

The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast



The Hospice of Florida Suncoast uses Fujitsu LifeBook Tablet PCs to make sure patients receive the best care possible, whether they're in a hospital or at home

Challenge:

Access and share information patient information, any time, any place.

Solution:

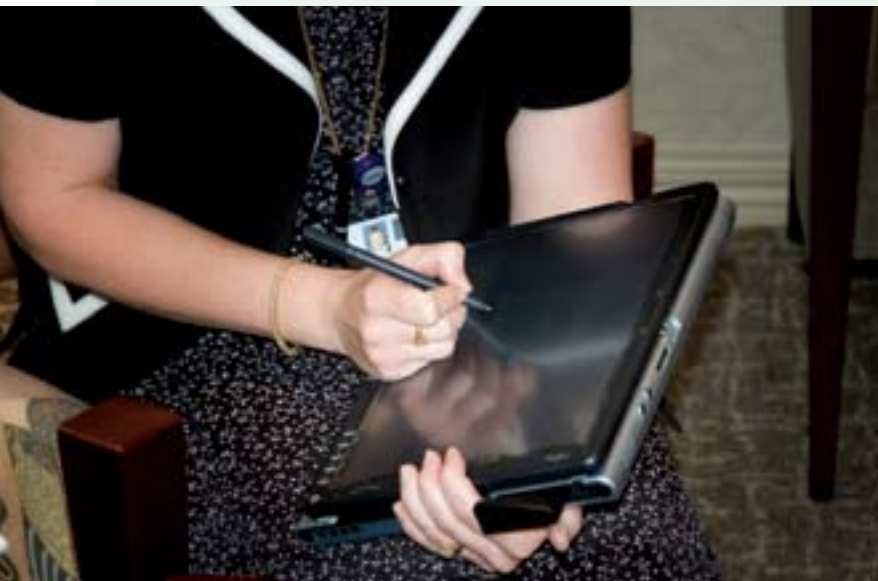
Equip hospice staff with Fujitsu LifeBook Tablet PCs, which are light, easy to use and less obtrusive than traditional notebooks.

Benefits:

With up-to-date information about patients now at their fingertips, The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast staff is able to give patients seamless care anywhere.

“When I came to The Hospice two years ago, less than 50 percent of our documentation was done electronically. Now approximately 70 percent of our documentation is done on computers, thanks in part to the Fujitsu LifeBook Tablet PC.”

-Gay Madden, Vice President of Information Systems, The Hospice



The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast was founded nearly 30 years ago by volunteers dedicated to improving end-of-life care for patients and their families in Pinellas County, Florida. Today, it is the largest nonprofit agency of its kind, serving nearly 2,300 patients a day. Hospice caregivers spend most of their day in the field, seeing patients in homes, hospitals, hospice facilities and homeless shelters. “Wherever they are, we will go there,” says Gay Madden, vice president of information systems for The Hospice.

The Challenge: Hospice staffs’ need to access and share patient information

How does technology help The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast patients and their families deal with the advanced stages of an illness? Simply put, when caregivers can share information about patients with other people on their team – which can include physicians, nurses, social workers and clergy – the quality of care patients receive improves greatly.

“One of the things we ask patients on our visits is ‘What is the most important thing for you today?’” says Madden. “If we can capture that and share it, everyone working with this patient will understand what he or she wants.”

When Madden joined The Hospice two years ago, hospice staff did not have an effective tool for systematically sharing information with other people on the patient’s hospice team. “Hospice staff was using outdated laptops that were heavy and cumbersome,” she says. “Many said that the laptops were obtrusive and made patients uncomfortable.”

Consequently, staff members did not regularly use their laptops to record or receive information about their patients. In fact, less than half of all documentation was done electronically.

The Solution: Fujitsu LifeBook Tablet PCs are light, portable and easy to use

Since 2004, The Hospice has replaced its outdated notebooks with 500 Fujitsu LifeBook® T3000/T4000 Tablet PCs. “I was sold on the LifeBook because it’s so light and portable,” says Madden. At just 4.3 pounds, the LifeBook T4000 is much less cumbersome than the laptops previously used by the hospice team.

The LifeBook Tablet PCs proved easy to use from the time Madden and her team unpacked them from their

boxes. “We were able to implement the LifeBooks ourselves,” says Madden. “The tutorial is wonderful.”

The LifeBook Tablet PC’s many easy-to-use features helped win over even the most adamant technophobes, says Madden. Whereas screens on traditional notebooks simply open and close, the 12.1” screen on the LifeBook Tablet PC’s swivels from side to side and can be flipped face up so that the screen becomes a digital notepad. Hospice staff can input information with the keyboard or use the digital pen to write handwritten notes and draw diagrams directly on the screen.

“I was sold on the LifeBook because it’s so light and portable.” -Gay Madden, Vice President of Information Systems, The Hospice

Using Suncoast Solutions, a proprietary software developed by the hospice, the staff turns on their LifeBook Tablet PCs to check their daily schedules, access up-to-date information on patients, admit new patients and chart patients’ conditions, to name a few of the applications. Recently, 50 percent of The Hospice staff completed their documentation on the LifeBook Tablet PCs at the patient’s bedside. The other 50 percent finished their documentation at home or in their cars. The Hospice’s goal, says Madden, is to eventually have 100 percent bedside documentation. “Nurses are realizing that these PCs really are not obtrusive,” says Madden, noting that one-touch application buttons make it easy for staff to launch applications, scroll up and down and change their screen orientation.

Although 150 of the LifeBook Tablet PCs use cellular broadband cards to work real time on the server, most caregivers input information and replicate it while at home or in the office. “We are waiting for the next level of cellular broadband,” says Madden. “My goal is to be 100 percent wireless when the broadband technology can support continuous connections.”

Given that most hospice staff members are in the field with patients or traveling most of their day, a long battery life is essential. The LifeBook Tablet PC averages close to five hours of power on a single battery

and comes equipped with a second battery. “We’re not even having to use a second battery,” says Madden, whose trained staff to plug in at night and hibernate when not in use. “We’re getting six to seven hours out of the batteries.”

The Benefits: Greater continuity means better care for patients and their families

Since The Hospice implemented its LifeBook Tablet PCs, the number of caregivers documenting patient information digitally has increased dramatically. Explains Madden, “When I came to The Hospice two years ago, less than 50 percent of our documentation was done electronically. Now approximately 70 percent of our documentation is done on computers, thanks in part to the Fujitsu LifeBook Tablet PC.”

Not only are more caregivers using PCs in the field, they are using their LifeBook Tablet PCs for more applications than they did in the past. The benefit of this, says Madden, is greater continuity of care. “When a team member visits a patient, they know exactly what has been going on, and they can say to the patient ‘I see that the nurse or the social worker was here and this is what is important to you this week,’” says Madden. “In many respects this technology has become a safety net for our patients.”

In fact, many patients have recognized that the LifeBook Tablet PC plays a crucial role in their care. “One of our nurses was running late and left her LifeBook in the car,” says Madden. “Her patient asked her to go





Fujitsu Computer Systems Corporation

Enterprise Sales:

1.800.831.3183
us.fujitsu.com/computers

Consumer Sales:

1.800.Fujitsu (available 24/7)
www.shopfujitsu.com

Fujitsu, the Fujitsu logo, and LifeBook are registered trademarks of Fujitsu Limited.

© 2006 Fujitsu Computer Systems Corporation.
All rights reserved.

FPC58-1543-01

back and get her PC so he wouldn't have to repeat himself to other caregivers."

Though improving quality of care was The Hospice's primary goal, it has seen improvements in other areas as a result of implementing the LifeBook Tablet PCs. For one, Madden's department has cut maintenance costs by standardizing on the Tablet PCs. In addition to being less expensive to maintain the newer notebooks, Madden also finds that it is less expensive to support and maintain solutions from a single vendor. The LifeBook Tablet PCs have

"We need caregivers' notes to bill insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid. In the old days those notes might have sat in the back of someone's car for a few days before they were turned in. Now that the notes are automated, we can process insurance claims faster and receive that revenue."

also improved the efficiency of such administrative tasks as scheduling and billing. "We need caregivers' notes to bill insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid," says Madden. "In the old days those notes might have sat in the back of someone's car for a few days before they were turned in. Now that the notes are automated, we can process insurance claims faster and receive that revenue."

How does technology help The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast patients and their families deal with the advanced stages of an illness? "Most of our patients don't have someone looking over them at all times," says Madden. "But because our staff has a device that is responsive, they are able to document information, get it to the rest of the team and make the experience better for the patient. If we can improve the quality of care for our patients, we've been successful."