

effective stakeholder communication



When Emergency Health Service of Nova Scotia (EHS) partnered with Medusa Medical Technologies to outfit its ambulances with Medusa's Siren ePCR™ Suite (Siren), it took a step that was unprecedented in Canadian pre-hospital emergency care. Never before had a province attempted to offer all of its residents – even those living away from major urban centres – the benefits of a complete electronic patient care reporting (ePCR) solution.

But before residents of all parts of Nova Scotia could be served by Siren, the Siren technology would have to be configured to meet the diverse needs of the paramedics of those areas. To be considered effective, the technology would ultimately have to enable Nova Scotia's 900+ paramedics to improve their efficiency in delivering pre-hospital emergency care. In order to deploy such a significant piece of technology in a timely and cost-effective manner, communication between Emergency Medical Care Inc. (EMC) (the ambulance management company selected to implement this ePCR solution), Medusa, and the paramedics was of paramount importance.

What Was Done?

From the beginning, effective communication with stakeholders was necessary to deliver a product that met the needs of the paramedics and office staff, while adhering to time and budgetary constraints.

quick facts

Siren Implementation Period

- 8 months
- October, 2006 – May, 2007

Training & Rollout Period

- 8 months
- May – December, 2007

EHS

- 900+ paramedics
- 150 ground ambulances equipped with Siren ePCR
- 2 air ambulances equipped with Siren ePCR
- Serves the entire province of Nova Scotia
 - 52,917.46 km
 - 913,462 people

Paramedic Working Group

EHS established a working group of 11 paramedics and one LifeFlight nurse to provide Medusa business analysts with local clinical and operational knowledge. Medusa used this information to configure Siren to meet EHS's particular needs. The solid partnership between Medusa and the working group would ultimately be responsible for the paramedics' high acceptance rate of Siren, and would be a testament to the importance of grassroots involvement.

"I have spoken with all members of C Platoon and they all wanted to know if they are going to keep using Siren after the pilot or resort back to the ancient days of map books, paper and an ink filled pen. WOW! Memories! This has been received more positively than I could have ever imagined."

- Peter Cholock, EHS Paramedic

Regular Vendor Updates

Through a variety of face-to-face meetings and regularly written updates, EMC provided vendors the opportunity to share their updates, their support methodology, and support information required to keep the Siren project on track. At the meetings, all vendors responsible for providing Siren-related deliverables (software, interfaces, servers, operating systems, and the tablets) would meet to discuss the project's progress. In addition to keeping the vendors focused on their common goal, the meetings were formed for the vendors to address integration issues.

Internal Correspondence & Roadshows

EHS internally distributed monthly online newsletters detailing the upcoming implementation of Siren so its staff would be continuously informed of the changes that were to come. Additionally, roadshows to many of the 900+ paramedics province-wide helped build excitement for Siren before its actual deployment commenced.

Project Management Committee

Comprised of project managers from both EMC and Medusa, the Committee met weekly to provide guidance and clarification so that both parties stayed current with the needs of their counterpart. Open and honest dialogue facilitated and expedited communication. The regular contact kept the partnership current and fresh.

Key Success Factors

Paramedics Champion the Product

Success of the implementation of the Siren ePCR Suite was measured by the level of acceptance from the paramedics. When the time came for Siren to be introduced in ambulances across the province, the members of the working group were called upon to champion Siren in their home regions. In doing so, the paramedics in the working group were catalysts in creating grass roots support with their colleagues by demonstrating how Siren could help paramedics deliver better pre-hospital emergency patient care.

“The success of this project is largely due to the enthusiasm and dedication of the working group. They have worked tirelessly to configure Siren to meet the needs of the paramedics and LifeFlight staff, provided demos of the software throughout the province, supported the field test on-site and plan to provide ongoing support to their colleagues until the system is completely implemented province-wide in December, 2007.”

- Susan Hazelwood, ePCR Project Manager (EMC)

Staying Within a Defined Set of Deliverables

According to Oliver Nemeskeri, VP Solution Delivery at Medusa, a crucial element to the deployment of Siren being on-time and on-budget was “resisting the temptation to change everything.” While Siren was configured to meet the needs of Nova Scotia paramedics, it was free of major customization, which helped keep the project within EHS System time and budget constraints.

“The Nova Scotia integration for the Siren application required detailed project planning, a secure and tested wireless architecture, ambulance hardware preparations, ruggedized tablet technology, and a committed team of paramedics and vendors to allow for a successful implementation.”

- Tim Coolen, VP, Business Planning & Technologies (EMC)

About EHS

EHS is a division of the NS Department of Health. It is responsible for the continual development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of pre-hospital emergency health services in the province. EHS assures best practices in pre-hospital emergency services and emergency preparedness to the communities it serves through regulation, prevention, education and research.

About EMC

Emergency Medical Care (EMC) is a subsidiary of Medavie Blue Cross. The 900 paramedics, medical communications and system staff members manage all requests for emergency ambulance service in Nova Scotia. The province’s ground ambulance service is recognized as one of the best in the world having achieved its accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services late last year.

About Medusa Medical Technologies

Incorporated in 1998, Medusa develops information technology solutions that improve pre-hospital emergency data capture, increase emergency medical staff effectiveness in patient care encounters, and ultimately lead to better pre-hospital emergency treatment protocols. In order to continuously meet market needs, Medusa collaborates with clinicians and field paramedics worldwide to ensure that the quality and effectiveness of its leading electronic patient care reporting system remain second-to-none.

About the Siren ePCR Suite

The Siren ePCR Suite is a secure electronic patient care reporting system that improves the speed and accuracy with which paramedics can record patient information. Designed for use in ambulances en route to hospital, the Siren ePCR™ software and complementary hardware employ an easy-to-use touch-screen interface to provide paramedics with more efficient data capture tools. With the system, patient data is recorded quicker and more accurately than with pencil and paper. Ultimately, the Siren ePCR Suite allows paramedics to spend less time documenting patients’ ailments – and more time treating them.

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