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Kittanning

Corry Memorial Hospital (CMH)
Corry

DuBois Regional Medical Center
DuBois

Making the difference for life.

Kane Community Hospital (KCH)
Kane

Meadville Medical Center (MMC)
Meadville

Millcreek Community Hospital (MCH)
Erie

Saint Vincent Health System (SVHS)
Erie

The Ellwood City Hospital (TECH)
Ellwood City

Titusville Area Hospital (TAH)
Titusville

UPMC Horizon
Greenville/Farrell

A hospital of UPMC Health System

UPMC Northwest
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Meadville Medical Center



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Vantage® Holding Company, LLC

A For Profit Company that Forms Health Care Partnerships to
Create Revenue, Savings and New Services

April, May, June
2005



The Vantage® Opportunity

Vantage® is a company that was started in 1984 by a group of non-profit hospitals who were seeking to assure their future viability. The region's population was not growing. Hospitals needed to meet future challenges and the opportunities the future may present. The advantage they sought became the Vantage® organization. The future can truly be a choice of opportunity rather than a threat when viewed from the correct vantage point.

The hospitals created Vantage® as a for-profit partnership with the mission of creating owner value from the partnership services created. To determine the services Vantage® should offer, the hospitals identified a problem or a service that was outsourced at significant expense.

By solving a hospital owner problem, Vantage® was a business that could generate new revenue and profit.

Opening new markets and expanding existing markets is the driving force of Vantage's growth by combining the efforts from each individual hospital. This adds strength, resources, and a financial advantage that the single community hospital would not have on its own.

Over the twenty years of Vantage's evolution, an expertise of partnership building has developed which includes marketing and capital resources. These two items, "marketing" and "capital", are difficult to create and are most often missing from most new ventures that try to enter the health care market place. Blended with the operational expertise to run a non-hospital health care business, Vantage® has developed the skill set to succeed.

When hospitals combine their efforts and assess the services they are outsourcing, there is an opportunity to capture revenue that is being lost by hospitals. This keeps more money in the hospital communities. It preserves jobs. It helps hospitals afford service expansion outside the hospital setting and it allows hospitals to joint venture with other local companies.

Using these techniques results have been outstanding and are

Vantage® Capital Management Company, Ltd.

Developing Opportunities for Health Care that
Bring Value to Vantage Investors

Vantage® Care Apothecary

A Vantage Institutional Pharmacy Service

Vantage® Document Security Service

We're in the business of making sure no one knows yours!

Vantage® Healthcare Linen Services

State-Of-The-Art Laundry Service for Hospitals
and Healthcare Institutions

Vantage Healthcare Network, Inc.®

A Joint Planning Company of Community Hospitals
Providing Quality Health Care Services

Vantage Health Group®

A Non-Profit Group Purchasing Organization Using Premier

Vantage® Health Group Telecommunications

Next Generation Telecommunications Services

Vantage® Home Infusion Therapy Services

Hospital Owned Expertise from the Regional Leader in Home IV Therapy

Vantage® Home Respiratory Services®

Respiratory and Medical Equipment at Home

Vantage® Mobile Services

Quality MRI, Urological, PET-CT, CT and RFA Services for Hospitals

Vantage® Preferred Provider Organization

A PPO for Self-Funded or Fully Insured Employee Health Benefit Plans

Vantage® Quality Institute

The Regional Leader in Health Care Quality Improvement

Vantage® Urology Services, Ltd.

Physician Owned Quality Urology Services

Cover Story continued on page 3

www.vantagehealthcare.com

Quarterly

The Vantage® Point

What's News

JBEC- May 12-13 PEEK'N PEAK – Clymer NY

Vantage® is pleased to announce it's 12th annual Joint Board Education Conference at the Golf and Ski resort, Peek'n Peak, located in Western NY. Each year the educational conference agenda is geared for trustees, physicians and health care executives. This year Vantage® has assembled a outstanding group of nationally known speakers to entertain and educate attendees with a special combination of topical legal issues, opportunities, and future trending in health care and leadership. To register and for more information, please access www.vantagehealthcare.com, see Events or contact Karen Weber, 814-333-8533, ext. 135 or karenw@vantagehealthcare.com



Seagate Alliance / Vantage® – Services expand into New York State

Seagate Alliance and Vantage® agreed to utilize each others resources to bring a new level of service to New York health care facilities. Jerry Alonge, CEO of Vantage®, explained, "The Vantage® Model is based upon services that hospitals would normally outsource and puts these services together. Once two or more hospitals agree to use the service, Vantage® creates a business that provides the service to the hospitals at a savings. The hospitals can become owners and the service can also be sold to non-owners that generates new revenue sources for hospitals. This allows hospitals to develop business opportunities for their communities and expand the partnership to businesses which desire to expand into the health care service industry."

Robert Swinnerton, President/CEO of Seagate Alliance said, "Over the years, we have known Vantage® as one of our partners in Premier, one of the largest and most respected health care group purchasing organizations in the United States. Vantage® brings to the table many new services that will benefit our group of New York hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities."



LECOM Students experience Vantage®

Vantage® is proud to be a preceptor site for pharmacy students. Vantage® Home Infusion Therapy Services and Vantage® Care Apothecary host student rotations for LECOM and other schools of pharmacy. First year LECOM students utilize the Vantage® pharmacies for "shadowing". Second year students must complete two-five week rotations in varied pharmacy settings. Third year students must fulfill a requirement of six-five week clinical rotations. LECOM Pharm.D. Candidate Denise Bean indicated the various rotations allow students to apply knowledge and to become acquainted with different pharmacy settings. The varied settings enable students to find their best fit for future employment. Denise termed the Vantage® rotations as "symbiotic". Students gain knowledge from the preceptor pharmacists and the pharmacists benefit from the student's enthusiasm. Denise commented it was amazing the work that is done and the large region that is served behind the unassuming facade of the Vantage® Perry Highway location.



LECOM School of Pharmacy students at the Vantage Care Apothecary Facility

Vantage®, the regions experienced service provider, offers convenient, cost-effective, document shredding



Vantage® Document Security Service
We're in the business of making sure no one knows yours!

To address the needs of hospitals and other companies and organizations that process confidential paperwork, Meadville, PA-based Vantage Healthcare Network, Inc.® has introduced Vantage® Document Security Service, a mobile document destruction service that brings the shredding capability to the customer. The new Vantage® mobile unit, a vehicle specially fitted with shredding equipment, is available to all hospitals, as well as other types of businesses and organizations that require certified destruction of paper, cardboard and other types of media, including film and microfiche. The Vantage® shredder exceeds current standards turning the documents into confetti. Vantage® is a health care provider, subject directly to the rules and review of confidentiality and the requirement to kept its patient data and customer data private. The shredding area, located on Vantage® premises in Meadville Pennsylvania, is under a 24 hour, 7 day a week restricted access and is alarmed. An off-site area is shared with a local hospital for record storage and destruction with "24-7" security and restricted access.

For more information on this service, contact Vic Vidoni 800-715-1214 or vicv@vantagehealthcare.com

The Vantage® Point is published quarterly by the Vantage® Marketing Department. For information on all Vantage® services and new market opportunities within the USA, contact Chris Cook, Director of Business Development: chrisc@vantagehealthcare.com 814-720-2651 or Tom Surman, Senior VP Communications & Marketing for Vantage® Holding Company, LLC, tomsurman@vantagehealthcare.com 814-336-1781 ext.124

The Vantage® Forum

where owner hospitals highlight their services

New Gastric Bypass Program

The Mind-Body Wellness Center and Meadville Medical Center now offer a comprehensive Gastric Bypass Program for gastric bypass surgery and lifelong weight management. Weight loss surgery is just one piece of the puzzle. Success requires a team effort. Our Gastric Bypass Program is the only complete program in the region that features long-term follow-up and lifestyle management before, during and after surgery. Our dedicated team of specially trained nurses, nutritionists, physical therapists and counselors work with experienced surgeon Gregory Beard, DO to provide the medical, nutritional, exercise and emotional support you need to maximize success. Our team coordinator works closely with you to manage all appointments and insurance issues.

In addition to personalized care, education and long-term support, we offer a monthly Gastric Bypass Support Group led by specialists in the field of gastric bypass, nutrition, exercise and lifestyle change. Meetings are held at the Mind-Body Wellness Center on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. For more information about our Gastric Bypass Program, contact the Mind-Body Wellness Center at (814) 333-5060.



UPMC NORTHWEST EARNS 4th 100 TOP HOSPITALS AWARD



UPMC Northwest is one of the nation's best hospitals for the fourth straight year, according to a study that produces an annual listing of top-performing hospitals. For being one of the most consistent winners of the Solucient 100 Top Hospitals award, UPMC Northwest also has earned a place on an even more elite list of hospitals: Solucient's Best of the Benchmark Hospitals, which is limited exclusively to 89 "best of the best" hospitals nationwide that have achieved 100 Top Hospitals awards four or more times.

The Best of the Benchmark Hospitals "form a very select group," Solucient said in announcing its 12th annual tribute to everyone who's part of our organization – employees, physicians, board members, auxiliary and volunteers – and what they do for our patients, the hospital and the communities we serve."



Five months after opening its new hospital in Seneca (above), UPMC Northwest has earned its fourth straight 100 Top Hospitals award for superior patient care, operational and financial performance.



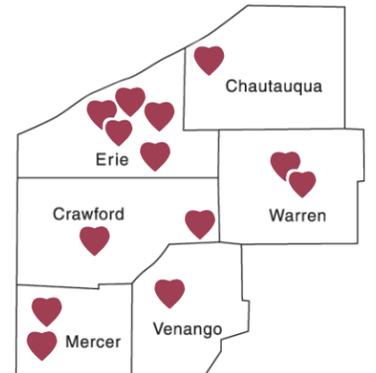
The Regional Heart Network is a nonprofit corporation that links hospitals in northwestern Pennsylvania and western New York with shared technology, training and expertise, ensuring a high standard of heart care throughout the region. It allows patients to stay in their own communities and receive the same quality diagnostic procedures that they would receive at the Saint Vincent Heart Center. The more complex procedures are still done at Saint Vincent, the specialist in advanced cardiac care. This level of collaboration surpasses any other cardiac relationship in the region, giving patients and their doctors easy, seamless access to the finest cardiac care.



In addition to Saint Vincent Health Center, the Regional Heart Network includes Millcreek Community Hospital, Westfield Memorial Hospital, Titusville Area Hospital, the Saint Vincent Outpatient Center in Union City, Warren General Hospital, the Saint Vincent Diagnostic Testing Center in Bradford, and Consultants in Cardiovascular Diseases, Inc. in Erie, Meadville, Greenville, Franklin and Warren.

The Regional Heart Network offers benefits to member hospitals, primary care physicians and their patients:

- State-of-the-art diagnostic testing at the local hospital, where test results can be read immediately on-screen by Saint Vincent experts via high-tech telemedicine equipment
- 24-hour access to Saint Vincent Heart Center specialists for immediate consultation
- Elimination of duplicate testing when patients are transferred for advanced care
- Free exchange of vital patient information between specialists and family doctors
- Continuity of care, including follow-up and rehabilitation close to home
- Enhanced health education programs on topics such as recognizing and responding to cardiac emergencies, general heart health, diet, and nutrition
- Positive effect on the quality of health care throughout local communities





Feature Company of the Quarter - HGT

Vantage® Joins With Verizon and Nortel to Pioneer Cutting-Edge Telecommunications Technology

New HGT Constellation Model Promises Greater Efficiencies and Significant Cost Savings to Area Hospitals

By John Fries

Take a moment and think about what the ideal hospital telecommunications system would look and feel like. You're probably thinking of a system that would provide many more options that you have right now, connecting hospital staff, physicians and others with perfect clarity, and providing a range of options that are quickly and easily accessible. It would merge telephone, computer, video, Blackberry and PDA capabilities. You could send and receive calls and messages from anywhere, anytime, via any communications device, with a high degree of privacy and efficiency. In a perfect world, this system would also cost much less to own and maintain than your current system, which only has a fraction of these capabilities.

Believe it or not, a system that's probably pretty close to the one you're imagining now was just installed at Saint Vincent Health System in Erie, one of the owners of Vantage Healthcare Network Inc.®. At the core of the system is a new \$1.5 million switch and a fiber optics network that will move data at lightning speed. It will soon be available to Vantage® owner hospitals as well as other healthcare facilities in northwestern Pennsylvania.

The Vantage HGT Constellation Model

Introducing the Vantage® HGT Constellation Model is the result of a joint effort among Vantage® Health Group Telecommunications (HGT), Verizon and Nortel. Powered by Internet Protocol technology and connected by fiber optics cables that replace yesterday's analog lines, the Constellation Model is based on the same broadband technology as your high-speed home DSL connection. The difference here is that, unlike a DSL line that feeds into just one computer or router, the Constellation Model connects multiple users, facilities, and devices simultaneously, and with remarkable efficiency and clarity. Both Vantage® and Nortel believe the new model will radically change the face of healthcare telecommunications.

Highly Affordable For Hospitals

"This is new telecommunications technology," said Jerry Alonge, Vantage® president and chief executive officer. Most new technology isn't affordable. Price becomes a major barrier for hospitals—especially in the northeast, where population isn't growing as quickly as other parts of the country."

The reason the Constellation Model is affordable to Vantage®, and in turn, to its owner hospitals, said Alonge, is the relationship Vantage® HGT has with Verizon. Verizon owns the fiber optics lines that carry the data. Because Vantage's contract with Verizon—as well as other hardware and software providers—represents a group arrangement on behalf of its owner hospitals that results in deep volume price discounts, the technology can be provided to hospitals much more inexpensively than if the hospitals were contracting individually with another carrier. "Vantage®, a telecommunications aggregator, can make this technology available to hospitals and other healthcare providers today, at a tremendous cost savings," said Alonge.

"It's the first-ever system of its kind in a healthcare organization, and only the second one in the U.S.," said Jeff Scarpitti, HGT director of operations. "It not only provides a HIPAA-compliant network, but one that comes with major cost savings. Hospitals using this system will save dramatically on charges related to line leasing, voice mail, phone switches, maintenance and more—and, they'll enjoy greater efficiencies."

Jay Long, executive director of Vantage® HGT, views the model as visionary. "It's the new generation of equipment," he said. "When HGT



Vantage® HGT, Jeff Scarpitti, with the new Nortel Switch located at Saint Vincent Health System, Erie, PA

was formed, it was with two specific goals: to enhance biomedical communications in the region (Northeastern PA) and control costs. The Constellation Model does both. The switch at Saint Vincent will enable HGT to develop medical technology that will roll into the next decade. It also gives us the ability to design applications and functions that fit our needs." The result, he said, will be "the ability to provide better quality healthcare through communications across the region."

A New World of Possibilities

Dennis Muir is a senior relationship manager with Nortel, the telecommunications company that worked closely with Vantage® HGT to develop the Constellation Model. According to Muir, the new system's efficiency is based on convergence—a blend of computer and telephone technology. "There's an ongoing shift from traditional telephone technology to technology that uses Internet Protocols. This model enables people and facilities located in diverse geographical locations to appear as one system." Part of the system at Saint Vincent is a multimedia communications server that makes communications between hospitals more efficient than ever. The system also redefines the concept of call forwarding.

"One of the major benefits of the model is the mobility it provides," said Muir. "You can be anywhere and use the hospital's technology. Saint Vincent employees will be able to receive calls made to their hospital phone at home—or anywhere else—using the health system's switch. Imagine how this can improve disaster response, since no one will be restricted by traditional boundaries."

Physicians will be able to program the system to predetermine where people can call them at various times of the day, with each call instantly routed to where they'd like to receive it. They can even set up their caller ID so that no matter where they're calling from, it only shows one phone number. And, every call sounds crisp and clear."

Because of the computer-telephone convergence, the technology enables a world of new possibilities. Conference calls can become desktop videoconferences, with participants not only hearing, but seeing each other, and even having the capability to send private 'instant messages' to each other during the conference. Unified messaging will become a reality, as voice messages can be converted to text, or vice versa. This means that a traveling employee or physician will be able to access his or her e-mail by telephone and hear the message read aloud. Consider the cost-savings here, as hospitals become technologically self-sufficient and no longer have to pay an outside provider to set up conference calls. Even Web-based training can be done internally with no outside service costs.

Want to Know More?

Vantage® HGT looks forward to working with hospitals, physicians' offices, and other facilities in Northeastern Pennsylvania to improve their communications efficiency and enjoy substantial cost savings. For more information, please contact Christopher Cook, Vantage® Director of Business Development: chriscc@vantagehealthcare.com 814-720-2651 or Tom Surman Senior VP Communications and Marketing: tomsurman@vantagehealthcare.com 814-336-1781 ext. 124.

Cover Story continued



truly unprecedented in the health care field when describing the types of services developed by hospitals. The services developed through Vantage's twenty year experience cover traditional areas as well as innovative projects such as forming a regional telephone company and using this structure to manage telecom services for healthcare facilities.

Vantage® Mobile Service is a for-profit partnership structure that solves a hospital owners problem of accessing the latest technology. The business model uses mobile services to introduce the technology and build the service volume. Technology brought to a local community so patients do not have to travel or go without the latest service is a perfect solution.

Vantage® Health Group Telecommunications, (HGT), is a for-profit entity which has evolved into leasing to hospitals. It aggregates customers and works closely with incumbent telephone companies to obtain specific tariff rates that result in savings. This is a solution to the issue of how to afford the new telecom technology now available. Again, HGT solves a hospital problem and then takes the solution to the market place to generate revenues.

A new area of development is Vantage® Capital Management Company, Ltd., (VCM), a limited partnership that attracts outside investors to raise capital. The challenge addressed is how to capitalize the current Vantage® programs as they grow and how to pay for the development of new programs without the hospital owners being the only source of capital.

Health care industry profits are well over \$1.7 trillion dollars and climbing to reach over 15% of the total gross domestic product of our national economy. Despite this, hospitals in many

parts of the country are facing real problems with operational losses, questions of how to raise capital for changes in their delivery systems, and how to face change in general.

Vantage® business models provide an additional set of tools to solve these concerns. They simply work. Twenty years of experience and positive bottom-line results to prove it.

The future can truly be a choice of opportunity rather than a threat when viewed from the correct vantage point.



Vantage® Mobile Services
Quality MRI, Urological, PET/CT, CT and RFA Services for Hospitals

13th Annual Mammography Seminar

On May 4th and 5th, 2005, Vantage® Holding Company, LLC, (VHC), through its Mobile Services Division will hold its 13th Annual Mammography Seminar at the Days Inn in Meadville, PA. This two (2) day seminar is registered through the Quality Institute for continuing Medical Education, a division of VHC. This allows for continuing education credits by The American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT). Regional radiology staff members from both owner and non-owner hospitals are welcome. If you are interested in attending this year's seminar and would like further information, please contact Shelly Burchard, 800-715-1214 or 814-336-1781, ext 102 shellyb@vantagehealthcare.com

Doctor of the Month



Robin Garner-Smith, PharmD, CGP, FASCP, BCPP

Robin Garner-Smith, PharmD, recently earned the designation of Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist (BCPP) from the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties (BPS). This is pharmacy's highest credential in the practice of Psychiatric pharmacy. Through board certification, psychiatric pharmacy specialists demonstrate a defined level of education and training, as well as mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the public's demand for expert pharmaceutical care.

Dr. Garner-Smith is Vantage's Vice President of LTC Operations and leads the staff of Vantage® Care Apothecary, which includes nurses, pharmacists and technicians.

The BPS was established in 1976 by the American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA) to respond to the evolving requirements of patients and the health care system. BPS' mission is to recognize specialty practice areas, define knowledge and skill standards for recognized specialties, evaluate the knowledge and skills of individual pharmacist specialists, and serve as a source of information and coordinating agency for pharmacy specialties. In a recent letter sent to Vantage® from BPS, they said, "You are to be commended for having a pharmacist of this caliber on your staff." There are currently only 12 pharmacists in Pennsylvania with this distinguished BCPP certification.



Vantage® Care Apothecary
A Vantage Institutional Pharmacy Service



The Vantage® Care Apothecary, Meadville location, services over 40 nursing homes and institutions specializing in Long Term Care, Personal Care, Adult Day Centers, Drug and Alcohol, and Mental Health, covering Western Pennsylvania



Feature Company of the Quarter - VHLS

Clean Linen and Much More

Vantage® Healthcare Linen Services Provides Customers with a Basketful of Efficiencies and Cost-Savings

By John Fries

In the healthcare environment, the need for cleanliness is beyond important — it's absolutely crucial. And when you're talking about linens used in surgical suites and patient rooms, among other places, the need for near-purity is even more pronounced.

However, it hasn't always been easy for healthcare facilities to get clean linen. Just ask the northwestern Pennsylvania group of hospitals that own the Vantage Health Care Network Inc.® In 1995, after experiencing dissatisfaction with the level of quality and cleanliness that was being provided by their laundry companies, they decided to do something that would ensure them with access to the cleanest linen possible at the most reasonable price: they formed Vantage® Healthcare Linen Services, (VHLS). Based in Erie, VHLS has been providing those hospitals — as well as doctors' offices, clinics, surgical centers and nursing homes — with clean linen and cost-effective service for nearly ten years. VHLS is so successful that it now performs this service at a very competitive price to other non owner hospitals throughout Northwestern Pa and into New York.

Cost-Effective Service Combined With High Standards

A part-owner in Premier, one of the nation's largest group purchasing organizations, VHLS buys the highest quality linen items from the most reputable suppliers in the industry, then rents them to its customers. This includes bed linens; bath linens; patient and employee apparel; linens used in such areas as obstetrics and delivery, housekeeping, dietary, and surgery; and such specialized items as pediatric products. Because the cost of the linen is included in the laundry service, VHLS customers can save the money they would otherwise have to spend on equipment, linen and labor.

Specially Designed Facility Ensures Maximum Cleanliness

The VHLS physical plant was designed to meet Vantage's high standards by one of the foremost experts in the linen and laundry industry. The facility includes a number of features that set it apart from other laundries, including two separate and distinct areas for soiled linens and clean linens. At VHLS, the two never meet.

"Quality assurance and infection control are our number one priorities," said Fred Harrington, VHLS director. "We even disinfect our pickup and delivery trucks on a regular basis to ensure that the same level of quality is maintained from our plant to our customers' doors."

This is highly impressive when you consider that about 3,000 pounds of laundry is processed per hour by the plant's huge tunnel washer, resulting in, on average, nine million pounds of linen a year. Even with that volume, Harrington said the plant has the capability to take on up to three million additional pounds a year, expanding the laundry's service area.

Technology Further Enhances Efficiencies

Harrington also noted the strong role technology plays at VHLS. One highly efficient process incorporated into the facility's

design allows VHLS to operate using half the energy resources of a typical in-house hospital laundry, adding to the cost savings enjoyed by customers. This year, VHLS takes another giant step forward launching the latest state of the art computerized linen order and tracking system to which customers will have access.

"Our carts already have barcodes for identification," said Harrington. "Now the remainder of the system is up and running, all the inventory and service records will be computerized. Customers will be able to pull up a report containing current information about how much linen they've received and how much soil they have returned in addition to other reports. They'll also be able to place orders via the new system."

Customer Input Important

In addition to quality, efficiency, cleanliness, and cost savings, VHLS has a strong focus on customer service that unquestionably sets it apart from its competitors. For example, VHLS officials often meet with linen room personnel to evaluate the quality of laundry received by their hospitals. Harrington and his staff also present special customer forums. "Once each quarter," he said "we invite our customers to a meeting at VHLS. The heads of the linen rooms meet for an idea exchange, which is beneficial, not only to them, but to us as well."

An Important Part of the Vantage® Family

Vantage® Healthcare Linen Services, (VHLS), is one of 13 service companies owned by the Vantage® partnership of community hospitals. Started in 1984, Vantage's mission is to develop partnership services, formally structured with commitment to share risk and revenue. Each hospital is a shareholder, based upon formal investment, and the hospital shareholders appoint the Board of Directors. For the past 20 years, Vantage® has successfully provided its owner hospitals with millions of dollars in cost savings and year-end profitability, while introducing new technology and growth to the rural communities of northwestern Pennsylvania and New York.

For more information about Vantage® Healthcare Linen Services in Erie, PA, call Fred Harrington, director, at 814-835-4140 or fredh@vantagehealthcare.com

More information about Vantage®, and an overview of its owners and services, can be found at www.vantagehealthcare.com



Vantage® VHLS director, Fred Harrington, standing beside a tunnel washer which can process over 3,000 lbs. of linen per hour



Feature Company of the Quarter - VMS

Vantage® Mobile Service Brings Diagnostic Quality and Affordability to Hospitals

By John Fries

Vantage® is a for profit company owned by 12 non-profit hospitals that form partnerships to provide quality health care services. Their business model is partnering with non-competing health care organizations to capture profits from services currently being outsourced and to offer ownership options to locally controlled partnerships. Vantage® successfully accomplishes these partnerships by identifying health care organizations in secondary or rural markets having interests in new technology and services and has successfully implemented such partnerships beginning with Mobile Services, MRI, in 1984.

In the health care environment, innovators continue to improve and enhance delivery of services, making them faster and more convenient and patient-friendly. This is especially true at Vantage Health Care Network Inc.®, which recently made available mobile positron emission tomography/computed tomography, (PET/CT), a unit providing fast, simple cancer detection, and Bravo™, a non-invasive, pH monitoring system that tests for heartburn.

"This is the region's first 16-slice mobile CT unit, and it's now in use at Vantage's member hospitals," said Bill Henwood, senior vice president of mobile/clinical sales at Vantage®, who added that the advanced diagnostic unit is one of several owned and operated by Vantage®.

"By using mobile technology, we can go from hospital to hospital and provide services when and where they're needed," he said. "This enables our member hospitals to have ownership of a wide array of diagnostic capabilities without the overhead costs associated with fixed site units, while eliminating duplication of services."

PET/CT Provides Advanced Diagnostics For Cancer, Cardiac and Neurological Conditions

The PET/CT unit is a camera that creates powerful images of the human body's biological functions. When compounds like simple sugars are labeled with signal-emitting tracers and injected into a patient, the PET scanner records the signals sent by the tracers as they make their way through the patient's body and are collected in the organs targeted for examination. A computer then reassembles the signals into images.

In oncology patients, PET serves multiple functions. It can be used to determine the spread of cancer to lymph nodes or other organs; locate the primary source of cancer in situations where the cancer has already spread; evaluate response of tumors to treatments or surgery; grade tumors, especially those that are non-solid, like lymphoma; and determine whether masses detected by other means are benign or malignant.

PET is also useful in diagnosing and treating a number of neurological conditions, including epilepsy, dementia, depression, movement disorders, stroke, and traumatic brain

injury. For cardiology patients, PET can determine the viability and perfusion of myocardial tissue after a heart attack.

"PET provides a major time savings," said Henwood. "Scans only take 40 to 45 minutes. For cardiac patients, this reduces an hour or more in the hospital to just minutes in the mobile unit. And, PET is covered by Medicare."

Heartburn Diagnosis

The Bravo™ system provides a quick, easy, non-invasive way to diagnose heartburn, a condition that occurs when stomach contents flow back up into the esophagus. Although many people experience heartburn from time to time, it can also be a symptom of a more serious condition known as gastroesophageal reflux disease. During the Bravo™ test, a miniature pH capsule (the size of a gelcap), temporarily attached to the wall of the patient's esophagus, transmits pH data via radio frequency to a pager-sized receiver worn by the patient. After a few days, the capsule detaches and passes through the digestive tract. Data received during the test lets physicians know what is causing patients' heartburn and what treatment is best to prescribe.

Pioneers in Mobile Diagnostics and Treatment

PET/CT and Bravo™ are the latest in a long line of mobile technologies offered by Vantage®. It all started in 1986, when Vantage® introduced the region's first mobile magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) unit that provided high quality images enabling physicians to view the human body from any angle. A year later, Vantage® unveiled the region's first mobile lithotripsy unit, which provided patients with a noninvasive alternative to the treatment and destruction of kidney stones. In the years since, Vantage® has added to its mobile capabilities with radio frequency ablation, which provides minimally invasive treatment for liver and bone lesions; computed tomography for anatomical cancer detection; mammography; and urology services.

Significant Benefits for Hospitals and Patients

With these convenient capabilities on wheels, Vantage® is able to offer its members—smaller, community-based hospitals—the ability to provide major services at or below market rate. Since Vantage® owns the company, and the hospitals that own Vantage® are shareholders, this creates a new revenue stream for the hospitals. It also enables them to provide necessary services to better serve their patients.

For more information on Vantage® Mobile Services, call 800-715-1214 or e-mail Bill Henwood, Sr. Vice President VMS at billh@vantagehealthcare.com



Vantage® Mobile Lithotripsy