As spring arrives, Westfriesgasthuis patients witness the beauty of Hoorn, a 660-year-old city that lies 35 kilometers north of Amsterdam along the clear waters of Markermeer. Sightlines from the hospital provide a unique view to the Hoorn-Medemblik heritage railway and spark conversation among visitors. Westfriesgasthuis sits proudly near the city center and offers local residents a hospital where they can feel at home. But unlike the view of the historic city outside, it’s the hospital’s modern feel and technological advancements inside that provide patients the most comfort.

IMPLEMENTING A VISION

Nils van Mourik, director of facility services and real estate, Westfriesgasthuis, is always looking for ways to improve the patient experience. In 2010, he began a journey that dramatically changed how patients consume entertainment, interact with their care team and stay connected with loved ones during their hospital stay. It started with an iPad.

In 2012 Van Mourik kicked off an iPad program with a 60-bed pilot in two departments: Oncology and Gastroenterology/Hepatology. “I thought if we started with the hardest part of the hospital, it would be easy to implement it in other departments,” he said. The two-month pilot was a success, and by the end of March 2014, the program rolled out to the rest of the hospital. Currently, Westfriesgasthuis has iPads available for 350 patients at the bedside and at least two devices in each department lobby for visitor use.
Adorning the wall of each hospital room is an iPad. New patients receive a code that unlocks it from a secure case and enables its immediate use. The home screen of each device includes a single app, PIECA. This opens to a vast assortment of options for the user, including TV, music, games, news and more. The devices also contain patient education and hospital services content that is customized for each department. And with management through Jamf Pro, a mobile device management (MDM) solution, the iPad devices are easily updated and always contain the materials most pertinent to patients.

When Thea came to Westfriesgasthuis for a knee replacement, she was thrilled to receive her device. “Others should give this service as well, because it’s so helpful,” she said. Thea used the iPad every day - mostly for card games and the news, but also for researching information on knee replacements. She said this led to more informed conversations with her doctor. Thea smiled as she talked about the iPad, stating, “If I was alone or with not-so-nice roommates, I would have used it even more.”

Staff weren’t enthusiastic when the program began. They didn’t think it would benefit older users like Thea. But happy, well-informed patients changed their mind. For the last seven years, nurse Judith Buisman, has worked in Geriatrics where she said the iPads help the older population of patients feel at ease. She recalled one man who came in confused. “After discovering he liked birds,” she said, “the nurse went to YouTube and looked up bird sounds. She played the sounds and the patient became relaxed and calm.” Buisman said she often takes the same approach. “The music helps the conversation come easily.” And with that, she’s able to deliver better care.

“I think it’s really wonderful to have an MDM. Now it’s much easier to deploy the apps the patients need. Because of its capabilities, patients don’t experience much hassle with the iPad anymore.”

– Nils van Mourik, director of facility services and real estate, Westfriesgasthuis
Beyond the common uses of music, movies, games and news, the iPad can serve a more profound purpose. Buisman shared an emotional story of a man who was dying while his family scrambled to make the journey from their home in Australia. Not sure they’d arrive in time, they used the iPad to say their final goodbye. “They used FaceTime, and the patient had a conversation with his son,” Buisman recalled of the heartwarming interaction. “It was very good.”

Buisman said the iPads give all of her patients something special—freedom. “Before, we had a TV that was hanging from the ceiling, and now we have this,” she said, holding an iPad. “It’s much better for the patient. They’re more mobile.” Buisman added the ability for each patient to utilize the iPad for their own purpose, versus the single option of a TV, has dramatically improved the hospital experience. “It allows them to do something different. This is a huge benefit.”

Utilizing Jamf Self Service, dozens of apps are available for users to select and download. This offers a variety of entertainment options for the patient. And having them on demand, instead of living on the iPad, saves device space and enables a speedy digital wipe. After a patient is discharged, the hospital’s cleaning service wipes down the device and initiates a command that requests a digital sterilization of the iPad—a process that erases any trace of the previous patient, including their downloaded apps. The process takes an average of three and a half minutes per device.

“One department asked me last week, ‘Can you put that app on a specific iPad?’ Thanks to Jamf, it was done within five minutes, from home.”

– Rob Kolles, director of operations, BeagleBoxx
Approximately 70 percent of all Westfriesgasthuis patients use the iPad devices. This percentage includes patients who aren’t able to utilize the technology because of extreme sickness. The departments with the highest iPad usage are Pediatrics, Dialysis and Oncology.

Each iPad includes five surveys, one that asks patients for feedback on the hospital’s entertainment options, and another that focuses entirely on the iPad program. Prior to offering iPad devices, when patients only had access to TV, Westfriesgasthuis consistently received a six (on a 1-10 scale) for Patient Appreciation for Entertainment and Information. Since the iPad program began, Mourik said they’ve seen the score climb to an eight – a substantial result that he believes proves success. A question asking if the iPad service qualitatively improved the patient’s stay also received a rating of eight.
Behind the hospital’s iPad program is the technical process that makes it possible. BeagleBoxx, a mobile service company that partners with Westfriesgasthuis to enhance the patient experience through technology, utilizes Jamf Pro to manage the hospital’s iPad devices. But this wasn’t always the case. Recalling the days before Jamf, Rob Kolles, director of operations, BeagleBoxx, said, “I still have nightmares from that period. I had to wipe every iPad by hand – every single one of them.” He said Jamf changed everything. “The MDM made all the difference.”

Kolles, and his colleague, Peter Sommer, managing director at BeagleBoxx, see great potential with how their partnership with Jamf can foster even more possibilities for the iPad program. “Jamf is very stable, which makes the process of managing the iPads and the continuous flow of updates of iOS and apps manageable for us within the time and budget restrains we have set,” Sommer said. “Jamf is a great company to work with, and we feel that we get great support on our quest to have the absolute best patient experience with iPads in hospitals.”

Future plans for the program include providing patients with the ability to access their patient records and schedule appointments. Van Mourik said continuing to advance their iPad offering is essential to delivering the best patient experience possible. “I want to have tutorials from our own doctors,” he said, recognizing that with the right support, nearly anything is possible. After all, he added, “It all starts with a dream.”
Approximately 70 percent of all Westfriesgasthuis patients use the iPad devices. This percentage includes patients who aren’t able to utilize the technology because of extreme sickness. The departments with the highest iPad usage are Pediatrics, Dialysis and Oncology.

Each iPad includes five surveys, one that asks patients for feedback on the hospital’s entertainment options, and another that focuses entirely on the iPad program. Prior to offering iPad devices, when patients only had access to TV, Westfriesgasthuis consistently received a six (on a 1-10 scale) for Patient Appreciation for Entertainment and Information. Since the iPad program began, Mourik said they’ve seen the score climb to an eight – a substantial result that he believes proves success. A question asking if the iPad service qualitatively improved the patient’s stay also received a rating of eight.
“I think it’s really wonderful to have an MDM. Now it’s much easier to deploy the apps the patients need. Because of its capabilities, patients don’t experience much hassle with the iPad anymore.”

– Nils van Mourik, director of facility services and real estate, Westfriesgasthuis