



Kalispell Regional Medical Centre Boosts Wristband Readability with Zebra

Kalispell Regional Medical Centre

Located in Northwestern Montana, Kalispell Regional Medical Centre serves the area with a level of care you might only expect in a metro area. KRMC offers a comprehensive cancer treatment program, some of the finest neurosurgeons in the country, a gynaecological surgery program, including advanced laparoscopic procedures pioneered by KRMC physicians, an orthopaedic centre, heart surgery program and NICU.



The Challenge:

With a strong focus on patient safety, KRMC has 139 steps built in to help ensure patients receive medication correctly—from the time the physician writes the order to the pharmacy filling it to administering it to the patient.

However, the hospital pinpointed patient identification as an area for improvement, inspiring its Positive Patient ID initiative. Enhancing readability and ease of use of its patient wristbands were essential to supporting safety.

At the time, the paper wristbands KRMC used required multiple scanning attempts. A small wrinkle in a band left it unscannable and the paper didn't hold up well over time. "It was frustrating because you'd have to do things over and over again when it should only take once," said Kim Knutson, charge nurse. "You're taking time away from your patient because you're trying to get an armband."

"Patients had sheets of labels at their bedside and nurses were pre-scanning the label and not the patient," added Pat Mulberger, clinical informatics nurse. "We knew that for this to be a really safe process, we had to have a good armband."

Additionally, nurses had to manually assemble each wristband. They would feed in special laser paper stock, wait for it to print and then put the armband together. KRMC needed an easier, faster and safer wristband solution.

The Solution:

Pacific ID, a bar code solutions company, implemented a new patient ID scanning solution at the hospital that included scanners from Code Corp. and Zebra® HC100™ printers.

The Zebra HC100™ Patient I.D. Solution combines a direct thermal printer with easy-to-load cartridges containing Zebra's durable Z-Band® wristbands. Nurses simply insert cartridges into the printer to produce wristbands with barcodes and text that stay readable long after paper bands would degrade.



Prior to implementation, nurses tried the new process and wristbands, wearing them for a week. "After a week, we were still able to scan the wristband," said Suzanne Catalfomo, pharmacy informatics specialist, Northwest Healthcare.

"It was one of the easiest implementations that I've ever done with nurses," Mulberger said. "There's always something wrong that the nurses will find, but they didn't find anything wrong with this process."

The new solution improved KRMC's process at multiple points. The small footprint of the HC100 printers means they fit compactly at nurses' stations, in admissions and registration, inspiring staff to call them "little toasters." It's easy to drop a new cartridge in the top when one runs out.

To print, staff click on the patient's name on the computer, print out the band, and put it on the patient. The Zebra printers detect wristband size—adult, paediatric or infant—and automatically calibrate settings for optimal print quality.

At the critical point of medication administration, nurses have a computer and scanner in the patient's room. Nurses ask patients first to verify their names, and then dates of birth as a secondary identifier. The patient's record comes up on the computer and the nurse scans the wristband to ensure the two match. If so, the nurse scans the medication to ensure the right time, right route and right dose, and the nurse is alerted to anything that doesn't match.

For labour and delivery, KRMC now automatically prints two non-bar code bands for the mother and two bar code bands that link the baby to that mother.

"It's accurate, easily apply-able to the baby, and if we need to cut off a band, they can be easily reprinted accurately. We don't have to come up with an entirely new four-part banding system for mom and baby, which has been great," said Linda Cavigli, obstetrics computer operations.

Product:

- The only wristband printer in the industry that offers easy to load media cartridges to provide user friendly, hassle-free printing.
- Wristbands scan correctly 100% of the time.
- Faster printing and no assembly reduce the time staff spend creating labels.
- Easier scanning supports the hospital's safety initiatives for patient ID and medication administration.

Used for:

- Person ID & Access Control
- Security
- Medical Record Labelling
- Hospitality

Results:

The new patient identification scanning solution has delivered multiple benefits for the hospital. Staff members now get wristbands on patients more quickly, without the need to assemble them.

Most importantly, the new Z-Band wristbands stay readable, making it easier for nurses to accurately identify patients and administer medication. KRMC reports 100 percent readability.

“I feel like in my day-to-day job that the new scanning process is an extra safety net. The wristband scans in the room every single time. Whether you’re trying to scan medicines, glucometer or whatever, it scans every time,” Knutson said.

“At that bedside, the only thing between the nurse and the patient is this safety feature. It’s the final tool that that nurse has to make sure she gives the right medication to the right patient,” Mulberger added.