

Easter Seals Midwest Grows Services with Vertical Wave IP



Customer Snapshot

EASTER SEALS MIDWEST

St. Louis, Missouri



LOCATIONS

7 cities throughout
Missouri

SYSTEM USERS

800+ caregivers and
administrators, including
nearly 100 remote users

VERTICAL SOLUTION

- Wave IP Communications Platform
- WaveNet
- ViewPoint Desktop
- ViewPoint Mobile

Technology That Grows with People

Since replacing its old phone system and communications technology nearly a decade ago with the Vertical Wave IP™ Communications Platform, Easter Seals Midwest has relied heavily on Vertical Communications® to help the nonprofit improve its workflows and enable continual growth to better meet the needs of the people it serves. The organization has nearly 1,500 employees, with offices in Cape Girardeau, Columbia, Joplin, Kansas City, Poplar Bluff, Saint Louis and Springfield, Missouri. The organization provides autism, community living, employment and early childhood services for nearly 4,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities, ensuring that they can learn, live, work and participate in accepting communities.

To better meet the ever-increasing demand for quality developmental disability services, Easter Seals Midwest recently merged three similar organizations together. All three had different phone systems, creating a number of logistical obstacles. The agency needed to quickly integrate all staff members onto one network and bring them up-to-speed on a single communications system without time-consuming training. Another challenge was networking incongruent equipment and locations together without disrupting services and support to clients.

“We need to deliver the best possible services to remain the provider of choice in our market,” said Shawn Aller, director of information technology at Easter Seals Midwest. “By merging three organizations, we inherited separate phone

systems with different carriers, contracts and multiple traditional phone lines. When we contracted with Vertical for the Wave IP system, not only did the company provide an excellent solution, but it also managed our contractual logistics, making sure the system was hugely cost-effective."

With the Wave IP platform, Easter Seals Midwest has been able to consolidate network carrier costs by as much as \$2,000 per month at each of its locations, while using the system's superior flexibility and advanced features to help the agency's dispersed staff stay connected, operate at peak efficiency and provide innovative services for people with developmental disabilities.

"As the Easter Seals Midwest organization evolves, the Wave IP platform is able to remain in lockstep with the agency's communications requirements," said Vertical account representative Susan Enger. "The Wave IP delivers automatic system updates, which negate any disruption for loading new software. This keeps the system current and secure, and able to deliver the functionalities that staff and clients depend on."

Easter Seals Midwest also deployed Vertical's WaveNet technology, enabling the organization to seamlessly network all of its locations across the state, resulting in improved reliability and lower operating costs.

"The WaveNet application is one of the strongest elements of the platform," said Aller. "It's a differentiator for an organization as distributed as we are. The ability to utilize four-digit dialing from location to location has a huge impact on our ability to work faster, communicate more fluidly and attend to our clientele more diligently."

Mobility Improves Service

For the nearly 100 staff members who support clients in the community but also need to maintain regular communication with supervisors at various offices, Wave IP's ViewPoint Mobile application ensures they stay connected. This powerful tool extends the unified communications capabilities inherent in the system directly to remote employee cell phones. Mobile staff members are now able to call and instant-message supervisors and coworkers wherever they are.

For more information on products and solutions from Vertical Communications®, contact your Authorized Vertical Business Partner, call 1-877-VERTICAL, or visit www.vertical.com.

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Shawn Aller
Director of Information Technology
Easter Seals Midwest

According to Aller, "The mobility feature makes interactions seamless. Our remote staff members always have quick access to a supervisor in any situation. And to our clients and those individuals outside our network, it appears as if our staff is calling from the office."

Conference-calling used to be another obstacle for Easter Seals Midwest. The organization contracted with a third-party conference bridge provider, racking up per-minute fees of between \$200 and \$1,200 a month. Now, team members simply schedule calls using the Wave IP's built-in MeetMe Conference Room application.

"If we needed to do a conference with an outside party, we'd ask them to set up a bridge on their end, because our own costs were so prohibitive. Rather than set up in-house conference calls, we'd all physically gather in a conference room," said Aller. "Now, it's as easy as scheduling an Outlook appointment, and the monumental third-party costs have been eliminated."

Supporting Nearly 1,500 Team Members with a Staff of Eight

Easter Seals Midwest is looking to expand its service area by providing supplemental programming to similar organizations in neighboring geographies. Thanks to the intuitive ease of the Wave IP's ViewPoint user interface, the organization is able to support a staff of nearly 1,500 with only eight full-time IT staff members.

"The Wave IP system has made us a more agile company, enabling us to focus on delivering exceptional services for people with developmental disabilities. With this high degree of scalability and functionality, we can take advantage of growth opportunities whenever they arise," Aller confirmed. "Thanks to Vertical, our communications infrastructure is the last thing we worry about."

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