



SCHSA Uses Sydion Solutions to Evolve Emergency Patient Tracking and Inventory Management Processes



“We have successfully migrated from our previous manual paper based systems for tracking patients and disaster inventory, to Sydion’s electronic systems. As a result, our tracking and reporting capabilities in all of these areas have greatly improved. In addition to tracking patients and resources, we are now able to track vaccination clinic visitors using the eMET Patient Tracking system, and in addition to daily use for emergency inventory tracking, the iCAM inventory system was used during the H1N1 outbreak for tracking the movement and distribution of H1N1 vaccine, as well as our flu prophylaxis stockpile. Today with Sydion’s tools, support and training we feel we are as ready as we can be!”

- Randy Fike, Applications Specialist III Stanislaus County



The Stanislaus County Health Services Agency (SCHSA) provides health care services to the community via its network of federally qualified health center - look alike outpatient clinics, public health services, an indigent health care program, and a family medicine residency program. The Agency, located in Stanislaus County, California, is about 90 miles east of San Francisco, and 75 miles south of Sacramento. The HSA is operated by Stanislaus County, serving close to 500,000 patients and community residents each year.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and with concerns about the potential for local flooding and other natural disasters having the potential to displace the citizens in the communities, Stanislaus County Health Services Agency determined the need for a patient and resource tracking system. In early 2007, with grant funds from the CDC and Homeland Security, SCHSA began the search for an electronic system to perform these tasks, and after reviewing the few available systems, the Sydion eMET program was chosen for their patient tracking system. Shortly following the implementation of eMET, SCHSA also implemented Sydion’s iCAM disaster inventory tracking system.



Like most organizations around the country, SCHSA realized there was a “gap” in their data collection and ability to utilize this data during an emergency. The patient’s paper record or vaccination record was all that was available. During school vaccine tracking, SCHSA used a simple immunization registry, but no real patient tracking tool. SCHSA now utilizes Sydion’s eMET solution for emergency electronic patient tracking.

“Sydion offered the most comprehensive set of tools and seamless integration between the field equipment and the enterprise components. Cost was also a factor and Sydion was the most cost effective.” - Randy Fike



The growing demand for grant accountability reporting fueled the need to improve inventory tracking as well. SCHSA used Excel spread sheets for tracking items in their surge trailers, and used paper and pencil forms for keeping track of seasonal flu vaccine. This data was then added to another Excel spreadsheet as inventory was used. This was time consuming, prone to error and did not enable SCHSA to effectively use of the data. The solution for SCHSA was Sydion’s iCAM solution to provide real-time tracking for inventory, assets & maintenance records.

Today, SCHSA has an enterprise wide solution for patient tracking (eMET) and inventory/asset management (iCAM). These tools provide visibility and segmentation of data through both applications across five hospitals in the region and support data collections from more than 20 handheld wireless scanning devices.

SCHSA ensures preparedness with weekly ongoing “Triage Thursdays” training events. The training along with well-defined protocols and policies ensures they achieve their objectives no matter what the event is.

To learn more about electronic patient tracking or inventory/asset management, please contact David Reinartz of Sydion directly (512) 771 1429 or email dreinarz@sydion.net .

Appendix: Q&A with Randy Fike of Stanislaus County

Q: *What were the primary challenges you had tracking patients prior to Sydion?*

A: The primary challenge of tracking patients was not having a way to do it with enough efficiency to keep the records current. If not for the scanners, the process would otherwise be paper and pencil and in addition to the time for other paperwork, this would have held up the patient flow. Using the Sydion eMET system has allowed us to track patients using wrist bands and in addition to the ability to track their movement throughout a facility or between facilities, we are able to capture other demographic information, such as the timestamp, age, gender, what type of shot they received, their age range, and zip code. This information is then used to track where people come from, when we're most busy, and the age and gender groups most likely to come to our clinics. This has helped us plan future events and plan the layout and staffing requirements. As a result we have become very efficient at running flu clinics and this reduced the impact of last year's H1N1 outbreak.

Q: *Please tell us which Grant(s) supplied the funds for Sydion?*

A: The HPP and CDC grants were the primary funding sources for the eMET and iCAM systems. Also, our OES used Homeland Security funds to purchase the eMET systems for our five hospitals. These kits included (6) Dolphin 9900 handhelds w/eMET Licenses and docking stations, (1) Dell laptop with eMET server license, (1) AppleTalk AP, and one extra eMET license for a desktop at the hospital. All five of our hospitals received one of these kits.

Q: *You mentioned that 9/11 & Katrina were big drivers for Stanislaus Co to consider an electronic tracking tool. How did these events drive attention to these issues at Stanislaus? What were some of the key lessons learned from these events that you wanted to ensure you didn't re-create?*

A: Actually, the HPP and CDC grant guidance required us to implement some form of electronic patient tracking. This was the primary motivator. We tend to like to be as cutting edge as we can, so we were what I would consider an early adopter, especially considering the size of our Agency. As far as Katrina being a driver, the exposure of the mess that they were faced with was pretty sobering for every county in the country. I don't think any jurisdiction wants to be faced with a situation like that, and the hope is that having a system in place will help with family re-unification and general patient and evacuee tracking. The biggest issue they were faced with was not knowing where people were sent once they left the Superdome, and people ended up all over the country.

Q: *What were your primary concerns in selecting a patient tracking partner? Did you have different needs for an inventory tracking partner?*

A: Responsiveness, great service, and an innovative spirit are always my primary reasons for going with a vendor, followed by competitive pricing as the budget is always a major driver too. We interviewed several vendors and I always look for the vendor that offers something extra in terms of support or functionality, and Sydion offered both, more functionality and the support has been excellent.

Q: *Please describe your Sydion implementation process.*

A: We selected Sydion and signed the license agreement in May 2007. We first implemented the eMET system with (9) Symbol MC50 handhelds and then added 11 more about a year later for a total of 20. We also have 2 Dolphin 9900's and an enterprise server for both the eMET and iCAM systems and a couple of laptop licenses for these too. We used the system during a large flu vaccination clinic in October 2007 to put the system to the test. We vaccinated and fully tracked over 3000 people in about four hours, tracking the time it took for them to move through the entire clinic and every stop in between. We used it again in November 2008 and then used it for the real thing at every one of our 7 H1N1 community clinics at the end of 09 and through February of this year. We scanned and tracked over 10,000 patients this season. We're planning to use the system for our seasonal flu clinics this year and going forward. This keeps us in practice.

Now that the hospitals have their own systems, we're beginning to use the system during our monthly triage drills as well. The goal is to have all five using the system during the drills at an enterprise level, sending real-time data to our enterprise server throughout the drill. We are on our way to achieving that goal.

Q: *What would be the strategic goals for Stanislaus County in utilizing Sydion?*

A: Our strategic goals were to build a comprehensive emergency preparation plan supported with electronic tracking and global visibility to our assets/materials/maintenance records. Integration of all our Sydion components and partner participation are critical to continued viability. Planning and drilling are the only way to keep systems, primarily focused on emergency use, viable. I'm also always looking for creative ways to incorporate these systems into the daily routine, as long as it improves efficiency or quality and the user community buys into it.

Q: *Please describe the benefits for Stanislaus Co now that you are using Sydion.*

A: We now know where our materials are, have well-defined protocols and we can leverage this data throughout all of our operations. A primary benefit has been efficiency - we now know real-time what inventory we have in house, and how much our partners have. We save a lot of time and have much more useful data. It has also driven us to create and maintain better processes and we have seen efficiencies in the new processes. The reports and data we have extracted from both eMET and iCAM have helped drive business decisions and create efficiencies.

Randy Fike, Stanislaus County rfike@schsa.org (209) 525 4859

To learn more about Sydion's electronic patient tracking or inventory/asset management, please contact David Reinartz of Sydion (512) 771 1429 or [dreinarz@sydion.net](mailto:dreinartz@sydion.net) .