5 Ways to Get Back to the Bedside with the Help of RTLS

Nurses and other clinical care providers are drawn into the healthcare profession for the opportunity to connect with human beings – patients who often are experiencing the most vulnerable time of their lives. By using their skills to meet physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing, nurses are able to make a difference in the lives of their patients and the patients’ loved ones. Yet nurses are facing a frustrating reality when a significant amount of their time is spent on tasks not related to providing care at the bedside.

According to Health Leaders Media, “bedside nurses are occupied in non-patient care tasks for a quarter of their shifts.” Some of the most time-consuming tasks include documenting patient care information in multiple places and trying to secure equipment and supplies necessary to deliver patient care.

The good news is that new processes, supported by technology and adopted by the healthcare community now exist to help minimize the amount of time nurses spend on activities other than patient care. Examples of these Process+Technology+People super-combos include: bedside documentation, bedside medication administration, as well as real-time location of patients, staff, and medical equipment.

Here are 5 ways healthcare organizations can help their nurses spend more time on patient care with the use of Real-Time Locating Systems (RTLS):

1. **Reduce Search Time**
   With the use of real-time location software, clinical staff can simply type the name of a piece of equipment they are looking for to find its current location or they can glance at the map view to locate the nearest one. They can perform these searches at the nurse station, patient room, or even on-the-go using mobile devices. This simple tool reduces the precious time nurses spend hunting for things they need to deliver patient care.

   “With RTLS, we can find the equipment we need in a matter of seconds; and we can finally kick our habit of hoarding stuff.”

   *Cindy Troftgruben, RN*

   *Intelligent InSites*
Automate Ancillary Processes
One example of a process which oftentimes falls on the shoulders of nursing staff is checking temperatures of refrigerators, blanket warmers and temperature-sensitive supplies. By leveraging temperature sensors, combined with the automated alerting and reporting capabilities of an RTLS system, nurses can dedicate their time to direct patient care instead of time-consuming, non-value added tasks such as periodically checking and documenting temperature readings.

“As a nurse manager, I understood the importance of maintaining accurate temperature reports for our unit, however, this manual task pulled the nurses away from bedside care and was not always completed. I am glad there is now a technology that can do it for us.”

Shelly Schulz, RN
Intelligent InSites

Increase Team Collaboration
There is almost no single task in healthcare that can (or should) be performed by a single care provider. To ensure the highest level of patient safety, nurses ask for assistance when administering medications, lifting a patient, or marking a body part for surgery. Making it easy for nurses to immediately find a helping hand will alleviate stress and make healthcare organizations more productive. All of this is possible when staff are wearing locating badges.

“My work as a PA in an Emergency Department is dependent on constant interactions with other members of the care team. With RTLS, you can easily find assistance when you need it.”

Keith Herron, PA
Intelligent InSites
Stop the “Pony Express”
We all understand the importance of keeping family members informed about the status and condition of their loved ones who are undergoing or recovering from a surgical procedure. With the use of an RTLS system, patient status boards can be updated automatically to provide family and friends up-to-date information about the current location and status of the patient, such as “In OR” or “In Recovery.” This enables nurses to focus on patient care, not taking time away to be a messenger.

“As a periop nurse, I was on the phone constantly checking where the patient was in the process of a surgery and then relaying that information to their families in the waiting room or on the phone. Now we can push the patient’s status as it happens to the mobile devices of their loved ones, which is especially helpful if they can’t physically be with the patient in the hospital.”

Heidi Bell, RN
Intelligent InSites

Remain Patient-Focused
Patient care should be driven by patients’ needs, not by limitations of resources. With the use of an RTLS system that automatically captures interactions between patients, care providers and ancillary staff, nurses have instant visibility into the patient journey. This increases the safety and satisfaction of patients and staff alike.

“As nurses, sometimes we feel overloaded with technology, but an RTLS system is different. Finally, there is a tool that brings minutes back to our interactions with patients, instead of taking them away.”

Donna Morrow, RN
Intelligent InSites

The examples listed provide a snapshot of how real-time technology can eliminate non-value added tasks in healthcare, allowing nurses to focus on what matters most – being with the patient, forging a special bond and helping to improve their health and well-being.

http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/nurse-leaders/ten-ways-increase-nurses-time-bedside