients. “People who see an animation on Cisco Digital Signs tend to remember it and are more likely to tell their coworkers,” Gibson says. “Word-of-mouth advertising is very effective within the company.”

**Increased Efficiency**

In many healthcare settings, changing hours of operation or advertising a new seminar requires someone to walk to every bulletin board to replace posters, or even repaint the hours on the door. The Cisco Digital Signs solution gives LifeConnections the flexibility to change notices on all displays at once. “When we decided to add Saturday hours for vaccinations during the H1N1 outbreak, we added a ‘Now open on Saturdays’ message with a few clicks,” says Gibson.

**Sharon Gibson**

Director, Healthcare Practice
Cisco Internet Services Business Group
The center’s administrators save more time by not having to maintain a DVD library on different healthcare topics. If a doctor wants a parent to watch a video on asthma care, for instance, the parent or a nurse simply selects it from the on-screen menu, and Cisco Cast delivers the video over the network.

**Low IT Resource Requirements**

The healthcare provider groups that work at LifeConnections create videos using Adobe Flash software, following the style and format guidelines that LifeConnections provided, and upload them to a website. The LifeConnections Center’s IT team simply moves the files to a content server in the center and schedules them using the intuitive Cisco Digital Media Manager interface. “Cisco Digital Signs is an example of an upfront technology investment that reduces costs while improving the patient experience,” says Uma Desiraju, IT manager for LifeConnections. “Resource requirements are just 5 to 10 hours a month, including support for special events.”

**High Return on Investment from Multipurpose Displays**

The LifeConnections Center uses the same digital displays for digital signage, EMR display, and emergency notification. The Cisco Safety and Security department can publish emergency notifications and evacuation instructions on any network-connected displays on the Cisco campus, including the displays in the LifeConnections Center. The content can either occupy the whole display or scroll across the bottom.

**Next Steps**

The center is considering new uses for Cisco Digital Signs, including wayfinding, using applications from Cisco partners. When the center begins offering optometry and optician services, patients will be able to watch a short video on fitting contact lenses. Soon, patients and caregivers will be able to choose from a menu of healthcare videos using a touchscreen interface, avoiding the problem of misplaced remote controls. The center is also integrating Cisco Cast with Cisco Unified IP phones so that patients or providers can select a video by touching a button on the phone.

**For More Information**

To find out more about the Cisco Digital Media Suite and the Cisco Digital Signs and Cisco Cast applications, visit: [www.cisco.com/go/dms](http://www.cisco.com/go/dms).