



NEWCASTLE PRIVATE HOSPITAL INCREASES PATIENT CARE AND STAFF PRODUCTIVITY WITH CISCO IP COMMUNICATIONS

Largest private hospital in regional NSW uses converged network for voice, data and security ...

SYDNEY, Australia - October 15, 2004 - NIB Health Funds Limited (NIB), one of Australia's leading private health funds, has improved patient care standards and staff productivity at its Newcastle Private Hospital with an Internet Protocol (IP) Communications solution from Cisco Systems® and Allcom Networks.

The converged network provides voice, video and data communications over fixed line and a wireless local-area network (LAN) for Newcastle Private Hospital's two buildings: the 118-bed Kingston Building, which opened in April 2004, and the 44-bed Croudace building. The network provides the communications platform for a range of the hospital's facilities, including eight operating theatres, an intensive care unit, 162 in-patient beds, the rehabilitation unit, primary care areas, medical imaging facilities, birthing suites and neonatal intensive care.

Newcastle Private Hospital's Commercial Manager, James Nicol, said the network is a strategic asset for the hospital because it is helping to improve the way services are delivered to patients.

"The Cisco® network, which was deployed by Allcom Networks, gives us confidence in the security and continuity of medical systems and provides the flexibility to offer future services as advances are made in clinical systems," said Mr Nicol.

Newcastle Private Hospital has specialist systems for radiology, nurse emergency calls, fire and staff distress warnings, many of which are now running over the converged network. The migration of these specialised applications onto the Cisco IP network allows the hospital's information technology (IT) managers to improve network management by prioritising bandwidth to different systems when required. It is also less complex to add new services to the network than it was with a traditional private branch exchange network environment.

Medical staff at Newcastle Private Hospital have access to wireless telephones, which communicate via the Cisco Aironet®1200 Series access points and the Cisco network. This facility enables hospital staff to communicate more quickly with medical personnel, other staff and management, thereby improving response times to patient and staff emergency calls.

Telephony is also carried over the network, helping to reduce costs and raise productivity by enabling non-technical staff to oversee additions, moves or changes to the phone network, thereby enabling IT staff to focus on more strategic functions.

The converged IP network also helps to increase security and redundancy of vital hospital data and voice services. This includes specialist systems for radiology, Nurse Call emergency, emergency warning and building security access by using virtual (LANs) to isolate each application. This feature helps IT managers to improve management of the network by prioritizing bandwidth to different systems, adding new services more easily, preventing technical problems in one area affecting other applications and protecting hospital communications systems from security attacks such as Internet viruses.

Cisco Australia & New Zealand managing director, Ross Fowler, said; "Newcastle Private Hospital is a first-class example of how the Australian medical industry is benefiting from the strategic deployment of converged networking solutions. Through its use of a Cisco IP network, Newcastle Private Hospital is finding new ways to improve patient care and increase productivity."

Allcom regional manager, Ian Warby said; "The hospital's forward-thinking technical staff were keen to embrace technology. Their choice of a converged Cisco IP network provided them with the ability to deploy data, voice, medical imaging and video services over the same network.

Newcastle Private Hospital is also considering the use of videoconferencing and other services such as patient Internet access, automated meal ordering via telephone and wireless access to patient medical data. These services can be added to the network in the future with little additional spending on the underlying infrastructure.

The network is based on Cisco Catalyst® 4500 Series switches, Cisco CallManager software, Cisco Unity™ voice mail software, Cisco Aironet 1200 Series access points and Cisco IP Phone 7902 and IP Phone 7960 Series handsets.

About Cisco Systems

Cisco Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ: CSCO), the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet, this year celebrates 20 years of commitment to technology innovation, industry leadership, and corporate social responsibility. Information about Cisco can be found at <http://www.cisco.com>. For ongoing news, please go to <http://newsroom.cisco.com>.

About NIB

NIB Health Funds Limited (NIB) owns and operates Newcastle Private Hospital which is NSW's largest regional hospital. Information about NIB can be found at <http://nib.com.au> and Newcastle Private Hospital at <http://newph.com.au/>

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