



Microsoft Healthcare Solution Case Study



Solution name: DOCS Scheduler
Company: ACME Express
Website: www.docsscheduler.net
Country or region: United States

Company profile

ACME Express is a software development company that focuses on scheduling management for hospitals.

Supporting Microsoft software and services

- Microsoft Azure SQL Database
- Microsoft Azure Virtual Machines

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On-call scheduling app consolidates calendars, contact information for hospitals

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ACME Express is on a quest to revolutionize on-call scheduling at hospitals. Its DOCS Scheduler app consolidates on-call schedules across the hospital so emergency departments have accurate calendars and contact information for doctors. Built on Microsoft Azure, the app complies with healthcare security and privacy standards, including EMTALA, a regulation specific to emergency departments. It’s an easy-to-use, low-cost solution that reduces the burden on IT and keeps an accurate audit trail of all schedule modifications.

Consolidating on-call scheduling

The medical field might soon outpace the movies. Things once regulated to Hollywood make-believe—robot surgeons, prosthetic limbs, cell regeneration, ambulance drones—are now commonplace in real-world healthcare. But despite these futuristic advances, many hospitals are still doing one thing the old-fashioned way: scheduling.

ACME Express intends to bring on-call scheduling in line with modern medicine with its DOCS Scheduler app. DOCS Scheduler is a browser-based tool that helps consolidate on-call schedules from across the hospital, giving emergency departments a single calendar that’s always up to date.

In many hospitals, on-call scheduling is a disconnected, sometimes archaic process—which is particularly troublesome for





emergency crews. It's vital these teams provide fast and accurate care to arriving patients, who are often in critical condition. Part of this care is bringing in the right on-call doctors. While processes are in place to make those doctors accessible, the on-call data is often inaccurate, so staff ends up calling the wrong doctor or wrong number. "What happens is that all these individual hospital departments produce their own on-call schedules—sometimes in Outlook, sometimes on Calendar Creator, sometimes on a piece of paper—and then send them to the emergency team," says Don Scipione, President of ACME Express. "That team then sticks each schedule in a binder, and when it needs to find the right on-call provider, someone has to page through the binder, find the right schedule, the right provider, the right contact information—all of which might be wrong. The emergency crew calls the doctor on the schedule only to find out she's no longer on call that night."

Always-accurate, always-available schedules

Using the calendar in DOCS Scheduler, on-call schedulers have an intuitive point-and-click method for assigning doctors to their designated days, weeks, or months. Each provider comes with a contact card that is easily modified if a phone number or email address changes. When an assignment or contact information is changed, DOCS

Scheduler keeps a detailed record of what changes were made, when those changes were made, and by whom.

The app is a simple solution to a once-complicated problem: it provides an online, consolidated, always-accurate, always-available scheduling system that emergency teams can use with confidence. "Our mission is to dramatically increase the productivity of healthcare schedulers and to produce a fair schedule for providers, an accurate system for emergency departments, and a low-cost solution for hospitals," says Scipione.

Compliant with Microsoft Azure

DOCS Scheduler differs from its competitors in a number of ways. Foremost, it is built on Microsoft Azure, which significantly reduces the burden on hospital IT teams. "Essentially no IT resources are required to implement DOCS Scheduler, except for due diligence," says Scipione. "But with Azure, it's a no-brainer: Azure helps us satisfy all the medical healthcare regulations in terms of security and privacy. It simplifies the entire due diligence process for IT." What's more, since Azure is a Microsoft product, the app is compatible with other Microsoft solutions, which are widely used across hospitals.

The app is also compliant with the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA), which governs when and how a patient in unstable condition may be refused treatment or transferred from one hospital to another. In addition to other requirements, the statute provides that hospitals must keep records of who's in charge of emergency services at any given time. With ad hoc, disconnected scheduling, this kind of record keeping is time-consuming. But with DOCS Scheduler, on-call schedules are saved indefinitely, as is the audit trail of changes made by schedulers.

Finally, DOCS Scheduler gives hospitals a host of options for disseminating on-call schedules to employees, as well as flexibility in who maintains the calendar. The app can be projected on screens throughout the hospital so staff have a real-time view of who's on call at that moment. DOCS Scheduler also gives hospitals the ability to have schedules managed individually by each department, centrally by the hospital, or a combination of the two. That flexibility extends to the DOCS Scheduler app for Windows Phone, which enables both schedulers and providers to access the on-call schedule from anywhere.

Blazing new trails in on-call scheduling

ACME Express has benefited from Microsoft's one-on-one guidance, especially when the company moved to Azure. "With the help we received from Microsoft, we were able to transition our entire datacenter to Azure in about four months, and that was me working part time doing it. It was really the best migration I've ever gone through," says Dave Denes, Head of Product Development for ACME Express.

Thanks to constant innovation and help from Microsoft, ACME Express is closer than ever to reaching its goal to be recognized as the pioneer in medical staff scheduling worldwide.