

VA Medical Centers Update Their Barcode Medication Administration System, With The Newest In Corded and Secure Wireless Honeywell Products from The Culver Group.



Overview:

Industry

Healthcare

Application

Medication administration

Product Solutions

Honeywell 1900HHD-BCMA

Honeywell 1902HHD-0USB-5FVA

Partner

The Culver Group (TCG)

In 2008, The Culver Group (TCG) teamed up with Honeywell to deliver a barcode medication administration (BCMA) scanner to VA Medical Centers – one that set a new standard for patient data security, drug administration safety and product durability. Having maintained a product support relationship with the VA ever since, TCG was once again engaged by the VA in September, 2012, to update the VA's barcode scanners to the next generation of Honeywell technology. This time, TCG managed the purchase and deployment of 12,000 **1900HHD-BCMA corded scanners** and the 10,000 **1902HHD-0USB-5FVA wireless scanners**, products designed around the specific needs of the VA.

Background

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the largest single medical system in the United States, with more than 150 medical centers and 900 ambulatory care and community-based outpatient clinics around the country. Approximately **250,000 employees dispense more than 600,000 medications each day**. With such a massive system covering a wide variety of situations, patients, staff and medications, keeping track of patient information in an efficient and accurate manner is critical.

The VA was one of the first medical systems in the country to implement BCMA, a system that uses **barcode scanners at the point-of-care to electronically validate medications for patients by scanning the worker's badge, the patient's bracelet, and the appropriate drug**. This ensures what is known as the "Five Patient Rights"—the right patient, right drug, right dose, right route, and right time.

After years of using bar coding for medication administration, in 2000 the VA was faced with a new government regulation, Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-2,



making it mandatory for all wirelessly transmitted patient records to be encrypted for extra security. As a result, the VA had to replace old barcode scanners with units that were FIPS-compliant. Since there were no compliant scanners on the market at the time, the government placed a temporary waiver on the mandate until a compliant solution could be found. This is where TCG and Honeywell teamed up to bring the first compliant solution to the VA, the Honeywell 4820HC-FIPS.

According to Brian Czawlytko, CEO/President of TCG, "When we first visited the VA, we found a 'free-for-all' of scanning products: far too much variety - not just of product, but of product capability as well. Some scanners worked well at a distance and some did not. Some did an excellent job of reading damaged barcodes and some did not. The solution implemented, the Honeywell 4820HC-FIPS scanner, was so successful that it came to be known as the BCMA Super Scanner. But it didn't start out that way."

When initial orders were placed, the VA experienced a number of product problems – specifically, cracks in the handle housings. The harsh disinfectants used to clean the units were corroding the plastic casings, increasing the risk of a product failure, as well as causing health and safety concerns. TCG worked with Honeywell on the VA's behalf to correct the cracking issue, resulting in the first-ever disinfectant-ready housing.

The Business Challenge

The challenge was finding the best barcode scanning solution to address the three main concerns of the VA: security, durability and flexibility.

SECURITY - The solution needed to be secure “from gun to base,” to achieve **HIPAA compliance** as the technology moved from two-way radio to Bluetooth®.

DURABILITY - The scanners needed to **hold up to constant disinfections** between each use. This was crucial for both patient and employee safety.

FLEXIBILITY - The scanners needed to **read a wide variety of barcode types and sizes**. From the standard barcodes found on medical forms and patient ID bracelets to complex 2D codes or high-density codes found on medical supplies, the scanners needed to be **flexible for use anywhere, at any time**.

The Solution

The new round of products meet and exceed the VA’s BCMA specs, and offer the following features either desired or required by the VA:

- Disinfectant-ready plastics
- IP-41 rated case
- 3-year comprehensive warranty-comprehensive being if anything breaks it gets fixed-not just manufacturing defects and bugs
- HD imager for scanning high density 1D and 2D barcodes
- FIPS 140-2 Bluetooth® encryption
- Defaulted for BCMA from TCG

The Benefits

FROM THE SCANNING PRODUCTS - The VA realized a number of benefits by upgrading to the new products. First, no power supply is necessary, allowing for easier integration to the varied models of Medical carts used throughout the VA. Tim Myers, TCG’s VA Technical Support Manager mentioned, “Having no power supply means there is no longer a need to splice wires to batteries on med carts; making for a much cleaner and reliable solution.” A second benefit is that the Xenon imager delivers a large depth of field that enhances overall scan performance. Also, the **1902HHD-0USB-5FVA** is more ergonomically friendly for the nursing staff. It’s smaller, lighter and has a sharp red LED aimer beam. These additions, combined with the disinfectant-ready healthcare plastics and FIPS 140-2, were the key drivers of the new purchase.

According to Brian from TCG, “Out of the thousands of older units that were shipped, we used to receive quite a few back with cracked cases. Those had to be repaired as a non-warranty issue. Now with the disinfectant-ready plastics, we’ve not received a single broken unit. Also, Honeywell took the initiative to implement FIPS into a cordless scanner, which has enabled the VA to continue its use of barcode scanning for patient



safety, while preserving the privacy of patients.”

“FIPS encryption, while presently required by several U.S. government agencies, is valuable to any business or organization where data is transmitted wirelessly and there is a need for enhanced security,” said Taylor Smith, Honeywell Scanning & Mobility. The

encryption module also guarantees that the products can pass the strictest audit of HIPAA regulations, an increasing concern amongst healthcare facilities today.

FROM THE TCG RELATIONSHIP - Ron Schneider, retired Pharmacist Consultant to the Barcode Resource Office of the VA, worked with TCG to evaluate and test the scanner products that the VA was considering. According to Ron, “TCG had great customer service. We could call Brian any time day or night, even if it had to do with a scanner not purchased through TCG.”

Ron worked closely with TCG on identifying the cause of the cracking problem, and TCG worked closely with Honeywell to fix it. According to Ron, “There were a lot of complaints because the battery was in the handle that kept cracking. If the VA had been working directly with Honeywell instead of TCG, the problem may have taken much longer to remedy, due to no fault of Honeywell’s. For instance, if six units got sent back to the manufacturer for replacement, then six different people probably would have handled the problem. TCG noticed the problem because they were the center point for all returns.”

Ron summarized the VA’s relationship with TCG, stating, “When there were issues, TCG not only addressed them quickly and professionally, but solved them. They were and are a key partner in providing leading-edge medication administration solutions to the VA.”

? For more information

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