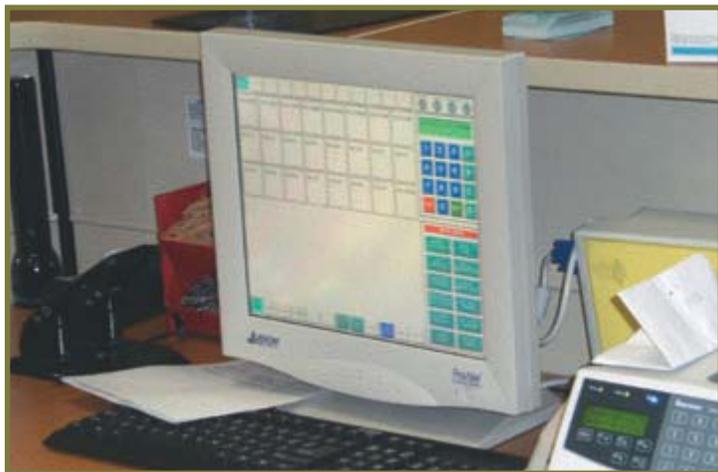


One of the largest medical centers in the Air Force, Keesler Medical Center in Biloxi, Mississippi is an integral faction of the Air Force's prominent 81st Medical Group. As the Federal Coordinating Center for the National Disaster Medical System and the medical branch of FEMA, it is imperative that Keesler maintains a high level of efficiency and progression. And with nearly 60 services and education programs offered and a staff of roughly 1,700, it is a challenge to keep staff and patients communicating effectively.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina ravaged much of the hospital's equipment, requiring major renovations. Included in this overhaul was replacement of the facility's antiquated nurse call system. Previously the staff had relied upon a very basic Executone nurse call system that was lacking in functionality. The facility was now seeking out a solution that would improve communication with patients as well as between staff members.

From the onset of the project, Jeron Electronic Systems, Inc. and their local distributor, Electronic Controls, Inc., had been working with Keesler to create a comprehensive nurse call solution. Keesler expressed what they wanted to accomplish and ECI and Jeron then formulated a design that would function within their existing environment.



**The Provider Touchscreen Master provides easy to navigate information about patients and staff assignments at the touch of a finger.**



**The Keesler Air Force Base Medical Center was looking for an advanced nurse call solution in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Jeron responded with a sophisticated system involving pocket pagers and Centralized Code Blue among other features.**

Jeron's Provider 680 Touchscreen Master, on the other hand, transmits a wealth of information, such as patient's name and health information, on an easy to navigate full-color floor plan. The ward clerk has the ability to answer the call and speak directly with the patient to assess their needs. In situations where a patient is merely looking for information such as when they will be receiving their next meal, the ward clerk can answer the question and avoid pulling a nurse away from another patient to respond to the call.

A substantial impediment that staff was forced to overcome with their old system was the ward clerk's inability to communicate directly with patients from the master station. In the past, a patient would place a call and a light would illuminate at the ward clerk's desk indicating a call had been placed. No additional information was conveyed beyond the room number. This would require the ward clerk to investigate the nature of the call by physically visiting the room or by flagging down a nurse to respond to the call. Features such as the intelligent Touchscreen Master, pocket pagers and centralized Code Blue helped them achieve and exceed these goals.

In addition to improving staff to patient communication, pocket pagers have redefined the way in which work is delegated as well as reducing response time. Formerly, upon receiving a call, the ward clerk would have to consult a hand-written list of the day's nurse and technician assignments and then track down the appropriate staff member on the floor. The pocket pager system directly integrates with the Provider 680 system, revealing staff assignments with the touch of a finger. A host of programmable messages can be transmitted to the pager with the details of the patient's needs. In the event that no one is available to be at the master station physically, pagers can be programmed so that the appropriate staff member is automatically notified that they must respond to the specific room.

Beyond streamlining communication, the system's centralized Code Blue feature ensures that the proper staff members respond to emergencies quickly. The system is connected to the facility's existing Local Area Network (LAN) through integration software provided by August Development, Corp. To ensure that this critical system is perpetually operational, it is hard-wired with a duty station for redundancy.



**The flexibility of the Provider 680 system allowed Jeron to tailor a solution that would maximize communication within the various units of Keesler's facility.**



**Keesler's Code Blue stations alert assigned staff of the pending emergency instantaneously via pre-programmed pagers, allowing staff to respond immediately.**

Keesler has an appointed Code Blue team that is composed of trained staff throughout the facility. In the event of a Code Blue call, the staff must be ready to assemble immediately to respond to the call. For instance, if a patient's heart monitor detects a problem, a page can be automatically sent out to the Code Blue team to alert them that they must respond to the emergency. By utilizing pagers in these situations, an overhead page is avoided, eliminating the chance that the page will not be heard. Direct pages also eradicate overhead pages, which are bothersome to patients and can worry visitors.

Subsequent to the installation, Jeron and ECI staff provided onsite training to acclimate staff with the new system and its capabilities. The system was quickly adopted and staff had an immediate appreciation for its advanced features. Flexibility to the facility's needs was crucial in designing a system that would thrive in its environment. The ability to choose different master stations, the freedom afforded by pagers and communication options that could be tailored to fit the individual wards- from ICU to maternity- made Provider the ideal solution.