

Gateway Ambulance

Managing Risk With New Levels of Accountability and Control

Gateway Ambulance of St. Louis is a 175-person private EMS agency that makes about 2,600 calls each month. It was managing supplies and equipment in a traditional storeroom staffed by a team of four employees covering three shifts a day, seven days a week. But it wanted more accountability for expensive equipment and jump bags, and more control over supplies and narcotics.

Answering the Question: Who's Using What?

Like many EMS agencies, Gateway had a hard time tracking equipment and supplies to the people who used them. This led to problems when items went missing or were damaged, but the problem wasn't reported. So the next shift would come on and other teams had to scramble to find or replace them. It wasn't uncommon for truck keys to go missing, or for someone to set down their portable radio and lose it.

"When a critical item was missing or damaged, we didn't know who had it out last," according to Aimee Lepsky, Clinical Service Supervisor. That meant managers wasted a lot of time trying to keep shifts ready to go with critical items they needed to care for patients. Unfortunately, it was hard to hold anyone accountable, and it caused a lot of finger-pointing.

They also saw a lot of wasted supplies. Supply supervisor Lorenzo Tate explained, "If a team used three-fourths of a box of gloves, they'd get another box from the supply room. We wasted a lot of partially used boxes." At \$160 a case, those little items really added up.

The situation was even more urgent when it came to controlling advanced life support (ALS) and basic life support (BLS) bags and narcotics boxes. Although these items were kept in the supply room, they weren't always returned face-to-face, so it was hard to pinpoint which bag was used by which shift. In the event that Schedule II drugs or medications were ever stolen or misused, the agency would face extensive fines and penalties. Previously, they used a supply tech to manually check-out and check-in each item, requiring 24/7 staffing.

Gateway's distributor, MMS – A Medical Supply Company, came to them with a recommendation for a simple, cost-effective way to manage supplies, narcotics, bags and kits: a range of automated dispensing solutions from Apex Supply Chain Technologies®.

A Clearer View of Supply and Equipment Usage

MMS showed them how these systems not only provide greater control over critical equipment and assets, they also offer detailed visibility of supply usage – who's using what, when and where. The devices collect all transaction data and store it in Trajectory Cloud™, a powerful enterprise platform that lets managers view on-demand, real-time



AXCESS™ 6000

The new system provides accountability and peace of mind.

information from any web browser, 24/7. Trajectory also sends automated resupply alerts when any item reaches a minimum quantity, virtually eliminating stock-outs.

Working closely with Apex and MMS, Gateway selected a variety of devices to meet their needs, including:

- AXCESS™ 6000 automated lockers for controlling check-out/check-in of truck kits (keys, radio, cell phone and Toughbook/tablet), ALS and BLS bags, IV kits and narcotics boxes
- A MegaStore™ 9000 "smart supply cabinet" for easy access and tracking of high-use supplies
- An EDGE™ 5000E for single dispensing of fragile items, supplies and medications

Gateway installed the devices in their old supply room and quickly discovered new levels of control, tracking and savings.

Making Quick Work of Check-out and Check-in

Gateway now assigns each team's needed kits and bags to their own specific lockers. This not only keeps everyone accountable for their own equipment, it also makes loading the trucks a lot faster. Each shift leader always goes to the same lockers for their vehicle kits, ALS or BLS bags, narcotics box and IV kits. They can also dispense their own supplies to restock trucks as needed.

As an added benefit, when bags and narcotic boxes are checked in at the end of the shift, they can be marked as "used" or "not used," providing documentation and informing the supply techs which bags need their attention. And each time a narcotics box is checked-out, Trajectory Cloud™ provides time-stamped records of who took it and when it was used. This not only fosters accountability among employees, it also helps managers rest easy knowing they have documentation for inspections.

Big Savings in Supply Costs and Labor

Now that Gateway has greater visibility into supply usage, they've seen a significant drop in use of items like sanitary wipes and gloves. "Instead of getting a new box of gloves, they finish up the box they have," said Tate. Within weeks, Gateway was able cut its glove order from six cases a month to two. "We're now saving about \$1,200 a month on gloves alone – an 80% reduction," according to Tate. They've seen similar savings with sanitary wipes, as well.

Now that many time-consuming supply management tasks are handled automatically, Gateway can manage inventory and equipment in just 12 hours a day, allowing it to reduce its supply staff by 50% and eliminate 16 hours of overtime pay each week. These reductions in supply staff and hours save Gateway a minimum of \$54,000 a year.

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With substantial monthly savings on labor and supplies, Gateway has seen a quick ROI on its Apex solutions, and continues to refine its processes and items vended to gain even more control and savings.

Gain New Levels of Control and Accountability

To start gaining greater control and visibility of your EMS equipment, narcotics, kits and supplies, visit ApexSupplyChain.com, email info@apexsupplychain.com or call 1.800.229.7912.



MegaStore™ 9000, AXCESS™ 6036 and EDGE™ 5000E

