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LONESTAR STATE



ETMC installs new communications system

by Kelly Bell/ Contributing Writer

East Texas Medical Center (ETMC) Regional Healthcare System Emergency Medical Services has deployed new technology called In Motion's onBoard Mobile Gateway, and onBoard Mobility Manager in order to improve emergency communications and response time over the hospital's immense service area. President and CEO of In Motion Technology Kirk Moir explained the advantages of this new system.

"ETMC deployed the onBoard Mobile Gateway because they are committed to using the best available communications between ambulances in the field, dispatchers and hospitals," he said. "By insuring that dispatches are received instantaneously and the closest ambulance to the scene is dispatched, the Gateway will help the ETMC reduce response times."

The onBoard Mobile Gateway essentially transforms emergency vehicles into secure, high-tech wireless communications centers. The system weaves all data devices, like EKGs, patient care records and dispatch systems, into a single, coordinated medical communications network that operates with speed and efficiency. This permits emergency personnel to radio an uninterrupted flow of data from crime and accident scenes back to operations commands and hospitals both from the incident scenes and while in transit. The onBoard Mobility Manager enables operations centers and hospitals to keep track of emergency vehicles' locations and of network health.

"By enabling ETMC ambulances to transmit important patient information from heart monitors and other devices to the hospital before the patient arrives, ER staff can be prepared to administer care as soon as the patient arrives," said Moir. "This will help improve patient care and outcomes."

ETMC EMS Medical Director Dr. William Moore agrees that this increased speed with which patient information can be conveyed will be a literal life-saver.

"When we provide the doctors with EKG results before the ambulance arrives at the hospital, we enable them to make immediate decisions prior to the patient's arrival," he said.

Because of the large area and population served by ETMC this new technology is of great value to regional health. The Regional Healthcare System serves more than one million East Texans in 17 counties and over 17,000 square miles. Each of the ETMC's almost 100 ambulances has been fitted with Advanced Life Support communication sets, and the certified paramedics and emergency medical technicians have been meticulously trained in their operation. This is in keeping with how ETMC has been listed among the "Top 100 Most Wired" health systems in the country for the past eight years.

The system is especially well-suited to ETMC because of the large rural areas in East Texas. In rural regions there are often isolated areas where wireless communications are unreliable. Gateway overcomes this problem by automatically and constantly scanning for the best wireless network and seamlessly switching to the one that is providing the most reliable channel for transmitting medical data. This is a great advantage for ambulance crews who are transporting and treating critically ill or injured patients.

"Because the Gateway is easy to use and enables crews to access training and other information from the field between calls, it increases productivity, reduces costs and allows crews to focus on their mission and not their communication

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costs and allows crews to focus on their mission, and not their communications devices," said Moir.

In Motion Technology manufactures cognitive wireless systems that enable public safety agencies of all kinds to stay in contact with each other while in action.

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