



## CASE STUDY

### Oakwood Healthcare Wayne County, MI

Leveraging their more than two decade long relationship, American Messaging and Oakwood Healthcare worked seamlessly together to successfully upgrade and modernize the facility's Critical Messaging System

#### BACKGROUND

Recently acquired by Beaumont Health, Oakwood Healthcare is an award-winning health care organization committed to improving the health and well-being of the individuals and communities of Wayne County, MI. As one of the largest employers in the county, Oakwood provides acute, specialty, primary and preventative care services backed by excellence in research and education. With four acute care hospitals and more than 60 outpatient facilities, Oakwood's 9,000 employees and 1,300 physicians represent nearly every medical and surgical specialty and subspecialty in the United States.

Oakwood and American Messaging have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship for almost as long as American Messaging has been in business. This long-standing relationship of more than two decades was built on trust, experience and great communication, all of which were critical when it came time to transition from a dated critical messaging system to a modern, Critical Messaging System better suited to today's ever-evolving healthcare industry.

#### SITUATION

"If it isn't broke, don't fix it" – that was the age-old adage in the back of the mind of Oakwood Healthcare's Critical Messaging Coordinator, Kendra Johnson, as she found herself caught between her staff's comfort with a tried and true messaging system, and a new Critical Messaging System that addressed new, more stringent HIPAA compliance requirements, including the need to encrypt messages.

In order to comply with new HIPAA laws, all of Oakwood's 3,500 critical messaging users were faced with potentially having to carry two separate devices —their current messaging device and a second paging device capable of receiving sensitive, encrypted messages. Obviously, no one wanted to add yet another electronic device to their daily lives.





## CRITICAL FACTORS

In addition to incorporating encryption, the new Critical Messaging System needed to use critical messaging devices that were smaller and lighter than existing messaging devices, yet as easy to use as a smart phone. The system would also have to work seamlessly so that the daily, critical needs of various teams wouldn't be compromised during any transition.

Kendra turned to her long-time American Messaging Account Manager, Gena Sprow, who recommended the company's new "CUE" critical messaging device. Boasting a smaller, more modern form factor with a large and easy to read screen, the CUE operates simultaneously on two frequencies, negating the need for Oakwood personnel to carry two different pagers in order to receive encrypted messages.

## SOLUTION

Following a thorough evaluation of Oakwood's existing messaging system, which is spread across four hospitals and 60 additional outpatient facilities, American Messaging's team developed and implemented a solution to deliver encrypted and non-encrypted messages to devices operating on American Messaging's traditional wide area network and Oakwood's dedicated Critical Messaging System.

With a detailed integration plan finalized, the American Messaging team and Oakwood scheduled a series of educational meetings to prepare personnel for the transition. An initial rollout was used to test the Critical Messaging System and the CUE so that any necessary adjustments could be made prior to fully rolling out the new system.

## CHALLENGES

Shortly after beginning to transition to the new Critical Messaging System, Oakwood Healthcare merged with Beaumont Health, which had a messaging system that operated on a completely different frequency than the Oakwood system. Concerns about communicating between the two entities became a non-issue thanks to the fact that the CUE works simultaneously on two frequencies. While each healthcare unit could continue using their dedicated frequency for on-campus needs, staff and physicians across the Oakwood/Beaumont system could send and receive encrypted messages through the second, mutual frequency. Potential problem averted!

## RESULTS

The complete rollout across all four of Oakwood's hospitals is scheduled for completion in February 2016. Reaction to the CUE from staff and physicians alike has been universally positive. The credit for the smooth transition should be shared equally by Oakwood Healthcare and American Messaging, demonstrating the benefits of their more than two decade partnership.

