



Launching a System-Wide COVID-19 Employee Hotline: Design to Deployment in 2 Days

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BACKGROUND	AIM STATEMENT	SUMMARY
<p>On 3/12/2020, the Clinical Effectiveness and Patient Safety Team was tasked with the implementation of an employee hotline within 2 business days, focused on answering COVID-19 related employee questions.</p> <p>The main goal of establishing the hotline was to reduce the volume of calls to the Methodist Infection Preventionists and Employee Health teams. Additionally, the health system wanted to enhance employee health and safety by providing a real-time resource and central communication tool to address COVID-19 specific concerns from employees. The hotline was designed as a critical access point for employees and physician partners and served as a direct line of communication with MHS System Leadership. The hotline scope of service included questions from employees with COVID-19 exposure at work or in the community, as well as any other questions or concerns needing escalation.</p>	<p>To successfully implement a system-wide COVID-19 Employee Hotline to enhance the safety and information provided to employees and to reduce calls to Employee Health and Infection Prevention Departments.</p> <p>PILLARS</p> <p>Employee Safety</p> <p>KEY PRESENTER</p> <p>Tiffany Meraz, MBA, MHS, CPHQ E-mail: tiffanymeraz@mhd.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 1007 individual calls were addressed by the hotline team in the 79 days in operation. The hotline started on 3/17/2020 and transitioned to an automated information line on 6/3/2020. The majority of the calls were concerning symptoms (23%), and testing (27%). Average Call Length was 10 minutes. Calls were routed to the testing centers (33%) and employee health (14%) the most, with 17% of calls resolved by the hotline operators alone.

ACTIONS TAKEN METRICS

Hotline operators were identified across the system in collaboration with Human Resources to effectively re-deploy staff who needed hours (e.g. Quality, Pre-Admission Testing, etc.)

New Exposure/Return to Work tracking processes and tools developed.

Implemented a fully remote operator training module to orient new operators quickly and safely as they sheltered in place at home.

Operator scripting and SOPs were updated in real time to reflect changes in the "latest and greatest" information available to our employees, in all mediums.

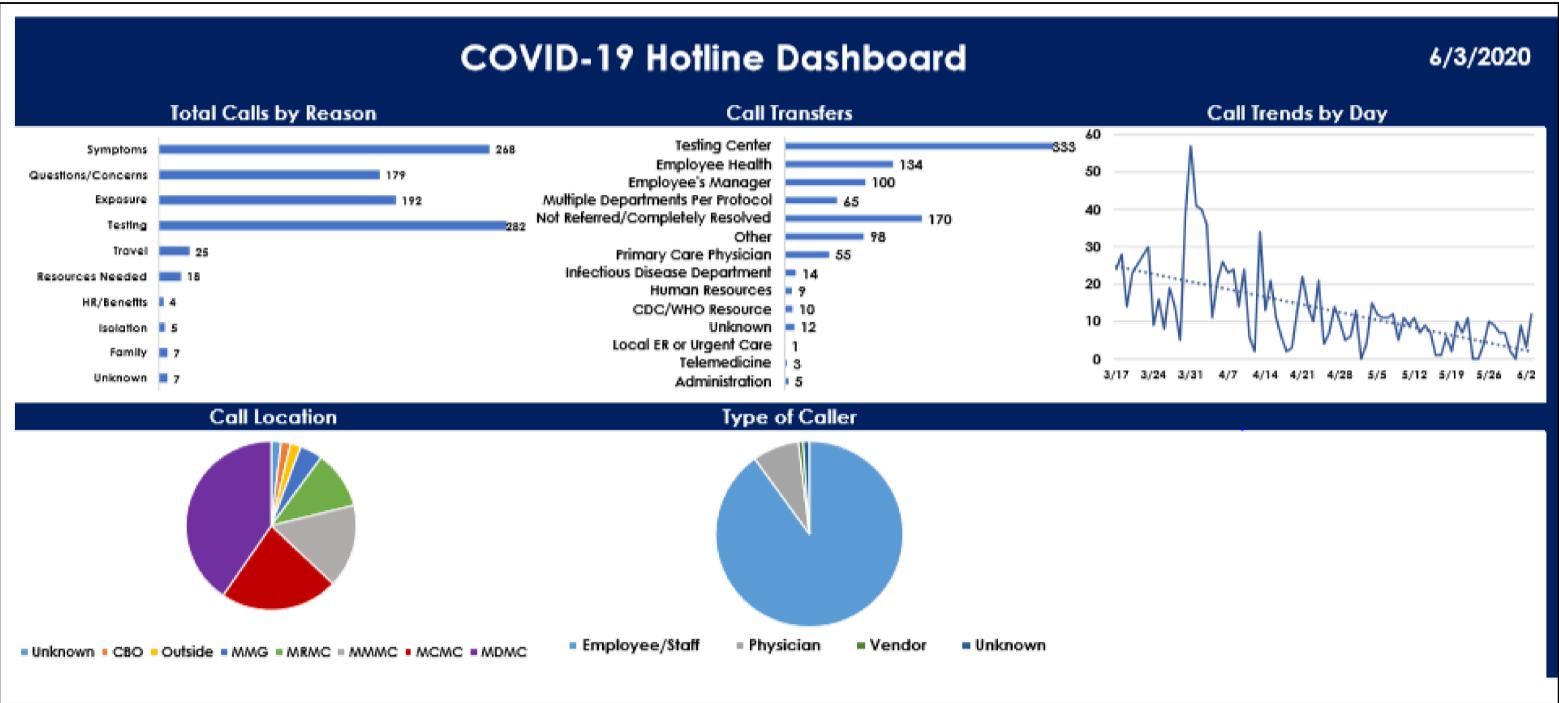
Hotline hours of operation quickly expanded to provide weekend support and testing services so as to provide the most prompt care to the employees.

Operated 2 Clinical lines and 2 Non-Clinical lines daily.

Hotline was operated 100% remotely to ensure employees were able to safely shelter in place at home while still *Taking Care of Each Other* in alignment with the MHS Care Commitments.

Additional lines & operators quickly trained and added to handle a surge in call volumes when employees needed the most support.

Leader on Call role established to quickly escalate employee COVID-19 related safety concerns and other urgent issues to Administration.



KEY LEARNINGS	NEXT STEPS	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The COVID-19 Employee Hotline was crucial to addressing employee's COVID-19 questions regarding their health and safety. Maintaining the call scripting and SOP's with "by the minute" updates is required during a pandemic in order to provide the most accurate information available. Versatile staff with high learning agility was key to quickly launching the hotline and maintaining process changes daily. Communication was challenging due to the constantly changing processes and number of stakeholders involved. Identifying an operational team with clear line of sight to Employee Health and Human Resources processes would be ideal to future operations of the hotline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Hotline Playbook was developed so the health system is equipped to reactivate the hotline during another pandemic or any other crisis type situation. The Methodist Health System COVID-19 Employee Hotline was reactivated on July 27, 2020. The hotline is active and operational under the original structure and remains so today. 	<p>Special thanks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clinical Effectiveness and Patient Safety Team Jeremiah Streetman Lauren Stewart Bonnie Hurst Omar Tariq Kyndall White Stephanie Wells Martin Koonsman, MD