# Case Study: Standardizing A System For PPE

WakeMed Health & Hospitals is an 870-bed private, not-for-profit healthcare system based in Raleigh, N.C. Its system includes two full-service hospitals, two stand-alone emergency departments, Children's Emergency Department, Children's Hospital, Rehab Hospital, Heart Center as well as multiple outpatient centers and rehabilitation facilities. The system features two nationally accredited Chest Pain Centers and Stroke Centers and the system recently earned Heart Failure Accreditation.

The hospital system has more than 1,000 physicians on its medical staff and more than 7,500 employees.  WakeMed prides itself in providing North Carolina with the highest level of expertise, technology and a comprehensive range of advanced inpatient and outpatient services.

**The Challenge**

The WakeMed system faced unnecessary problems providing its patient care staff proper access to personal protective equipment. WakeMed had been employing an army of unattractive, inconsistent and outdated metal carts to house gowns, gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, and disposable stethoscopes.

However, on a day-to-day basis, director of infection prevention, Robin Carver, found that the staff was using the carts to store gauze, lunch containers, purses,

and other unapproved items. Additionally, the carts were not easily mobile, posing fire hazards to employees, patients and visitors, as they protruded into hallways. Lastly, compliance with the use of PPE and staff productivity was compromised. Identifying the carts to locate the required gear posed a daily challenge and, since carts were not designed to hold PPE, supplies frequently needed to be refilled.

As a result of continued medical staff and unit staff complaints, the Infection Prevention team began a five-year mission to provide the WakeMed facilities with a standardized system to house personal protective equipment that was both simple to navigate and easily identifiable. Throughout the search, the team explored many options, including custom cabinetry and various roving metal carts—each posing their own unique limitations.

**The Solution**

In April of 2008, after conducting extensive research and utilizing both in-house and outsourced design teams, Robin came across the KIMBERLY-CLARK* PPE Dispensing System. At first, she showed the product brochure and petitioned her nursing staff to use the PPE Dispensing System, to find that the staff's central concern was that they were "too bulky." After one Med/Surg nursing unit agreed to a trial implementation, WakeMed purchased their first six dispensers, realizing that they were the right fit and size. Within two weeks, Robin began fielding additional requests for the new dispensers from the other units in the WakeMed System.

WakeMed purchased additional dispensers in an effort to equip their entire community hospital with the KIMBERLY-CLARK* PPE Dispensing System, this was followed by efforts from their acute care, long-term care, rehabilitation, and extended rehabilitation facilities. WakeMed currently houses 96 PPE Dispensing Systems across their entire network.

**The Results**

WakeMed has since instituted the KIMBERLY-CLARK* PPE Dispensing System to house personal protection equipment across almost all of its hospital system facilities. As a result of the new dispensers, WakeMed now has a less expensive and more standardized home for their personal protective equipment, saving its employees time and providing a system that lends to increased employee safety through greater compliance in the use of PPE.

Calling the change to the KIMBERLY-CLARK* PPE Dispensing System "monumental," Carver also notes, "There is no question what this is for when you look at it." Because the KIMBERLY-CLARK* PPE Dispensing System provides specific compartments to house PPE, caregivers now have ready access to the proper protective gear while allowing for increased productivity and safety across the system.

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