

## **PRINT -Twiage App Helping OSF Hospital Prepare ED for Incoming Patients**

*New Isolation module added for suspected COVID-19 patients*

During any medical emergency, time matters. OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center two years ago began using a secured, privacy protected app to expedite care and now a new upgrade is helping local EMS better communicate information about patients suspected of having COVID-19.

[Twiage](#) is an app that was developed by physicians and emergency medical technicians that allows emergency responders to share patient information with hospital personnel in real-time, to expedite lifesaving care.

The app's name comes from a combination of the social media platform "Twitter" and "triage", the commonly used medical term for prioritizing treatment.

Debbie Trau is nursing director of Emergency Services at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center and OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois. According to Trau, Twiage offers emergency responders the ability to use a smartphone to share real-time patient data and send secured, privacy protected (HIPPA-compliant) photos and videos.

"There is information directly to the charge nurse on a computer screen with GPS tracking so we know actually how far away the ambulance is as well as the bedside nurse can pull up the full report. It can include pictures that maybe were from an accident scene or an EKG as well as information about the patient," she said.

An average case can be entered in 30 seconds as opposed to the two minutes it takes to initiate a radio call that often goes through a third party before it is relayed to the emergency department. The previous system was a bit like the game of telephone where information could get lost in translation.

The app also has a privacy feature which only temporarily holds information on the EMS provider's phone.

"All of this data is not kept on the individual medic's phone. Once it is taken and sent, it's gone. So that protects our patients' privacy and there's no demonstration of it to anyone in the community. It's used to relay communication to the medical center and for subsequent treatment of our patient but there's no recall of that by the medic," she explained.

OSF Saint Francis was the first hospital in the state to use Twiage and it has been the first to pilot and implement a new Isolation module which alerts the ED the incoming patient could be infectious, allowing ambulances to be directed to a separate entrance and for caregivers to be prepared with proper protective equipment.

"You can see on the screen, they can select COVID-19, TB, measles, and flu so it can be used for many purposes but it changes the color of the font so anyone who is

receiving that patient on the monitor screen can see that this is a potentially infectious patient. This module was quickly enacted and has been utilized quite a bit over the last five weeks” Trau said.

The information also goes into the patient’s medical record for review by the individual’s family doctor, cardiologist, neurologist or other specialists.

EMS Training Officer Scott Rossman with the Eureka-Goodfield Fire Department says in the case of a patient having a stroke or heart attack it can allow pre-hospital responders to initiate life-saving care based on the best, real-time information.

OSF HealthCare EMS leaders are working with Twiage to add a new feature that would allow live streaming, two-way video conversations enabling additional evaluation before a patient even arrives at the hospital. Rossman says that could greatly expand and improve pre-hospital care.

“I would ask that if a physician were able to view that patient, then perhaps we would have a larger scope of practice where we would be able to administer drugs that would be beneficial prior to arrival to a receiving facility,” he suggested.

Rossman hasn’t yet used the new Isolation module but he welcomes the additional feature. Recently he experienced the significant value of Twiage’s photo feature with a patient who had been involved in a fireworks accident that severely damaged the patient’s hand.

He explained, “It was a nice option to be able to send exact pictures of the damage to that extremity so that they could have a heads up on what to expect. I can notify them immediately about whether bleeding is controlled. They can visualize and confirm that.”

Rossman has also used the photo feature to quickly send vitals, information from an electrocardiogram (EKG) or patient information that allows frontline staff to register the patient in advance of their arrival and make for a smooth transition to inpatient care by assigning a hospital bed when it’s clear they’ll need treatment beyond the emergency department.

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