# In the Emergency Room, IT Systems are a Matter of Life and Death

Texas Systems Group Case Study: November 2019

## Introduction

Medco ER operates freestanding emergency room and urgent care facilities in Plano and Frisco, Texas (in the Dallas metro area). The population density in these metropolitan areas means that wait times in hospital emergency rooms can be lengthy. The freestanding ERs can improve the speed of service to patients in emergency situations. With Medco's hybrid model combining the emergency room and urgent care services, the company essentially operates two facilities in one building; with the success of this model, Medco will soon expand to communities across Texas and the U.S.

The company's IT systems—from computers and printers to electronic records and medical equipment—are the equivalent of the human central nervous system. It's not only imperative that all systems work, but that they work together seamlessly.

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**Medco ER**

## The Challenge and Client Experience

Dorma Kohler, principal at Sorelle Healthcare, LLC, which owns Medco ER, led the project for the client. "It cannot be overstated how critical the IT network is in our business," she says. "When I hired Texas Systems Group, I needed a map of the network. I needed hardware. I needed someone to negotiate services and work with vendors. And I needed it done on a tight, three-month timeline... on budget."

An additional challenge with Medco ER's projects was the fact that the company was not building from the ground up. They were buying and renovating existing buildings. So, not only was the Texas Systems Group staff working to meet the actual IT needs, they were also part of what became a sort of "ER fixer upper" project. "We literally didn't know what we were going to find when we opened the building door for the first time," says Kohler. "In some cases, we had to completely rebuild the IT infrastructure. In other cases, they could use what was there. So I added that element of challenge for them and it didn't faze them at all."

When asked what made the difference between Texas Systems Group and her previous vendors, Kohler said the Texas Systems Group team was able to push other suppliers to meet deadlines without alienating them, and that they were able to offer friendly support to the end users in the company. "I've heard from my team that Texas Systems Group's support team is consistently responsive," she says. "Not all IT people are wired that way; but Texas Systems Group's staff understands what we're dealing with and knows how to communicate to solve problems. They go above and beyond."

## Client Results

Kohler had experienced frustrations with previous providers who failed to understand that Medco ER is a 24/7 operation, just like a hospital, and that down time directly affects patient care. "In a project like this, you cannot have your IT team stumble," she says. "But Texas Systems Group understood what we needed. They got it immediately. Now I've found my dream team."

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## Project Requirements

Texas Systems Group's IT Manager, Sam Hamilton, worked with Medco ER to ensure that all project objectives and timelines were met. He described the project's priorities below.

### SCHEDULING

"Opening a new facility can mean dynamic scheduling with inspections, equipment delivery, and installation. TXSG is proactive in communicating with the general contractors, clients, and medical professionals to coordinate the IT timeline with all parties."

### MANAGING VENDORS

"From PACS (picture archiving communication system) to EMR (electronic medical records) to badge access vendors, TXSG takes the lead in communicating with all parties regarding IT Network requirements, timeline and troubleshooting issues."

### MANAGING FACILITIES

"We're regularly coordinating with site contractors, reviewing state requirements, scheduling facility – and sometime occupancy – inspections. There are electrical inspections and medical equipment inspections. Physicians come in to certify CAT scan and X-ray equipment. So it's a huge amount of responsibility, and there's no simple checklist out there that you can use. You have to have an in-depth understanding of each and every job."

### TRAINING

"TXSG not only installs the hardware, but also takes the time to ensure staff members understand how to operate phones, desktops, scanners, and more. End user education is critical to ensuring a positive and seamless experience during go-live."

### ONGOING SUPPORT

"TXSG offers 24/7 IT Support for ER Facilities. Emergency Rooms see patients at any hour of the day. It is critical for TXSG team members to be available to troubleshoot issues range from wireless access, printer, desktop, and many more."

### ENSURING UPTIME

"99% uptime isn't good enough for an ER. 99% means that there are still three days of downtime every year. And while there are updates that must be done to support HIPAA compliance, Texas Systems Group coordinates with the ER staff on the precise timing of those updates. At the end of the day, an ER needs their systems to work every time."

## Words of Wisdom from Medco ER

According to Kohler, Texas Systems Group isn't the least expensive option, nor are they the most expensive. "I've had both of those," she says. "What they are is the smartest solution out there."

Kohler offers this advice for others needing a reliable provider. "Things work more smoothly when you can clearly articulate what you want and have good communication," she says. "And, don't be dictatorial. Stay open to their recommendations because they're very, very knowledgeable. Keep that dialogue open and don't be afraid to ask questions. They'll help you figure it out and you'll be very happy with the end product."

## Words of Wisdom from Texas Systems Group

"One of the major takeaways from this project is the importance of selecting the right vendors for the job," says Sam Hamilton. "It's not just about getting the best deal on equipment. It's about knowing that the vendor will have someone available 24-7 to support your operation. Freestanding ERs typically don't have redundant systems. We provide help on the IT side, but will someone be available from your medical equipment vendor at 3 am when your X-ray machine stops transmitting to your system? There are vendors out there who get this right. Find them."

**TXSG**

**Texas Systems Group**

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