

Tulane University Hospital & Clinic

THE SITUATION

For more than 25 years, Tulane University Hospital & Clinic, located in New Orleans, Louisiana, has been a satisfied USA Mobility customer. Their digital pager system had been serving them well and they were extremely pleased with USA Mobility's record of network reliability.

However, in a matter of a few hours, Hurricane Katrina completely changed the communication requirements for hospital personnel responding to a major natural disaster.

The hurricane and the resultant breaching of the levees put about 5 feet of water into the neighborhood around the main campus in downtown New Orleans.

"USA Mobility's dependability became more evident after Katrina when other cellular and paging providers lost service and the USA Mobility system was still going," notes Mike Meyers, Manager – Information Systems for Tulane University Hospital & Clinic. The problem was that you could not get in touch with anyone by land line or cell phone. The phone numbers that were going through the 504 area code, which encompassed the majority of our employees, could not get through due to the Bell South system or cell towers being out of service. Plus, many employees that carried pagers either left them at their homes as they evacuated or lost them during the evacuation.

"USA Mobility was able to supply us with 70 replacement pagers overnight," said Meyers.

Service for their digital pagers was restored in a matter of a few days (a tribute to redundancy in USA Mobility's networks).

THE SOLUTION

With that real-world experience and insight, Tulane University Hospital & Clinic discovered how helpful it is to have a wireless partner like USA Mobility. As the One Stop for Wireless, we can react to changing needs with new and cost-effective solutions. We are working with the hospital's administration to phase-in alpha-pagers. This will allow more accurate information to be sent over our proven satellite network, while avoiding the need to respond over a vulnerable land-line phone service to receive messages.

"With many companies doing away with pagers due to the popularity of cell phones, it's reassuring to know that there is still a company out there able to provide cost-efficient, reliable paging service," says Meyers.

"It wouldn't be economically feasible for a facility the size of Tulane to provide cellular service to all of its essential employees, so we depend on USA Mobility to provide us with a dependable means to stay in contact with our employees that is cost-effective."