

## Disaster Recovery: The Clock is Ticking... Is Your Hospital Ready?

*By definition, a disaster is "a sudden, calamitous event bringing great damage."*

*We can't schedule disasters so that we're better able to deal with them, but we can put systems in place to minimize their damage.*

**John D. Archbold Memorial Hospital**, located in Thomasville, Georgia, is an 800-bed facility that has been serving the people of Southern Georgia and Northern Florida since 1925. It's the anchor of a 5-hospital network that also includes Brooks County Hospital, Early Memorial Hospital, Grady General Hospital and Mitchell County Hospital. Although geographically separated by some 120 miles, these five facilities rely on a common Siemens hospital information system and often provide care to a shared patient population—so system downtime presents special challenges.

"Access and response time to our hospital information system was slow," explains Bill Zimmermann, VP and CIO, Archbold Memorial Hospital. "We had to replace it, and that was going to require an estimated 18-24 hours of down-time of our host system." Rather than viewing such a formidable challenge as an obstacle, Zimmermann and his team saw it as an opportunity to refine and test their HIPAA-required Disaster Recovery procedures.

"We're an extremely tech-savvy hospital," says Zimmermann. "We have bedside charting, document imaging, and digital x-ray (PACS) and Medication Administration Checking, so if the computer goes down, we lose contact with all patient clinical information.

With our old procedures for handling downtime, we had to wait for the main computer to come back up. That wasn't going to work for this scheduled event."

In order to prepare for the scheduled down time, Zimmermann and his team worked together to anticipate how they could maintain patient safety and services. "We examined every aspect of patient care: 'How would we register a patient? How would we order lab work? How would we retrieve results? How could we ensure that a patient got medications ordered and administered on a timely basis?'"

"During our scheduled downtime, we knew our biggest challenge was assigning patient identification numbers and maintaining an accurate patient census," says Zimmermann. "This was a huge patient safety issue, and it was required if we were going to track patient activity in our system." FormFast developed a "mini-registration" that allowed hospital admissions staff to create an ER registration and admissions packet. This, in turn, allowed them to create armbands, labels and admission sheets. "The mini registration not only helped ensure that services to patients weren't interrupted, but it also met with Joint Commission compliance requirements," adds Sandra Day, Archbold Operations Manager and Project Manager of the hospital's FormFast installation.



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*"The FormFast enterprise document automation software, including the downtime module, was live in 6 weeks. We had 19-hours of downtime in our system; and we brought it completely up to date 2 hours after coming back online. We had no sentinel events, no lost data. We developed a downtime response. We tested it, and it works..."*

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## Disaster Recovery: The Clock is Ticking... **Is Your Hospital Ready?** *(continued from other side)*

The hospital needed a downtime package that would allow staff to process admissions, even with the host system down. And with 75 registration points throughout its network, ease of use was critical. The "mini-registration" procedure required no additional training of the hospital's staff. "That's pivotal," says Zimmermann. "With 5 locations, separated by 120 miles, special training would have required a significant commitment of time and manpower."

But the challenges didn't end there. Once the system upgrade was complete and the computer system was back online, all patient activity had to be reconciled with the host system before hospital staff could again access the system. Careful planning and the addition of FormFast software paid off: Zimmermann reports that this data reconciliation took less than two hours once the system was again operational.

### **Added Benefits**

FormFast enabled Archbold's seamless downtime experience, but that hasn't been the only benefit to the five hospitals. Archbold was also able to take control of all its electronic forms and related forms design activity in a cooperative venture with their forms vendor. According to Lou Ellen Parker, Director of Admissions for Archbold Medical Center, "With our previous vendor, we were waiting 6-8 weeks to get updates on forms. On top of that, we had cost issues. Even the simplest changes to a form might cost \$800. We chose FormFast because we liked the downtime module and the self-design option. With FormFast we have real-time changes; better control, and we're not paying an outside vendor to revise our forms."

And once the forms are updated, additional savings accrue. Day addresses the savings in manpower: "Previously, when we revised our forms, we had to load changes onto each individual printer—which might cause the printer to crash—which then required more manpower to correct the problem. We then had to take the changes to all of our areas, where the experience was often repeated. With FormFast, we make a change and it goes to all printers at once." Adds Parker, "In addition to savings, having the ability to make all the changes in real time is a plus for patient safety."

Zimmermann and his team are understandably pleased with the results of their labor: "It was a slam dunk," he says. "The FormFast enterprise document automation software, including the downtime module, was live in 6 weeks. We had 19-hours of downtime in our system; and we brought it completely up to date 2 hours after coming back online. We had no sentinel events, no lost data. We developed a downtime response. We tested it, and it works. FormFast is a major piece of our policy, and an integral part of our downtime and emergency recovery," he says.

### **Pathway to Excellence**

Since its successful information recovery experience, the hospital has expanded its use of FormFast software. "A key component of our electronic patient record is our Siemens document imaging system," says Day. "To assist in preparing documents for scanning, FormFast generates bar-coded cover pages and divider pages for each patient registered. Hospital personnel in areas such as ER, cardiovascular, and preadmission gather information such as release forms, insurance cards and clinical results. This generates a large amount of paper. As these pages accrue, they're placed behind the bar coded divider in the patient's record. At the end of the day, all the pages are scanned by our high speed imaging system—and are available online the following day." Once again, Archbold is putting technology to work to enhance patient safety.

To learn more about Disaster Recovery software, go to [www.Formfast.com](http://www.Formfast.com), email [info@formfast.com](mailto:info@formfast.com) or call 1-800-218-3512.

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please contact: [info@formfast.com](mailto:info@formfast.com)  
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