

# Better Patient Services Begin with Connected Care Teams

## Enabling Healthcare Enterprises To Collaborate Efficiently with Fortinet Unified Communications

### Executive Summary

When lives may be on the line, secure and reliable communications should be a high priority. A unified communications (UC) solution empowers care teams to collaborate and respond to critical patient conditions quickly and efficiently. Unfortunately, relying on ineffective communications tools is a problem across industries. One study found that 42% of workers were missing critical information needed to do their jobs due to ineffective communications tools.<sup>1</sup> In healthcare, consequences can be quite serious. Poor coordination and communications among staff can result not only in loss of life but also in financial loss, due to inefficient coordination and wasted time while staff is waiting around for answers.

Unlike many one-size-fits-all phone systems, Fortinet UC gives healthcare organizations the flexibility to tailor their systems to streamline communication processes for operational efficiency. Fortinet helps simplify modern communications with features that enable increased staff productivity and accountability. The all-inclusive, yet affordable solution helps healthcare organizations deliver better customer services and patient experiences without increasing costs.

### Business Challenges in Healthcare

The healthcare industry is critically reliant on timely, accurate, and secure communications among care providers, members, and patients. Communication speed and effectiveness directly impact patient safety and outcomes. The complexity of relationships across the network, the array of regulations, and evolving technologies present many challenges for healthcare.

#### Inefficient Communications Impact Quality Patient Care

As a healthcare provider, it is crucial to deliver high-quality patient care and safety. Aging phone systems rely on old copper wires through the antiquated public switched telephone network (PSTN). Legacy equipment not only lacks the flexibility to support modern communications needs but also fails to deliver reliable services for efficient staff collaboration.

#### Security Vulnerabilities in Patient Health Information

Always a popular target because they store valuable patient information, healthcare entities are continuing to see a rise in cyberattacks. When a breach occurs, in addition to compromising confidential patient information, organizations also face a hefty penalty for violating compliance regulations. Legacy communications tools often lack security and encryption features, so they are exposed to Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) attacks and call interceptions that could potentially leak sensitive patient information.



One study estimated that 150,000 to 250,000 patients were killed as a consequence of adverse events each year. Communication failures contributed to between 50% and 80% of these events.<sup>2</sup>



Over 41 million patients were impacted by healthcare data breaches in 2019, which is 195.6% more than in 2018.<sup>3</sup>

## Increasing Healthcare Costs Result in Poor Patient Outcomes

The rising cost of healthcare directly impacts revenue of healthcare companies. Health spending in the United States is projected to reach \$6.2 trillion by 2028 with an average annual growth rate of 5.4%. This can be attributed to several factors, such as a growing population, new government policies, and facility upgrades. However, for healthcare entities, maintaining multiple aging communication systems contributes to rising operating expenses as well. These expenses must be passed on to the patients. Due to the increasing costs, fewer people are visiting clinics and physicians are registering low revenue growth. This ultimately leads to poor patient outcomes because they are not seeking and receiving the care they need.

## Secure and Reliable Communications from Fortinet

As a leader in cybersecurity, Fortinet provides healthcare enterprises with an end-to-end security ecosystem from network security to business communications. Fortinet UC, combined with FortiVoice systems and FortiFone Internet Protocol (IP) phones, is equipped with cutting-edge technologies to ensure secure and always-on connectivity, so care teams can have more productive collaboration resulting in better patient outcomes.

**FortiVoice**, the cornerstone of Fortinet UC, provides a rich set of features in calling, conferencing, fax, and more, in one integrated platform. Its intuitive web-based console helps IT administrators simplify phone management across devices and locations, and gives them visibility into system performance, thus consuming far less staff time and reducing costs.

**FortiFone**, working seamlessly with FortiVoice, comes with a wide selection of phone devices to meet different user needs and budgets—from desk and receptionist phones to conference and cordless phones. These IP phones deliver high-definition (HD) sound quality and modern design to maximize the user's calling experience. FortiFone Softclient for mobile and desktop helps care teams stay connected anywhere, anytime.

Fortinet UC is ideal for healthcare enterprises in both centralized and distributed environments. Benefits include:

- **Secure communications.** Built on the latest security and encryption technologies, FortiVoice enterprise systems protect business conversations, safeguard patient and member information, and prevent call interception or SIP attacks.
- **Business continuity.** FortiVoice Gateway's dual network connection and local survivability ensure automatic system failover and always-on-phone connectivity, so quality services can be maintained even during internet downtime.
- **Easy deployment and management.** Fortinet helps reduce the complexity in configuring multiple phone systems with an intuitive web-based console. All FortiFone IP phones are auto provisioned and work seamlessly with FortiVoice systems. Management across locations and devices can be performed from anywhere.
- **Cost savings.** Fortinet's all-inclusive solution with simple and affordable pricing reduces costs without dropping communication quality. There are no extra feature or per-user costs.
- **Enterprise-grade features.** Featuring integrated HD voice, conferencing, fax, and more, Fortinet enables every user to collaborate easily and efficiently without switching to different communications tools. Employees can enjoy secure and clear conversations with staff, patients, or members, regardless of their locations or devices.
- **End-to-end protection.** Fortinet delivers a comprehensive security ecosystem for end-to-end protection. Recognized as a leader in cybersecurity by Gartner and other industry analysts, Fortinet is a proven vendor with a broad portfolio of solutions ranging from comprehensive network security to business communications.

## Conclusion

Fast-evolving industry regulations, technological innovations, and patient expectations create a new environment for hospitals and medical practices that requires secure and effective communications.

Fortinet's all-inclusive and affordable UC solution provides excellent savings for healthcare enterprises of any size. With integrated calling, conferencing, fax, and mobility, Fortinet helps healthcare professionals do more with less. Flexibility in the solution enables each office to customize for unique business needs and optimize for operational efficiency. Fortinet UC enables healthcare organizations to provide quality care promptly, lowering costs while increasing patient satisfaction.

<sup>1</sup> ["State of Employee Communication and Engagement Report,"](#) Dynamic Signal, March 28, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> ["Patient Handoffs: The Gap Where Mistakes Are Made,"](#) Patient Safety Monitor Journal, November 21, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> ["December 2019 Healthcare Data Breach Report,"](#) HIPAA Journal, January 21, 2020.



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