PHILIPS

Alarm communication: Steps toward optimizing a central monitoring unit

Monitoring patients across units requires swift and reliable communication between the CMU CMU and clinicians. Some next-generation CMUs still rely on phones, while others use data feeds to distribute alarms with context. Philips all-in-one solution promotes optimization.



Discussing alarms by phone

Some CMUs still rely on monitor techs to call the relevant unit when an alarm arises - whether it is red, yellow (and actionable) or blue. The tech must flip through a physical directory to find the appropriate name and extension. If no one answers, the tech must identify the next person in line. Even when reaching someone, techs lack visibility into what takes place after the call. An ongoing alarm provides the only indicator they should consider following up.



Incorporating systems to route and escalate alarms

Other CMUs tap Philips Event Notification or the HL7 feed to send alarms to designated caregivers - a list that becomes more focused with more sophisticated implementation. Inside the CMU, red and blue alarms can get automatically dispatched, with monitor techs selecting other alarms to send. If initial recipients do not respond, alarms escalate after a set amount of time. Techs may gain additional overviews of alarm status and history but still lack full visibility to alarm receipt and response.



Using those systems to share alarm basics

The same infrastructure - Event Notification or the HL7 feed - can send brief summaries to clinicians receiving alarms on the pagers and rudimentary clinical communication tools still frequently used. Typically, the summaries only include the bed location, type of alarm and - if the ADT system is integrated - patient's name.



Closing the communication loop

When paired with Event Notification, the Philips Care Assist app promotes alarm communication confidence. Clinicians equipped with smartphones can acknowledge an alarm, silence it or manually escalate it. CMU teams can visually confirm that alarms reach their intended destinations and track clinical responses - something that is not possible with less optimized CMU setups.



Providing deeper context and on-the-go monitor control

With Care Assist, clinicians can also receive a unique "alarm snippet" - up to four numerics and four waveforms - to supplement standard patient information and quickly convey alarm urgency. They can stream* and save waveforms and start a blood pressure or SpO2 reading from their smartphones, too, delivering true command and control and Act Anywhere ability within the health system.

HL7 Feed Vs. Event Notification

While third-party solutions can tap alarms through PIC iX's HL7 feed, the pipeline contains many other data types, too - making configuration and integration more complicated. The feed may also have a delay that can last up to five seconds. Event Notification directly captures Philips alarms and promptly delivers critical information. It enables clinicians to manage alarms through Care Assist and for CMU teams to track those responses.

*Streaming waveforms on smartphones with Care Assist also requires Philips' mobility server.