

# Case Study: CHRISTUS Good Shepherd Health System

## Unified Communication Greatly Improves Outcomes for Texas Stroke Patients

For seven years, a leading hospital system in Longview, Texas, has integrated a mobile healthcare communication technology with existing protocols to exceed national benchmarks for stroke treatment.

### BACKGROUND

CHRISTUS Good Shepherd Medical Center – Longview in Longview, Texas, strives to provide superior care to its patients. A Joint Commission-certified primary stroke center, the hospital responds to an average of 60 time-sensitive stroke cases per month.



### PROBLEM

Standardizing the time and communication channel in a stroke case is essential to creating life-saving outcomes. Every second counts when the brain is deprived of oxygen and all of the different care teams must be united to deliver appropriate treatment.



**Jennifer Reeves, RN, MSN, ASC-BC**

Jennifer Reeves, RN, MSN, ASC-BC, the stroke program coordinator at CHRISTUS Good Shepherd, has worked for eight years to support her team and patients by creating efficiencies in stroke care processes. Part of that role includes identifying current gaps and improvement opportunities.

“Shortening treatment times is critical to the quality of life and recovery of the patients,” noted Reeves. She and her team focus on improving workflows and streamlining care to treat and rehabilitate stroke patients.

“One challenge we found was that everybody providing care was looking at their own clocks, which weren’t necessarily in sync,” said Reeves. “I may be looking at the time on my watch and the charge nurse could be looking at the one on the computer.”

Beyond the challenge of everyone looking at a different clock, the team was also on different communication channels, none of which were interoperable with each other. This meant missing information and miscommunication in cases when clarity was needed the most.

### SOLUTION

Reeves helped to implement Pulsara—a mobile collaborative communication platform that unites healthcare teams. In March 2013, the technology went live across the entire patient care team, including members from the EMS, ED, nursing, CT and neurology departments.

Without changing any established protocols, CHRISTUS Good Shepherd simply replaced legacy communication tools, such as pagers and phone calls, with a mobile, device-based app that streamlines sharing of critical patient information. The use of the app’s universal clock ensured all of the responders were “on the same page.”

With Pulsara, the entire care team activates stroke cases at one single point in time and receives all additional alerts and information simultaneously. This created a new level of cohesion in CHRISTUS Good Shepherd’s stroke care processes.

“It cut down on the excessive word of mouth and allowed us to use one tool to communicate and one clock to refer to,” said Reeves.

### RESULTS

Since 2013, CHRISTUS Good Shepherd has diligently used Pulsara to improve patient care. In 2019, the hospital and its EMS partners successfully activated 472 stroke cases and achieved the following metrics:

- When EMS uses Pulsara, the stroke team is activated an average of 8 minutes BEFORE patient arrival versus 12 minutes AFTER patient arrival without Pulsara. That’s a total of a 20-minute time savings for the stroke team to prepare and mobilize resources.
- 46-minute average door-to-needle for patients receiving tPA, down from 110-minute average time pre-Pulsara, a 59% decrease.
- 100% of all door-to-needle in under 60 minutes, 87% in under 45 minutes and 58% in under 30 minutes.



Recognizing their excellent stroke care practices, the American Stroke Association honored CHRISTUS Good Shepherd with the Target Stroke Elite Plus Quality Achievement Award in 2019.

The CHRISTUS Good Shepherd – Longview team hopes to share its success with other healthcare facilities in the area to build an even stronger system of care for stroke patients and continue to improve outcomes, together.



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