CarePlus™ Supporting Regional Healthcare at Goulburn Valley Health, Shepparton VIC

Victorian Department of Health

The Department of Health in the Australian state of Victoria is committed to achieving the best health and wellbeing for all Victorians. The department is the leading agency overseeing all health services, mental health, aged care, and preventative health. Their responsibilities also include planning, policy development, funding and regulation of health service providers, and promotion of activities that protect Victoria's health.

The Victorian Department of Health seeks to achieve their vision of better health for Victorians through being responsive to community needs; improving every individual's health status; expanding service and system capacity; increasing stability and productivity; promotion of continuous improvement and innovation; increasing accountability and transparency; utilisation of e-health and communication technology to improve patient outcomes.

Challenge

Goulburn Valley Health is a 280-bed, public, acute and extended care hospital based in Shepparton, regional Victoria. Shepparton is a two hour drive, north of Melbourne, with a population of around 60, 000 and a population growth rate of around 1.8% per annum.

Due to Goulburn Valley Health's regional area, the hospital deals with many common rural medical issues including road accidents, farm injuries, work safety accidents and skin cancer. During fruit harvest season, the population in the region swells by around 10,000 – significantly increasing the workload at Goulburn Valley Health. Throughout this season the hospital deals with issues such as snake bites, cuts and injuries from branches and falling fruit, and allergic reactions. This region has also seen some of the worst draughts in Victoria which has significantly impacted the community for several years, particularly in terms of health and social issues.

Goulburn Valley Health works in partnership with other health providers in the region to ensure that the right mix of services are provided to meet community needs. The facility has participated in the development of Public Health Plans for each local government in the area.

Goulburn Valley Health was looking for an improved nurse call solution to meet the needs of their staff and patients. This solution needed to be a financially viable solution, while still providing improved workflow and efficiency for staff. The nurse call solution needed to be scalable, so that it is able to grow with the hospital into the future.

Meeting challenges of specialisation:

- Goulburn Valley Health initially required a nurse call solution that allowed them to upgrade their legacy system, while still keeping some components of this system. Allowing a low initial cost of installation and opportunity to expand this system in the future.

- Goulburn Valley Health was looking for a non-disruptive upgrade to their legacy nurse call system which would not reduce their occupancy rate.

- The nurse call solution needed to be scalable to meet the needs of Goulburn Valley Health during their busy fruit harvesting season, and their future requirements.

Challenges and technical considerations

A number of technical challenges were faced by Victorian CarePlus™ Gold Partner KTR in designing a CarePlus™ solution to meet the challenges of Goulburn Valley Health.

- Initially the CarePlus™ solution was to be connected to a legacy Sedco system in 2 wards of Goulburn Valley Hospital.

- At the conclusion of the initial project, CarePlus™ was chosen as the nurse call solution for the rest of the hospital. This included a complete phase-out of all Sedco legacy equipment and the removal of a Merlon nurse call system in Rehabilitation and medical wards.

- The installation and upgrade had to take place in busy hospital wards with minimum disruption to staff, patients and importantly bed availability.

Facilities at a glance:

- 280 in-patient beds

- Surgical services with 3 operating theatres and 1 treatment room

- General medicine

- Emergency medicine/department

- Paediatric, child and adolescents health services including home and community nursing programs, diabetes education, and maternity services.

- Obstetrics and gynaecology services

- Intensive Care

- Goulburn Valley Area Mental Health Service for children, adolescents, adults, elderly, support for families and carers, an Early Intervention Team, and an Aboriginal Liaison Officer

- Residential aged care in 3 locations, focussed on high care

- Variety of community based programs

High quality service and solution for Goulburn Valley Hospital.

Paul Caron, Technical Architect at KTR Group said;

"The remote login capabilities of the CarePlus™ system assisted KTR in providing high level customer care to Goulburn Valley Hospital, despite their regional location.

KTR has been able to implement the CarePlus™ system throughout the hospital with great success".

Solution

CarePlus™ was initially presented as a solution that was able to integrate with Goulburn Valley Health's ageing nurse call solution. As some equipment was able to be kept, it reduced their initial cost. This upgrade was completed through a head end replacement which results in minimum disruption with a 60 second connection time.

After this initial upgrade, Goulburn Valley Health chose CarePlus™ as the nurse call solution for their entire facility. This decision meant a complete phase out of all the Sedco legacy equipment in majority of wards, and the removal of a Merlon nurse call system in Rehabilitation and medical wards.

CarePlus™ was chosen by Goulburn Valley Health due to the level of customer care they were given by KTR. The remote login and maintenance capabilities of the CarePlus™ solution allowed for many issues to be repaired quickly, despite the rural location of the hospital. The presence of KTR within the state of Victoria allowed for quicker service and response times, which put Goulburn Valley Health at ease.

Technical Solution

- Initial head end upgrade in 2 wards from Sedco to CarePlus™, before complete phase out of Sedco and Merlon equipment in the remaining wards.

- Provide remote login enabling regularly required configuration changes to meet operational needs and maintenance to be carried out remotely, particularly important due to the regional location of the facility.

- Unified CarePlus™ nurse call and communication platform throughout Goulburn Valley Health.

Integration of Legacy System with CarePlus™ Solution
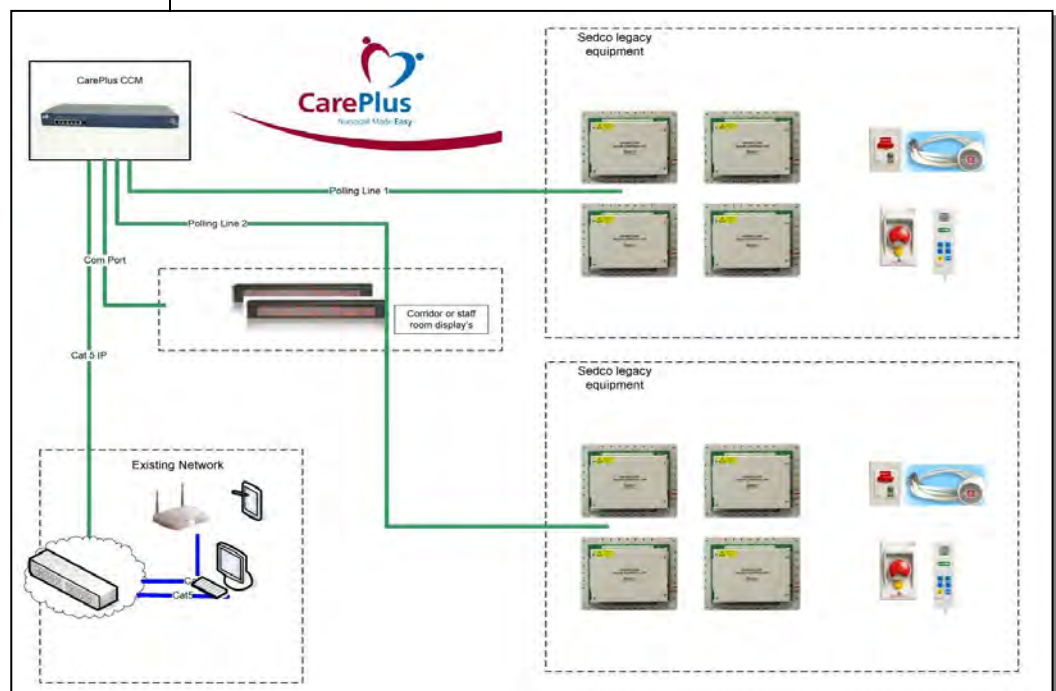
CarePlus™ Nurse Call Solution
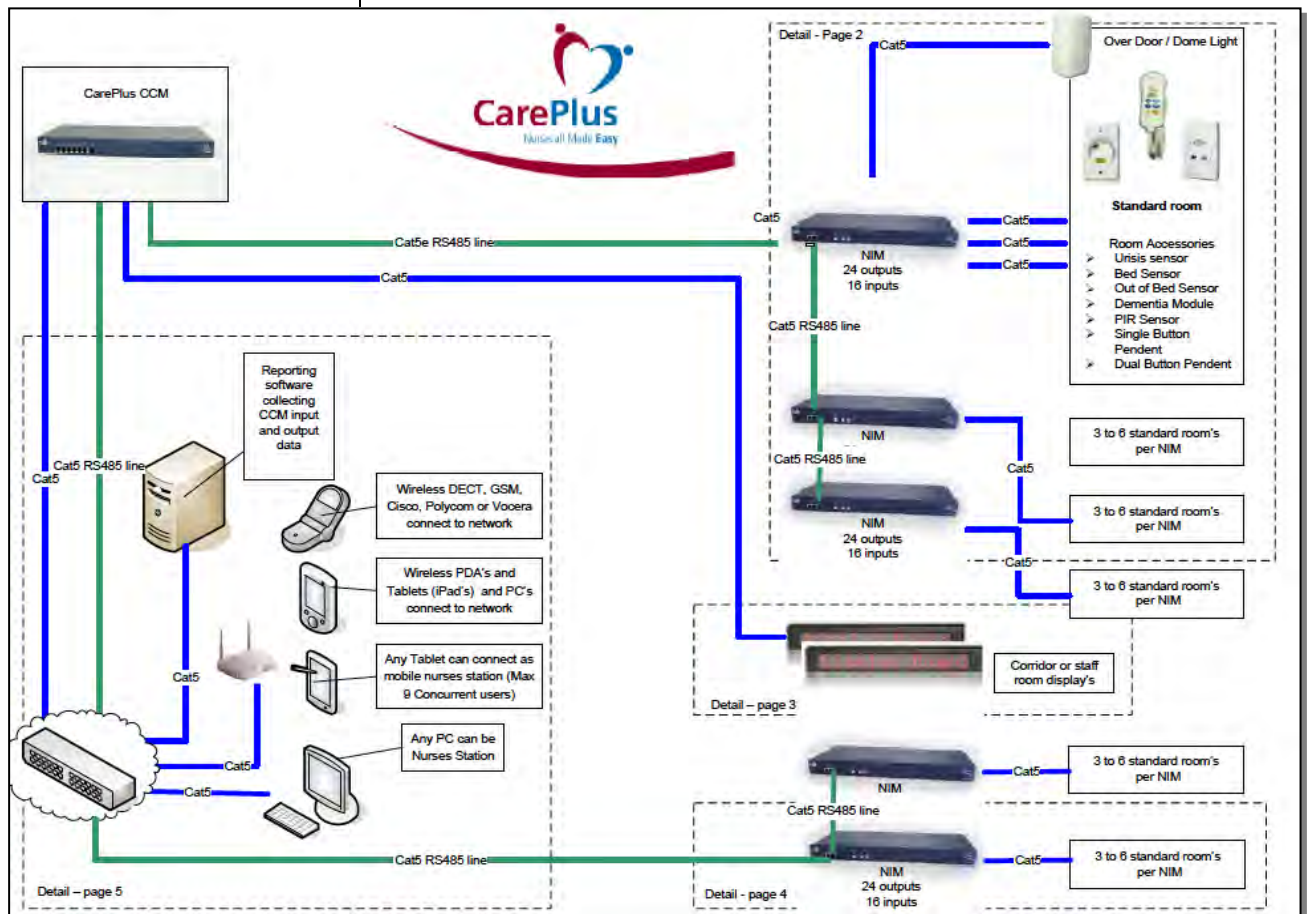
RESULTS

- CarePlus™ allowed for remote access into the system to be enabled. Allowing KTR to maintain and service this regionally located hospital, without long delays.

- Initially installed the CarePlus™ nurse call system while still retaining some existing parts of the legacy Sedco system. This minimised the initial cost and reduced disruption to patients, staff and bed occupancy.

- KTR has completed a phase-out of all Sedco and Merlon nurse call equipment. Goulburn Valley Health operates on a universal CarePlus™ nurse call and communication platform.

- Comprehensive call logging enabled and call management processes were improved with the introduction of the CarePlus™ nurse call solution into Goulburn Valley Hospital

- Provides a scalable and future proof system that will grow with technological change at Goulburn Valley Health for decades ahead. It also allows for a more advanced nurse call solution during the busy fruit harvesting season.