



Lifebridge Health is a Baltimore-based health system comprised of four major hospitals: Sinai Hospital, Northwest Hospital, Carroll Hospital, and Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital. The system employs more than 11,000 people and sees nearly 150,000 ER visits annually.



9.7% of Baltimore residents speak a language other than English, meaning that roughly one in ten Lifebridge patients may need a professional interpreter to receive effective treatment.

THE CHALLENGE

Like many health systems in 2017, Lifebridge faced budget constraints and rising language service usage costs. Providers had access to over-the-phone interpretation, but used it minimally. Instead, many providers were relying heavily on more costly in-person interpreters (often brought in from off-site) to communicate with limited-English proficient (LEP) patients.

Lifebridge leadership recognized that they needed to make a change. They chose to partner with CyraCom to bring video remote interpretation (VRI) to Lifebridge.

THE GOALS

Lifebridge began their VRI implementation with a clear set of goals in mind:

“To improve timeliness, efficiency, and reduce costs of patient care with a multi-modal interpretive service standardized across four hospitals.”

THE RESULTS

Since implementing video remote interpretation with CyraCom in February of 2018, Lifebridge achieved:



A reduction in average wait time for an interpreter from 120 minutes (to bring a live interpreter on-site) to about 10 minutes (which included time for Lifebridge staff to bring a VRI device to a patient's room)



A savings of over \$67,000 on interpreter spend across all four hospitals in 2018



Training 700 staff members in the use of video remote interpretation in person, as well as 1,000 more trained via online modules



A 60% reduction in in-person interpretation usage

Video remote interpretation (VRI) uses video chat to bring providers and patients “face-to-face” with qualified, professional interpreters, available from CyraCom in more than 25 commonly requested languages.

MANAGING THE TECHNICAL ROLLOUT

LifEBridge leadership brought in Margeaux Anderson, an operations and strategy consultant specializing in process improvement and organizational change, to make the transition to video interpretation a smooth one.

Anderson and CyraCom worked with LifEBridge's executive committee and project team to develop a five-phase rollout of video interpretation system-wide:



Conception and Initiation focused on the development of the project charter, identifying what was already working, and targeting what needed to be developed.



Definition and Planning consisted of budgeting for the project, including allocating funds to purchase video remote interpreting equipment. The team also decided on key milestones for the project and set deadlines to achieve them. Finally, they brainstormed potential challenges or obstacles they might encounter during the rollout, so that LifEBridge leadership could be informed and decide how to respond.



Launch and Execution involved taking VRI live across LifEBridge's four hospitals, as well as setting key performance indicators (KPIs) for the new technology.



Measure and Control meant comparing the results of the new VRI system to the goals LifEBridge set, helping the team to determine whether they had achieved their objectives.



Project Close gave Anderson and the LifEBridge team time to assess the project for lessons learned, things that went well, and opportunities to do better in the future. They also wrapped up any items left undone during the rollout and compiled reporting on their results.

MANAGING STAFF AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

In addition to crafting a process-driven implementation plan for VRI, Anderson emphasized the importance of a people-driven approach, ensuring the new technology was well-received by LifEBridge staff.

"The project team was a diverse group," she explained. "We really wanted to gain perspective from their vantage points of the work at hand, so it was a cross-functional team of representation...nurse educators, patient care services, IS, and specifically the telehealth and telecom departments. It was crucial for us to



Margeaux Anderson spearheaded LifEBridge's VRI rollout and presented her results at CyraCom's 2018 Healthcare Services Summit.

have equitable representation from all four [hospital] sites, so that everyone felt they had equal voice in the process."

FIVE PHASES OF CHANGE

Anderson recognized the importance of preparing people for change and involving them throughout the process for their buy-in.

"You have phases of a project, but you also have phases of change," she recalled. "So how can we align these two in order to see the 'people side' of this process? How are we engaging our stakeholders?"

Anderson identified five phases of change and prioritized helping LifEBridge staff achieve them on the CyraCom VRI project:

AWARENESS

"First off, we want to create awareness: Change is coming, and this is the reason why."

DESIRE

"Next, we want to create that desire – that excitement around the change. In this case, of course, it was relatively easy. We were focused on implementing video remote devices, so we had a well-thought-out technology that can help reduce patient care wait times. That was a fairly easy sell for the majority of us.

"We focused on 'What's in it for me?' Answering that question for our front line staff is very important. And we focused less on cost sav-

ings [versus with the executive team] and explained the benefits for patient care."

KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY

"Third comes knowledge. We worked hand in hand with our nurse educators and front line staff to develop a workflow that made sense to them. I really see project managing as a partnership between the subject matter experts and the project manager with their tools to determine 'How are we going to do this?' and getting their buy-in during the process. If we allow them to create that process, develop something through consensus-building, we're more likely to be successful."

REINFORCEMENT

"Our leading indicator of success was a reduction in in-person interpretation. We also established a gatekeeper role within nursing to ensure our process was being followed. We also had escalation pathways for any technical issues so they were able to surface that and we were able to revise the process as needed."

INSTINCT

"This is when a process becomes a habit. This is where we want to see the process become day-to-day: 'Okay, I'm looking for an interpreter. These are my options.'"

KEY TAKEAWAYS: HOW LIFEBRIDGE MADE THEIR ROLLOUT A SUCCESS

Anderson and the Lifebridge team developed some essential tools that made their CyraCom VRI rollout a success, saving them over \$67,000 in 2018 and lowering interpreter wait times by one to two hours:

PROCESS WORKFLOW FLOW CHART

"We had some guidelines around modality usage," Anderson explained. "As we introduced VRI, we wanted to make sure we addressed the other avenues of getting interpretation for a patient. What are the most appropriate times for phone interpretation, and here are some examples. What are the best cases for video remote?" And from a patient perspective, we didn't want to completely eliminate in-person interpretation, knowing that there may be special cases we wanted to recognize.

"We also included an idea of the time it would take to reach an interpreter using each modality – around 30 seconds for phone or video, as well as our average time to connect with an in-person interpreter [60-120 minutes]."

INTERPRETATION REFERENCE GUIDE

The guide included information on the importance of interpreter services, the various modalities available and when to use them, and a set of guidelines for talking to patients about their interpretation needs. It also contained detailed instructions for using VRI with CyraCom.

INTERPRETER SERVICES INTRANET PAGE

Lifebridge developed a proprietary intranet page for Interpreter Services, including information on VRI and other modalities, as well as FAQs.

In business for 25 years, CyraCom is a language services leader that provides interpretation and translation services to thousands of organizations across the US and worldwide.

Providing the best language services is a complex formula, and CyraCom considers every piece of the equation: quality, availability, security, speed and accessibility, and client support.



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