



## IT helps babies stay put

February 20, 2009 | Molly Merrill, Associate Editor

CHILLICOTHE, OH – Babies born with complications at Adena Health System, a 253-bed hospital in rural Chillicothe, Ohio, are facing fewer transfers these days thanks to a telemedicine project that links the hospital with neonatal specialists.

Adena is an entry level Neonatal Intensive Care Unit that is staffed by pediatric doctors unequipped to deal with complications such as respiratory problems.

More than two years ago Adena was asked to participate in a telemedicine project with Columbus-based Nationwide Children's Hospital, a Level III NICU. high definition video conferencing system from Austin, Tex.-based LifeSize Communications connects Adena with neonatal specialists.

The HD technology relies on a dedicated 1,600-mile high-speed, fiber-optic network maintained by the Ohio Supercomputer Center, a network that serves as the "backbone" for almost 100 educational institutions in Ohio.

It was the center that first suggested the hospital switch from technology provided by Andover, Mass.-based Polycom to the LifeSize system, says Marcus Bost, CIO of Adena.

From a price point it was a "no-brainer," Bost says.

Craig Malloy, CEO and co-founder of LifeSize, says, "The neonatal project at Adena has been the most compelling usage for our technology so far."

"Divisions are able to use it on their own without the help of a technician. It is a self-serve model," he says.

Malloy says the technology is designed to last.

"In two years we haven't had a hiccup, physicians love it and patients are benefiting from it," says Bost.

To date, Children's has linked only with Adena, but Rachel Brown, MD, assistant professor of pediatrics at Children's, says it plans to extend the program to Genesis HealthCare System in Zanesville, Ohio.

In the second year of the program Brown says the number of NICU transfers to Children's dropped from 64 to 39, which she attributes in part to the telemedicine program.

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