



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY: Lake-Sumter EMS

# Lake-Sumter EMS Chooses Simplicity to Improve Patient Care, Communications and Streamline Billing Operations

### LAKE-SUMTER EMS

#### At a Glance:

- 8 years in business
- 30 vehicles
- 250 employees
- 45,000 calls per year
- 36,000 transports per year

#### ZOLL Data Systems' solutions

- RescueNet ePCR Suite
- RescueNet Billing
- RescueNet CommCAD

#### Benefits

- Reduced DSO by 50%
- Streamlined efficiencies in billing, field operations, and communications

*"We felt that only a few companies actually had a fully integrated solution, and ZOLL was one of them. Having an integrated solution allowed a single vendor to handle all of our support needs. And having the option down the road to consider other integrated solutions based on our needs was a huge plus."*

*—Bryan Andrews, Patient Financial Services Manager*

### OVERVIEW

In October 2000, Lake-Sumter EMS, Inc. began operations as a unique, government-owned, bi-county corporation with the mandate to provide efficient, cost-effective emergency medical service and transportation of the sick and injured citizens and visitors of Lake and Sumter counties in Florida. They cover 1,700 square miles and transport approximately 36,000 patients annually.

Their expertise is operating a 9-1-1 ambulance system in two contiguous counties and they are best known for their unique structure and proven ability to work with the first-responder fire departments towards building the best possible EMS system available. They provide dispatch services for most of the fire departments in their service area for both fire and EMS first-response services.

Lake-Sumter EMS operates a state-of-the-art E-911 Communication Center at their administrative complex in Mount Dora, Florida. From the center, all Lake-Sumter EMS units are dispatched as well as calls for eleven fire departments. The skilled men and women who work in the center are often the first responders in an emergency situation and play a key role in meeting the EMS needs of citizens. When dispatchers pick up the line, they never know what to expect -- from vehicle crashes to structure fires to babies about to be born -- it's all in a day's work at the Communications Center. After months of planning and hard work, the Communications Center now uses a new computer-aided dispatch system (CAD), which is incident based and focuses on delivering EMS and fire dispatch services using a map-centric interface.

In addition, over 50% of the Communication Center staff members are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). This greatly assists them in identifying signs/symptoms given to them by the 911 caller. Not content to rest on past accomplishments, the Communications Center is currently working on accreditation through the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch. This prestigious accreditation will recognize us as a center of excellence as there are currently less than 120 accredited centers worldwide.

**ZOLL**



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*"The workflow feature of RescueNet Billing enables an efficient process for the end user, and it's an invaluable tool to management to keep a close check on receivables and the work process of our staff."*

—Bryan Andrews, Patient Financial Services Manager

### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Lake-Sumter EMS used paper for the patient care reporting and it took 4-5 days to get the paper reports from the field. After that, they needed to get them to the shift supervisor for review, and then to billing. At best, they were 7-8 days from the date of service to the date billed. Quality assurance existed, but not near to the level they needed. The primary challenge for their field operations was the ability to compile the data necessary to evaluate and strengthen their QA program.

Within the communications center, dispatchers struggled with a CAD system designed for police dispatch but adapted for limited use in fire and EMS dispatch. Demands for enhanced reporting, mapping, automatic vehicle location and mobile data terminals exceeded the existing CAD's capabilities. Where reporting was concerned, it often took the communications staff days to correct data errors in the system. As such, reporting was very time consuming and statistics were delayed in some cases by one to two months.

### BUSINESS SOLUTION

Lake-Sumter EMS viewed a number of software demonstrations at various trade shows and conferences. They also spoke with other users to find out their thoughts and experience with the software available on the market. At first, they were skeptical that the RescueNet dispatch system could meet the unique and complex needs of both EMS and calls for numerous fire departments. As a result of their RFP process, four companies ended up as finalists for their new CAD and ePCR systems.

They divided their team into two evaluation groups—one to evaluate the ePCR solutions that were offered by each company, and the other to evaluate the CAD solutions. The plan was to evaluate them as stand-alone solutions without considering the added benefits of integration in this phase of the process. In both areas, the ZOLL solutions came out on top. For the billing system, no evaluation of other products was necessary because extending the integration of their new ePCR and CAD systems into the billing area was a natural step.

The proven track record of integration was perhaps the most important aspect of the decision, and it's what set ZOLL apart from the others. Also, the RescueNet ePCR solution's ease of use from a user's perspective, and the simple administration and customized configurability made it the clear winner.

Where the billing system was concerned, the management team and staff were relatively pleased with their existing solution and had no initial intentions of migrating. However, Lake-Sumter EMS attended ZOLL Data Systems' annual users conference where they were able to network with similar organizations who had switched to RescueNet Billing from other solutions. They were also able to visit the Product Showcase room at the conference to ask many questions about the RescueNet Billing system and how it differed from their current billing system. It was here where the benefits of having both the RescueNet Billing system working together with RescueNet ePCR as a truly integrated solution became clear.

The final decisions were based on the RescueNet ePCR's simplicity of use, the RescueNet CommCAD's map-centric design that was completely different than any other CAD system they had seen, and the ease of integration with the billing and the ePCR solutions.



### BUSINESS RESULTS

The 911 communications center is a stressful environment in and of itself, so when you add change to that, there will be challenges. The communications center team adjusted well, and the map-centric design of the product eased the pain a great deal. It was the track record that ZOLL Data Systems had in building CAD systems that Lake-Sumter EMS invested in, along with their vision for the future.

The field operations team was up to speed on the RescueNet ePCR solution in no time and is enjoying its user-friendly design. Even the most apprehensive and skeptical users adapted to using the product quickly. Lake-Sumter EMS is now able to easily conduct quality assurance analyses on as many reports as they choose. The standard reports have been helpful, and they created a few custom reports as well.

The billing staff appreciated the workflow process, the ease of automated charges and contractals, as well as other features in the software. Whether it's looking at protocol compliance, evaluating outcomes from meds or procedures, or checking on individual medic performance, they are now able to accomplish all these and more.

From a billing perspective, the most quantifiable result is the reduction of days from the date of service to the date billed, which is down to 2-3 days from 7-8 days. Other differences can be seen by the accuracy of data elements since many of them are now brought over to billing seamlessly from the ePCR solution. Previously, many of these were manually keyed from the run reports.

The use of the workflow feature in RescueNet Billing has enabled them to better prioritize accounts, manage the process from verification to billing in real-time, and account for user productivity. They look forward to additional benefits such as more involvement from the supervisors in the QA process and MDT integration on their RescueNet CommCAD system.

Lake-Sumter EMS sees ZOLL solutions as a way to provide efficiencies in their service that can be passed on to their citizens and customers in the form of a higher quality EMS system that utilizes technology to enhance their mission.

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ZOLL Data Systems offers the RescueNet suite—computer-aided dispatch for fire and EMS, billing, field data collection, crew scheduling, fire records management, and mobile data software for the fire and emergency medical services (EMS) market. RescueNet is the only fully integrated information management system that allows fire and EMS organizations to manage critical information for maximum performance.

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# ZOLL

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