

CASE STUDY

Liberty Hospital Liberty, MO



Liberty Hospital was struggling with the effectiveness of manually monitoring temperature levels in medical refrigeration units. The time-consuming process often led to losses of medical inventory and situations that put the hospital at risk for regulatory compliance issues with the Joint Commission, CMS and state regulators. Liberty Hospital installed the Primex Wireless SNS Temperature Monitoring solution to automate and streamline temperature monitoring and compliance processes.

“Liberty Hospital has always been known for its involvement with the most state-of-the-art technologies. We push for innovation to produce a safer and better environment for patient care. Primex Wireless has been an active and responsive partner in automating Liberty Hospital’s refrigeration monitoring.”

- Kenny Brown, BioMed Manager for Liberty Hospital

The Problem:

The vision of Liberty Hospital, founded in February 1974, is to be the leader in providing high-quality, patient-centered care. Throughout its nearly 40-year history, the hospital has realized its vision in more than one way. The hospital started as a 130-bed facility and has grown to 250 licensed beds with more than 1,900 employees and nearly 300 physicians covering all specialties. When a facility such as Liberty Hospital gains a reputation for being progressive, while growing at a tremendous rate, it is essential to keep up with the latest technologies that can aide in patient care and efficiency.

Liberty Hospital’s thousands of patients, physicians and employees depend on the facility’s refrigeration units to maintain accurate temperatures to ensure the safety of drugs, vaccines and tissue. At any one time, the lab, surgery and pharmacy refrigeration units protect between \$118,000-\$275,000 worth of product.

While Liberty Hospital was running efficiently, the facility occasionally suffered from the loss of refrigerated medical inventory due to out-of-range temperatures. The losses were the result of a manual monitoring method that required hospital staff to perform the time-consuming and tedious task of visually checking every refrigeration unit one-by-one in person, and then logging readings for compliance documentation required by the hospital’s governing bodies and regulatory agencies. This is quite an undertaking

for a campus that comprises six buildings and 34 different departments. Previously, the cumbersome temperature monitoring process took more than 102 man hours per month to properly manually monitor all refrigeration units in the hospital.

But the real loss went beyond monetary value. If samples or products in the lab, surgery or pharmacy were not available because the hospital had out-of-range temperatures, it caused delays, cancellations or retesting, which hurt patient satisfaction and, quite possibly, patient outcomes.

“Running our facility at its peak potential has always been Liberty Hospital’s top priority,” says Kenny Brown, BioMed Manager for Liberty Hospital. “Having the highest and most up-to-date technology possible allows our staff to focus on patient care.”

Brown realized the manual process was compromising staff productivity, medical inventory and facility compliance. He began to evaluate how automated technology could address the facility’s issues without compromising the hospital’s budget. While evaluating potential solutions, Brown realized manual monitoring of his refrigeration units raised critical issues surrounding the inefficiencies in the hospital’s system.

The Solution:

After careful analysis from several vendors' offerings, and great cooperation from the Liberty IT department, Brown chose to install the Primex Wireless Synchronous Network System (SNS) Temperature Monitoring solution. The SNS system captures and logs data from FDA-registered and CFR Part II-compliant temperature sensors and probes. All data is communicated via Liberty Hospital's Ethernet or wireless network to the SNS Applications Management Platform (AMP), a centralized repository where staff can access the same up-to-the minute information from any Internet-connected PC. The data is then available for easy-to-generate reports that help Brown demonstrate compliance to authorities having jurisdiction.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of the SNS system is its ability to alert Liberty's maintenance staff when temperatures stray out of predetermined ranges. When a problem is detected, an alert is automatically sent to the staff member in charge of that area of the facility at that time of day. Once alerted, staff can easily locate the affected area on the Liberty campus via a graphical floor plan display in the software.

"The payoff wasn't just in [saved] inventory. It was in the hours saved on labor that nurses could now dedicate to patient care. After all, focusing on the patient is what we strive for," says Brown.

Results:

- Increased productivity, saving more than 100 man hours monthly
- Minimized capital expense by leveraging existing IT investments
- Decreased losses of medical inventory, such as blood, vaccines and tissue
- Streamlined processes for compliant storage of medical inventory in refrigeration units
- Better protection of between \$118,000-\$275,000 worth of medical assets in lab, surgery and pharmacy refrigeration units at any one time



To Learn More:

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