



## GE Healthcare, MobileAccess Pair Up for Single Wireless Infrastructure

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By [M.L. Baker, eWEEK](#)

Giant GE Healthcare has teamed up with 85-employee MobileAccess Inc. to enable hospitals to use a common infrastructure for their wireless applications, such as cell phones, pagers, public safety radio and Wi-Fi.

A midsize hospital could have as many as 15 different wireless systems, including pagers, and a multihospital chain could have as many as 40, said Steve Lorenc, general manager of GE Healthcare.

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As the numbers and types of wireless applications used in hospitals grow, several companies are offering to replace parallel networks in hospitals with infrastructures that support multiple kinds of devices. Most of these companies, including [MobileAccess](#), [Airwave](#), [InnerWireless Inc.](#) and [Meru Networks](#), have experience installing their networks in large private and public buildings as well as university campuses.

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But whether or not hospitals will use these companies is "the golden question," said Scott

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Tobin, an analyst in health and life sciences IT with Frost and Sullivan. "You're talking about a plethora of products to be managed. It's the hospital's choice" how it will do so. The deal between GE Healthcare and MobileAccess is an attempt to better penetrate a difficult hospital market.

The advantage of a common wireless infrastructure is "eliminating disparate networks that have different management capabilities," said Cathy Zatloukal, CEO of MobileAccess, so that IT staffs do not need to install, maintain and troubleshoot parallel, stand-alone infrastructures to support voice, data and other transmissions. Such consolidation can lower costs and increase reliability, she said.

GE Healthcare entered the partnership with MobileAccess because of plans to expand its offerings in medical telemetry. This technology transmits data from devices like glucose monitors and ECGs directly to a computer system. The technology can automatically track patients' conditions over time and alert clinicians of life-threatening problems, but it also requires absolutely reliable connectivity.

As use of telemetry applications expands, said Lorenc, hospitals need a wireless infrastructure that is simple to manage and that never loses or delays data.

The MobileAccess technology means that GE Healthcare can offer an infrastructure compatible with all of GE Healthcare's telemetry equipment and that will meet hospitals' other wireless needs as well.

Lorenc said GE Healthcare chose MobileAccess' infrastructure because of the breadth of wireless applications it can support and because it has an open, standards-based system that should readily accommodate new wireless applications. "Over time, the core technology of the system is the best for flexibility and growth and less invasive."

Under the agreement, GE Healthcare will be responsible for installing and maintaining the wireless infrastructure and for selling the product to health care providers. The companies have an exclusive agreement to create a GE Enterprise Access solution to support GE's wireless telemetry devices. Lorenc said that in this case, working exclusively on a wireless infrastructure is a means to creating universal applications.

"There are a lot of cases where we do work with everything. The problem is that for medical telemetry there are more cases where it's much less compatible or fully incompatible. It's an issue of what can we guarantee will work."

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