



Hospital Preparedness - New York, New Jersey Hospitals Serve as Model for Effective, Efficient Emergency Operations

Hospitals are constantly on alert to respond to new medical challenges, whether Ebola, MERS, or another unanticipated outbreak. This constant challenge heightens the need for facilities to have instant, secure communication and collaboration between hospitals, first responders and other agencies within the community. Recognizing this need, hospitals in New York and New Jersey were among the first to deploy the Mutualink interoperable communications system to enable secure resource sharing among affiliated hospitals as well as first responders, local, state and federal agencies and private entities. This has proven highly effective for day-to-day operations and emergency scenarios. As a result of their initiative, these hospitals are well-prepared to manage the Ebola situation, and any other deliberate or naturally-occurring threat that may occur.



Northwell Health Coordinates Ebola Response, Day-to-Day Operations using Mutualink System

One of the nation's largest health systems, Northwell Health (formerly North Shore-LIJ) delivers world-class clinical care throughout the New York metropolitan area, and they were prepared for the recent Ebola threat because of their comprehensive emergency preparedness program, of which Mutualink's communications platform is an integral part.

As the largest private employer in New York State facing more than 200 emergencies each year, Northwell Health has implemented sophisticated, integrated emergency preparedness efforts to protect its employees, patients and community stakeholders. Mutualink further extends these security measures by serving as a gateway for disparate radio and data systems throughout the Northwell Health system, allowing all parties to connect and share resources to improve situational awareness.

Since Northwell Health deployed Mutualink's secure communications platform in 15 hospitals and one ambulance in the spring of 2014, they have come to rely on it for daily operations – in emergency and non-emergency scenarios – to improve communications and situational awareness. Mutualink enables them to share voice, video, data and text communications in real time within the health system, as well as with police, fire, EMS, and the Nassau Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

"Mutualink is our go-to system for day-to-day communications needs," said James Romagnoli, Vice President, Protective Services, Northwell Health. "Our hospitals are geographically dispersed, but we are able to patch them together and collaborate in an emergency, without needing to be on site. It is a turn-key solution that is working very well for us."

Mutualink has proven so effective for Northwell Health that the system serves as the central communications hub for regional coordination and response, including as the

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Northwell Health



HOSPITAL CASE STUDY

Application in Action

healthcare system plans to manage the Ebola threat. [Mutualink Edge™](#) is deployed at a command center in Nassau County's newly-designated high intensity infection unit, where patients who are confirmed to have Ebola would be received and treated.



"Using Mutualink, we would be able to receive real-time intel from the minute we learned of a confirmed Ebola case, during transport of the patient, right through to when the patient has safely entered isolation – without any break in communications," stated Romagnoli.

"Biohazard suits make communicating difficult, but Mutualink's mobile deployment enables hospitals, EMS, Nassau OEM and others to share information with one another effectively and securely."

Northwell Health officials are confident they are well-prepared for a regional or large-scale emergency because of Mutualink's successful implementation in daily use and numerous smaller-scale incidents, including blizzards, power outages, and more. Examples include:

- Connecting different radio systems and frequencies for daily operations
- Facilitating interoperability between data systems
- Functioning as a crisis network during a disaster by connecting the command center, EMS agencies, hospitals, police, fire, and others with two-way communications

The Northern New Jersey Hospital Group – Hospital Coalition Bands Together to Streamline Regional Emergency Preparedness and Response

In 2010, The Northern New Jersey Hospital Group, part of the Northern New Jersey Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), embarked on a project to enhance interoperable communications between all 23 critical care facilities and their Emergency Operations Center in the region. They installed the Mutualink platform at each of their facilities. Based on their initiative and example, more than 85 hospitals in New Jersey today participate in the Interoperable Response and Preparedness Platform (IRAPP) network. This infrastructure has enabled a coordinated response to emergencies, which improves patient care, streamlines operations, and reduces cost for all participants.

With Mutualink, these coalition hospitals are able to seamlessly and securely share

radio, telephony, video and data between all of their facilities and local, state and federal agencies, including the Department of Health (DOH) and Senior Service Command Center, Emergency Medical Mobile Command Vehicles, New Jersey's 3 Level One Trauma Centers, and the states 9 Medical Coordination Centers (MCC).

Hospital coalitions, including The Northern New Jersey Hospital Group, face numerous challenges when it comes to establishing a unified communications infrastructure:

- Multiple disparate systems and radio frequencies among coalition hospitals
- Inability to communicate securely and directly with each other and with first responders
- Budget restrictions and operational issues, including decentralized administration





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Mutualink addresses these challenges and provides unique benefits to hospital coalitions:

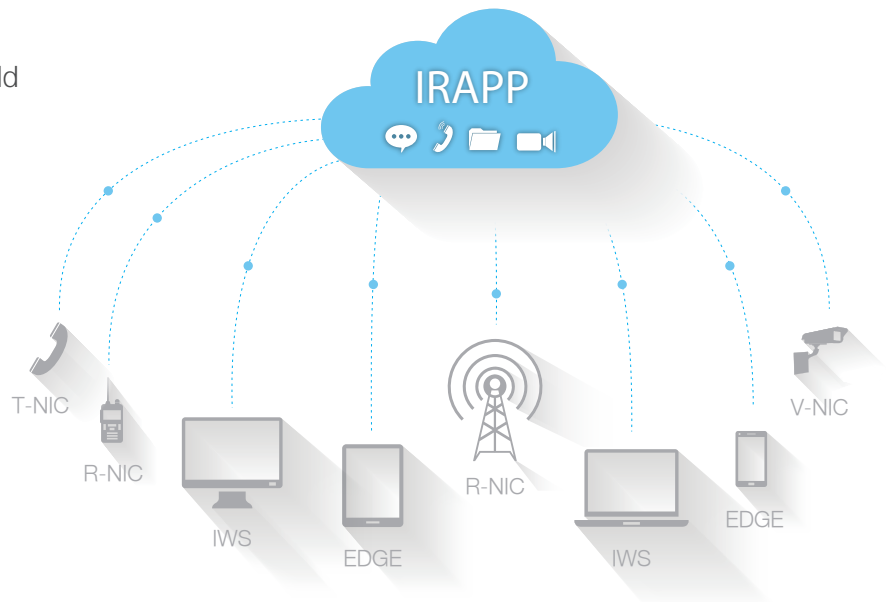
- **Cost Effective** – utilizes existing communications assets and a highly secure IP-based internet networking infrastructure, eliminating additional network costs
- **Scalable and Modular** – allows parties to join as need and budget dollars become available
- **Sovereign** – participants retain full control over their communications assets; there is no central server or administrative control point

- **Easy to Use** – a broad spectrum of participants can use it with very little training
- **Flexible** – as a “bridging” technology it can handle legacy and new telephone, video and radio protocols and equipment, allowing an effective pathway to next-generation technology

The Mutualink system has proven effective and efficient for The Northern New Jersey Hospital Group in numerous ways, serving as a model for hospital coalitions nationwide.

For more information about how Mutualink could be used within your hospital coalition, please contact:

Beth Clay
Marketing & Operations Specialist
Phone: (203) 774-3474
E-Mail: bclay@mutualink.net



Mutualink, Inc.

Headquarters
1269 South Broad Street
Wallingford, CT 06492

(866) 957-5465
www.mutualink.net

Research & Development

3 Lan Drive
Westford, MA 01886
and

313 South Jupiter Road - Ste 110
Allen, TX 75002



info@mutualink.net
www.mutualink.net