



“ Getting 15 competing hospitals to work together in a crisis is a challenge. Everbridge makes my life much easier. Make your life easy: get Everbridge.”

Chris Bellone, CHEP
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
Rockford Health System

CHRIS BELLONE, ROCKFORD HEALTH SYSTEM

Chris Bellone is the guy who gets 15 competing hospitals to work together in a crisis. As the disaster coordinator for the State of Illinois Region 1 Emergency Medical System (EMS), Bellone represents a region whose mission is to bring together leaders from competing hospitals to work as a disaster planning and response consortium. Additionally, Bellone oversees the preparedness efforts for Rockford Health System’s nearly 3,000 employees— including those at Rockford Memorial Hospital, a 391-bed, level-1 trauma center—and is responsible for the Rockford Health System’s Joint Commission Emergency Management Chapter compliance. Bellone is a big believer that regional hospital emergency preparedness success depends on collaboration, communications, and interdependence. When a crisis happens, the community must pull together.

GETTING CONSENSUS ACROSS 15 HOSPITALS

Recognizing the need to improve emergency communications within and among hospitals, a 15-person committee (comprised of one member from each of the hospitals in the Illinois Region 1 EMS) launched an extensive evaluation of incident notification systems. The committee selected Everbridge as its region-wide incident notification provider by unanimous decision for its ease of use and ability to reach emergency responders immediately in a crisis. Adopting the Everbridge Aware system, which was purchased with a government grant, enables the Illinois Region 1 EMS and its member hospitals to efficiently and effectively address emergencies of any size and scope that call for rapid communications. Because the system can be launched from anywhere, Bellone can send notifications at a moment’s notice to advise emergency contacts in the region to update bed status and report online to the State.

SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING H1N1 FLU AND THE STRATEGIC NATIONAL STOCKPILE DEPLOYMENT

During the H1N1 influenza (swine flu) outbreak, Bellone used Everbridge Aware extensively to manage incident response and Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) deployment within Rockford Memorial and the 14 other regional hospitals. When early reports of H1N1 started on Friday, April 24, 2009, Bellone conferred with the disaster POD medical director, George B. Beranek, MD, to determine when to start planning and response initiatives regarding the potential outbreak. At that early stage, the disaster incident command team decided to send a nonemergency alert to key contacts in the region to make them aware of the situation, advise them on preventative measures, and let them know that the regional hospital coordinating center was monitoring the issue. As the situation escalated, Bellone used the Everbridge system set up daily conference briefings, which were critical to response planning while keeping demands on staff time to a minimum.

During this same time, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) needed to deploy federal assets including medical materials and supplies from the SNS to all hospitals

in the EMS region. An IDPH EMS Region 1 representative contacted Bellone to inform all EMS Region 1 hospitals of estimated delivery times. This intervention saved organizations from making a series of calls. Bellone promptly launched a notification from offsite with details about this critical deployment. Over the weekend of May 2, Bellone

coordinated an afternoon briefing outside normal business hours via the Everbridge system with key members of the hospital management team and first responders to further update all team members about operational changes. On May 8, with the potential outbreak easing, Bellone notified all key members via the Everbridge system of a wrap-up briefing and the strategy to return to normal operations with heightened awareness. The ease of accessibility and use of the Everbridge system significantly enhanced the regional healthcare coordination center hospital's ability to maintain continuity of communications throughout the potential outbreak. Bellone received commitment from hospital leadership to continue to move forward with additional strategies for use of this important communications solution at all levels.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND MORE

Rockford Health System uses Everbridge Aware for many initiatives such as middle-of-the-night staffing recalls, management briefings, evacuation exercises, and compliance with Joint Commission emergency communication requirements. Bellone also uses the robust quantifiable information from Everbridge system reports in afteraction reports and plans as evidence of successful communications and documentation of compliance with requirements from the Joint Commission as well as other regulatory agencies. Thanks to highly visible successes with Everbridge, hospital and regional disaster preparedness leadership continues to be impressed with emergency response capabilities and is expanding system usage.

PEER-TO-PEER: CHRIS' ADVICE

- Use Everbridge's • conference notifications for emergency response briefings and strategy sessions as part of social distancing measures to maintain infection control.
- Start small and use the system as much as you can to get buy-in and continued support from Administration.
- When meeting with leadership, schedule a demonstration of the system to contact people 15 minutes into the session. The group will witness the effectiveness of the system firsthand.
- Use the system frequently and keep system uses as a benchmark of success and return on investment for future needs.
- Design messages in advance to ensure the emergency notification messages are effective and easy to understand.
- Use simple language suited to the level of the intended audiences.
- Collaborate with other organizations in the community to minimize the impact of a disaster. Use the Everbridge system to maintain continuity of communications across and outside the organization throughout the incident.
- Quantifiable broadcast results provide evidence of successful communications. Use reports from the Everbridge system in after-action reports and for compliance with requirements from Joint Commission and other regulatory agencies.
- Test regularly and use notification as an opportunity to identify communication gaps and update contact information.

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG), is a global software company that provides critical communications and enterprise safety applications that enable customers to automate and accelerate the process of keeping people safe and businesses running during critical events. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices in San Francisco, Beijing and London.

For a full product description, along with best practices and product details please see the Everbridge User Guide and Everbridge University.