



# Secure Texting and Care Collaboration Creates Hospital-Wide Improvements



Interfaith Medical Center Chooses Backline to Improve Patient Safety and Upgrade Communication in the Hospital and Across the Community

## CASE STUDY

### Interfaith Medical Center

287-bed acute care hospital

Located in Brooklyn, New York

Serves Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights Communities

60% Medicaid and Managed Medicaid

HIS: MEDITECH

“As an industry, we’ve never had an efficient and effective tool that would allow us to communicate securely at all times,” says Dr. Kyri Isaac, “but we do now.”

Kyri Isaac, Ph.D is the former Chief Privacy Officer who brought secure communications to Interfaith Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. Like all good privacy executives, she has strong convictions about patient rights.

“Today, most people are comfortable texting with their smartphones. Now, we can replace what people are already doing—texting—with a secure communication app that mirrors that exact activity AND operationally interfaces with our MEDITECH system. It’s a big win for us at Interfaith.”

Interfaith reviewed a number of secure communication tools but were dissatisfied with the tools’ ability to meet the hospital’s range of needs. Already familiar with DrFirst from the Rcopia® e-prescribing integrated into Interfaith’s MEDITECH EHR, Dr. Isaac evaluated DrFirst’s secure communication and care team collaboration tool, Backline®, and realized that it offered many additional benefits for the hospital.

“We feel very comfortable working with DrFirst to implement Backline at Interfaith,” said Jesus Cambrelen, Administrative Director, Emergency Department. “They readily understood our hospital’s specific needs and were quick to work closely with us to uncover where they could help. Also, Backline’s price point was better than any of its competitors – even the ones that couldn’t supply all of the functionality we needed.”

Interfaith selected Backline as a tool to achieve a number of key goals for the hospital, including improved community collaboration, enhanced patient safety, regulatory compliance, operational efficiency, and as a new tool for revenue generation.

#### Corporate Headquarters

9420 Key West Ave., Suite 101  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Toll Free (866) 263-6511

[sales@drfirst.com](mailto:sales@drfirst.com)

#### West Coast Office

916 E. Baseline Rd, Suite 202  
Mesa, AZ 85204  
(602) 466-7547

[www.drfirst.com](http://www.drfirst.com) | [blog.drfirst.com](http://blog.drfirst.com)



# DrFirst

### **Community Collaboration**

Seeking greater collaboration with community providers, Interfaith wanted a more streamlined process for communication. When the Interfaith Emergency Department learned about DrFirst's Backline, the staff became excited about using it as a tool to consult with community physicians when a patient came into the ED.

### **Patient Safety**

Interfaith appreciates the ability to use Backline to create groups and notify all appropriate care team members at once when important information needs to be shared. When critical lab results, for example, can be sent directly from the EMR, to the appropriate staff, patient care teams can react quickly and appropriately. In collaboration with Interfaith's Chief Risk Officer Steve Deluca, selecting Backline was the best option to reduce risk, as an organization. "Real-time notifications offer the opportunity for real-time solutions, keeping our patient's safety as our priority", states Dr. Isaac.

### **HIPAA Compliance**

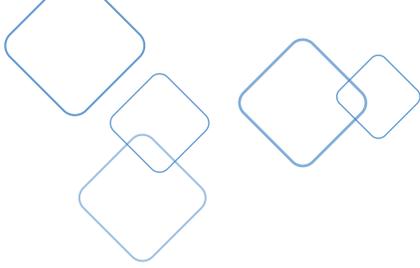
A frequent occurrence in many hospitals, providers and medical teams text each other and send files via email in an attempt to collaborate in real time. The Omnibus Clause increases HIPAA fines when the hospital is aware that staff is violating HIPAA but not working to remedy the noncompliance. Backline has made it possible to proactively reduce vulnerability.

### **Revenue Generation**

As a hospital that has emerged from a Chapter 11 bankruptcy that was filed in December 2012, the administration at Interfaith, under the leadership of the new CEO LaRay Brown, is mindful about revenue generation.

Currently, Interfaith provides telehealth follow-up visits, but has not been able to bill for those services as their existing protocol lacked an electronic, securely housed transcript of the telehealth visit. The use of Backline solves that problem by providing a PDF of the secure text exchange with the patient. The PDF can then be attached to the patient record within the EHR for patient medical history and billing documentation.

**"Backline is a great tool for our toolbox. It closes one of our greatest areas of vulnerability, namely patient privacy and HIPAA compliance, and at the same time helps make our facility more efficient and better for patients."  
- Kyri Isaac, Ph.D.**



DSRIP (Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment) is a 5-year initiative designed to ensure that patient care collaboration is occurring between the hospital and community physicians. Funded by excess Medicare and Medicaid money, DSRIP supports continuity of care with the goal of reducing readmission rates.

Interfaith will be developing its Backline communication process for collaborative discharge planning to demonstrate support for continuity of care in compliance with the DSRIP mandates.

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**- Jesus Crambrelen  
Administrative Director,  
Emergency Department**

### **Operational Efficiency**

Interfaith continually seeks to improve communications in support of improved efficiency and accountability among its staff. A key benefit to using a secure texting tool that is interfaced with the MEDITECH system is that previously manual communications become automated. For example, when a patient is moved from their room, the care team can now see where they are.

Rather than a staff member picking up the phone, a text is automatically generated and care team members can see at a glance that the message has been received. “Backline allows for greater accountability because we can see when individuals read the alerts,” said Cambrelen. “This creates opportunities for us to train and create policies which enhance both our patient’s safety and satisfaction.”

### **Conclusion**

“Backline is attractive and user-friendly,” said Isaac, “and it’s great for both mobile and laptop. In our hospital, we have lots of residents, and they’re all about technology. Based on preliminary feedback from our residents we expect it to be very easy to get them to be compliant because they’re already very comfortable with their smart phones.”

“Backline is a great tool for our toolbox,” continued Isaac. “It closes one of our greatest areas of vulnerability, namely patient privacy and HIPAA compliance, and at the same time helps make our facility more efficient and better for patients. We envision exploring many other uses for Backline in the future, depending on the ideas and input we get from our team.”

