

CASE STUDY

## CUSTOMIZED SERVICE PARTNERSHIP



### THE COMPANY

A large nonprofit academic medical center in New York City affiliated with two Ivy League medical schools. The health system utilizes Artificial Intelligence and an Operations Management Team (OMT) as part of their monitoring system and command center that connects clinical care programs and supports infrastructure throughout the healthcare system. The OMT tracks and monitors emergency department patient data in real-time. Additionally, temperature of critical refrigeration systems supporting lifesaving medicines are monitored in real-time. As a result of this innovative approach to patient data and temperature monitoring, the medical center has been recognized for its accomplishments and is ranked as one of the top hospitals in the nation for quality and excellence.



### CHALLENGES

Improving cold storage service processes was identified as an urgent priority due to the critical nature of equipment used to safeguard blood therapies, medications and vaccines, and patient samples, as well as other clinical applications.

During the implementation of the monitoring and command center, the medical center OMT identified several opportunities to improve operational efficiencies for cold storage. This included cold storage units across many different suppliers, temperature ranges, and locations across the health system network.

- 1 Discovered a lack of consistency, throughout the system, in technical (repair) response to temperature excursions and other medical-grade refrigeration issues.
- 2 Found a lack of consistency and control of service spend, sometimes resulting in repair costs that exceeded replacement cost. In addition, repair cycles were found to be very lengthy, resulting in excessive down-time of equipment in clinical care areas.
- 3 Identified gaps in easy visibility to historical records for service, preventative maintenance histories (PMs), and certificates of calibration. This combined with inconsistent PM scheduling and execution created regulatory compliance risks for the team.

Hospital staff also identified inefficiencies related to the overall coordination of internal and external staff required to manage routine maintenance and repairs for cold storage equipment.



## SOLUTIONS

The Medical Center had already been working with Helmer Scientific to standardize cold storage. As part of this activity, Helmer Scientific worked to understand how a service partnership could support the medical center's cold storage requirements.

At that time a discovery process began to determine what was needed and how an all-encompassing partnership, with both products and services, could best benefit the organization. Through these initial conversations, the medical center learned that a Helmer partnership could provide service operations to not only support existing equipment; but could also support all medical-grade refrigeration equipment across all suppliers and temperature ranges.

Working with the Helmer Service Team, a customized service workflow was developed for the medical center and implemented across the hospital system. This allowed staff in every clinical area to follow the same protocols for requesting service support, as well as having a single point of contact through Helmer Scientific for all requests.

As part of the service partnership, Helmer provided initial front-line phone support for troubleshooting for all cold storage inquiries. Helmer would also phone triage directly with field-based technicians for preventative maintenance and repair service as needed.

Also as part of the service relationship with the medical center, Helmer field-service technicians stored commonly used components on service vehicles in the region to decrease repair cycles and improve uptime by pursuing resolution on the first visit.

To help control service spend further and improve overall efficiency of the service program, service

technicians are encouraged to consult with medical center staff to recommend replacement versus repair when expected repair costs exceed the cost of a replacement.

To help support regulatory compliance, Helmer created and provided a service record repository to provide visibility to historical records for service, PMs, and calibrations for the medical center staff. In addition, Helmer also managed PM scheduling so that equipment is maintained regularly and remains compliant. Included in this program are frequent partner workflow meetings and high-level quarterly business reviews (QBRs) with supporting documentation to assist the medical center OMT in internal meetings.

Lastly, a dedicated Helmer service resource was assigned to support the medical center service needs. This dedicated resource provides continuity and immediate access for medical center staff to further improve cold storage operational efficiencies.

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## RESULTS

Through a Helmer Scientific Service Agreement, Helmer is now the primary services provider for all existing and new refrigeration equipment throughout the Medical Center health system.

Helmer provides direct support to the Operations Management team members daily. Processes have been established so the OMT members work in concert with Helmer service team members to extend the value of the service agreement. “The most critical component of the relationship is how the teams function as one... really responsive to the customer needs and improving response times”, stated an OMT member.

These processes continue to evolve to provide improved support, more efficient processes, and ultimately better outcomes for the medical center.

As a result of this customized partnership, the medical center has decreased response times in support of temperature excursions by being able to dispatch Helmer refrigeration technicians and partners in a much more efficient manner. “We are now able to triage service events more quickly than ever before”, stated a team member.

The ability to view all service records in one location

has increased overall visibility to manage preventative maintenance schedules, ensure compliance, and improve uptime of equipment. “We are thrilled with the open communication that helps everyone see what is happening. This relationship has always been one team - not us and them”, stated the team member.

## FUTURE PLAN

The partnership continues to evolve and grow in the spirit of continuous improvement as new opportunities are discovered. The customized service partnership is expanding, and implementation of an innovative, real-time monitoring partnership between the medical center, Helmer, and their environmental monitoring system partner is currently in the implementation phase.

“We are very excited about the shared Portal that is going to pilot soon. This should continue to improve communication and response times”, said the team member.

As a result of this continued exploration and implementation of best practices for medical-grade refrigeration servicing, the medical center has implemented a program that has:

- Improved clinical staff efficiency
- Helped support regulatory compliance
- Helped support improved uptime of equipment across the network.



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