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Polycom IP Video Communication Solution Adds An Extra Dimension To Care For Cystic Fibrosis Patients

Polycom video communications help protect sufferers from the risks of cross-infection while improving patient care

SLOUGH, Berkshire, April 9, 2003: West Midlands Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre (Ward 26), situated in Heartlands Hospital Birmingham, a centre of excellence for cystic fibrosis (CF) treatment, has recently deployed VS4000™ and ViaVideo™ video communication systems from Polycom, the world's leader in video and voice conferencing, conferencing bridges and integrated web collaboration solutions, to improve the quality of patient care.

Cystic fibrosis is the UK's most common inherited life-threatening disease with around 7,500 sufferers in the UK (6,000 under the age of 25) of which 250 adult sufferers are in the West Midlands region. As part of the progressive approach to patient care, cystic fibrosis patients at Heartlands Hospital have their own Patient Advocate, Tom McLoughlin, who is a fellow patient with first hand experience of the challenges patients face.

Through the use of video communications, deployed over Heartlands Intranet, Mr McLoughlin is able to play a key role in co-ordinating out-patient care for those with cystic fibrosis, and can advise on a range of therapies that are available to patients. He can also offer counselling on social, financial and work issues that might affect patients and their families through the CF Trust and other organisations.

Video communication solutions that enable face-to-face meetings are an important factor in reducing the acute risk of cross-infection between the Advocate and patients, defending their health and reducing potential resultant treatment costs for the Hospital. In addition, these solutions eliminate the problems associated with patients having to travel to the hospital.

Dr. David Stableforth, Chief Consultant at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital comments, "Cystic fibrosis is a wasting affliction of the metabolism that causes fluid to build up in the body, triggering lung infections and other problems. It is hard to over-estimate the importance of patients' access to the Advocate with whom they can share their anxieties on a variety of issues, such as the worry associated with awaiting a heart and lung transplant, for example".

Video communications are also particularly useful when a paediatric patient, who has previously been treated at an outlying hospital, makes the transition to becoming an adult patient at Heartlands. The Patient Advocate will use video communications to arrange a meeting between the newcomer and a patient from the Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre so that the young patient can talk through any issues or worries that they might have.

Advocate Tom McLoughlin can set up a face-to-face video meeting from an interview room for out-patients attending clinics, which is linked to his office on Ward 26, using Polycom ViaVideo personal video conferencing systems deployed on PC's, in both the interview room and Mr McLoughlin's office. Alternatively, he can hold video meetings with in-patients on Ward 26 via a Polycom portable VS4000 conferencing system, which can be set up in the patient's en-suite room within the ward area for those who are hospitalised and whose mobility is limited.

Mr McLoughlin explains, "Many patients live a considerable distance from Heartlands Hospital and can be spared the time, effort and cost involved in travelling to the hospital for these supportive face-to-face meetings as long as their local hospital has a video communications system or somewhere that we can set one up."



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The Polycom VS4000 and two ViaVideo systems were supplied and installed by Network 5, the specialist video conferencing reseller. Its Managing Director Amanda Martin says, "The Polycom VS4000 and ViaVideo systems were chosen by Heartlands Hospital to play this hugely important role in patient care because they are easy to use and manage. From the patients' point of view, the systems provide very high quality pictures and sound so that you really feel close to the person you are speaking to."

Tony Heyworth, Marketing Director Polycom EMEA comments, "We are delighted that our systems are being used to advance patient care for those who face such a range of challenges due to their condition. The West Midlands Adult Centre at Heartlands Hospital underlines our forward thinking and leadership in the field of telemedicine and illustrates why Polycom video communication solutions are being deployed within the healthcare sector across Europe."
About Polycom VS4000

The VS4000 is the first rack-mounted interactive video communications systems to deliver TV-quality video that provides lifelike interaction and high video resolution. Powerful, yet simple-to-use the VS4000 also features Polycom's market-leading audio technology that provides maximum clarity in rooms of all sizes.

About Polycom ViaVideo

ViaVideo's breakthrough design is the first and only IP desktop video communications appliance that combines a high-performance multimedia processor, microphone and camera into a compact, single unit. Easy to use, ViaVideo works by simply plugging into a desktop or laptop PC via the universal serial bus (USB) port, eliminating the need to open the PC to install a card for professional quality video communications.

About Polycom

Polycom, Inc. is the world's technology leader of high-quality, easy-to-use video, voice, data and web conferencing and collaboration solutions. The Polycom Office™ is our continued commitment to make distance communications as natural and interactive as being there by providing best-in-class conferencing solutions that are interoperable, integrated and intuitive to the user. The Polycom EMEA (formerly Polyspan) HQ is based in Slough, Berkshire in the UK. Polycom EMEA operates in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. For additional information call 00 800 00 33 44 55 or visit the Polycom website www.polycom.com.

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