Sound Masking Solutions for Hospitals
Qt PRO™

CAMBRIDGE SOUND MANAGEMENT

www.csmQt.com
The Medicare Funding Challenge

As Medicare ties funding to patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes, hospitals are seeking any advantage that might help them excel in a fast-approaching, mandatory, competitive environment.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will base a portion of hospital reimbursement on how well a hospital performs and improves in a combination of clinical and patient satisfaction measures. Increasing acoustic privacy through sound masking can help hospitals improve patient satisfaction, enhance quality of care, and ultimately raise key Medicare metrics that impact Medicare funding.

Patient experience is defined by Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey measure. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has recently launched a new initiative which will reward hospitals for the quality of care they provide to people with Medicare.

Administered by the CMS, VBP program marks the beginning of an historic change in how Medicare pays healthcare providers and facilities. For the first time, 3,500 hospitals across the country will be paid for inpatient acute care services based on quality of care, not just the quantity of the services they provide.

CMS will measure hospital performance using two metrics: clinical process of care and patient experience. Under the VBP program, Medicare will make incentive payments to hospitals beginning in FY 2013 based on these metrics. The payments will reflect a hospital’s overall achievement, improvement and consistency in the performance measure.

VBP seeks to reward hospitals for improving the quality of care. Hospitals having better clinical and patient satisfaction scores will receive a larger Medicare reimbursement. VBP metrics indicate that generally hospitals perform higher on clinical scores than on patient satisfaction (HCAHPS) scores.

A recent study on the financial projection for Medicare VBP estimates 75% of hospitals face losses.
Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) Metrics

HCAHPS is the first national, standardized, publicly reported patient survey regarding hospital care. It was designed by CMS and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to:

- Create incentives for hospitals to improve their quality of care.
- Enhance public accountability in healthcare by increasing the transparency of the quality of hospital care provided.
- Produce comparable data on the patient’s perspective of care that allows objective and meaningful comparisons between hospitals on domains that are important to consumers.

The HCAHPS survey measures a patient’s perception of care along 10 dimensions, ranging from nurse communication to quietness of the hospital environment. Hospitals need to obtain at least a 50th percentile in patient satisfaction scores (HCAHPS) to receive achievement points for full Medicare funding. Patient satisfaction results are publicly reported online, allowing users to compare facility ratings side-by-side.

A Sample Report

Here is a sample of patient survey questions and responses for three hospitals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATIENT SURVEY QUESTIONS</th>
<th>HOSPITAL 1</th>
<th>HOSPITAL 2</th>
<th>HOSPITAL 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients who reported that their nurses “always” communicated well.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients who reported that their doctors “always” communicated well.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients who reported that they “always” received help as soon as they wanted.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients who reported that their pain was “always” well controlled.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients who reported that staff “always” explained about medicines before giving it to them.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients who reported that their room and bathroom were “always” clean.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients who reported that the area around their room was “always” quiet at night.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QI PRO SOUND MASKING

QI PRO sound masking can influence the results!

Survey results are publicly available at: www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov

What the National HCAHPS Data Reveals...

With over 8.8 million surveys received from nearly 4,000 hospitals, a wealth of data now exists on HCAHPS scores (www.hcahps.org, March 2011). As the chart below indicates, the HCAHPS measure for “quiet at night” reveals that nationally, patients are marginally satisfied with the hospital noise near their rooms at night. Consequently, hospitals across the board are receiving the lowest of all HCAHPS scores from discharged patients on the key measure of “quiet at night.”

Both Press Ganey and a wide range of academic research indicates correlations between high patient satisfaction and high quality of care. Hospitals are looking for ways to boost their HCAHPS scores by investing in areas that improve their overall quality of patient care. Now, more than ever, hospitals cannot afford to lose HCAHPS points due to patient dissatisfaction.
Promotes Sleep

Promotes sleep and improves medical outcomes

Confidentiality

Reduces the intelligibility of confidential conversations

Speech Privacy

Enhances patient speech privacy

The hospital’s post-stay Press Ganey survey of 57 patients on the issue of noise in and around the room showed statistically significant promise. The results were dramatic—a 33% increase in patient satisfaction.  

4 It can be seen that sound masking has the most significant effect in promoting ICU patients’ sleep, producing an improvement of 42.7%.

Sleep is an important part of the healing process, but noise from hallways and nurses’ stations often prevents patients from getting the rest they need. Excessive noise and the resulting lack of sleep tops the list of patient complaints. Not only does a noisy hospital environment disturb patient sleep, it weakens their immune system and impacts recuperation. When surveyed upon discharge, patients express their dissatisfaction with low ratings on questions about “Quiet at Night,” “Likelihood to Recommend,” and “Hospital Overall.”

Studies show that patients in rooms with sound masking find the sound of the masking helps to shorten the time it takes to fall asleep, does not disrupt sleep itself, and reduces sleep distraction. Patients have reported they slept better, felt it was quieter, and were more satisfied with staff care. In addition, their incidence of re-hospitalization was lower. As HCAHPS results demonstrate, satisfied patients are also more likely to recommend their hospital to a friend or family member. Even small changes in patient loyalty can trigger significant profits.

Qt PRO Sound Masking Increases Patient Satisfaction

As noise in hospitals continues to be disruptive for patients, caregivers are looking for ways to address unwanted noise. Qt PRO provides continuous and consistent background sound designed to reduce hospital noise distractions. This sound masking technology dramatically contributes to patient satisfaction because it effectively:

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Qt PRO Reduces the Intelligibility of Confidential Conversations

During shift changes and physician rounds, small staff groups frequently congregate in hallways just outside patients’ rooms. These groups are often engaged in medical discussions and confidential staff conversations may be overheard by people in hallways and patients’ rooms.

When Qt PRO emitters are placed in patients’ rooms and adjacent hallways, they provide the appropriate sound level to mask confidential conversations.

Managing healthcare facilities’ acoustic environments by lowering noise levels and introducing appropriate levels of background sound to mask intruding noise can improve healthcare delivery.

Qt PRO Enhances Speech Privacy and Patient Confidentiality

Speech privacy is particularly important in public spaces such as reception areas and open counters common in pharmacies, where privacy is virtually non-existent. If patients can overhear other people’s discussions, they feel they might also be heard by others. As a result, patients may feel that they cannot fully discuss their issues and questions with other healthcare professionals.

Qt PRO sound masking makes conversation more difficult to hear or comprehend. Because it reduces speech intelligibility, privacy is improved and a patient’s fear of being overheard is reduced. The resulting increase in auditory privacy helps fulfill HIPAA-related requirements.

References:

Maintaining speech privacy in healthcare settings helps reduce medical errors as it supports open conversations among patients, families, and Patient Care Teams (PCTs) and is believed to influence patient satisfaction.
Qt PRO—the Ideal Solution for Today’s Hospital Environment

Qt PRO provides a sound masking solution for both private and public areas of the hospital environment. In addition, Qt PRO is easily installed in both new and existing hospital facilities with minimal ceiling disruption. Qt PRO sound masking offers a nearly invisible solution and requires little to no maintenance.

When emitters are installed in physicians’ offices and exam rooms, the omni-directional background sound prevents conversations from being overheard in adjacent areas and protects patient speech privacy.

Emitters installed in hallways and in patients’ rooms reduce speech intelligibility and maintain the confidentiality of medical conversations.

Emitters in patients’ rooms reduce the impact of distracting noise and conversations, and enable patients to sleep better and recuperate faster.

Emitters placed in the waiting area provide the necessary sound masking to keep patient conversations private.

Zoning Flexibility
Qt PRO is designed to meet the unique acoustic requirements of any hospital space whether large or small. Individual zones can range from 100 sq ft to 36,000 sq ft to provide the appropriate sound levels.

Private
- Patients’ Rooms
- Doctors’ Offices
- Examination Room
- Treatment Rooms
- Psychiatric Counseling Rooms
- Hospital Administration

Public
- Waiting Rooms
- Emergency Exam Rooms
- Patient Registration
- Business Areas
- Pharmacies
- Nurses’ Stations

Emitters in patients’ rooms reduce the impact of distracting noise and conversations, and enable patients to sleep better and recuperate faster.
Cambridge Sound Management, LLC, (CSM) is the developer of Qt PRO™ sound masking, paging and music systems. CSM was founded in 1999 with the specific objective of developing a new generation of sound masking technology to provide better performance with less effort than the dated approach of plenum based systems. Qt PRO features cutting edge distributed audio technology that combines extraordinary audio performance, low impact installation, low energy consumption and affordability. Qt PRO is distributed by a network of worldwide partners including, manufacturer representatives, AV dealers, systems integrators and installers. Qt PRO systems provide speech privacy solutions in millions of square feet worldwide and are highly cost effective for any size space-spot treatments to campus wide installations of unlimited size. Qt PRO is a trademark of Cambridge Sound Management.