

**Name of Organization**

University Health Network (UHN)

**Healthcare Organization Type**

Health Network

**Client Since**

1999

**Products**

Feedback

**Key Challenges**

- Small patient relations team, responsible for 3 large acute care hospitals
- Work demands led to team manually inputting paper files, resulting in data consistently being 2-3 months behind
- Need to track actual complaints and staff inquiries in real-time
- Part-time administrative assistant needed for data entry

**Key Benefits**

- Real-time data captured, improving information accuracy and quality of care throughout the hospital
- Incident resolution time reduced by sending monthly & quarterly reports to specific departments
- Patient relations department's Annual Report posted publicly to increase transparency
- Part-time administrative assistant no longer necessary
- Comprehensive reports help quickly determine problem areas

**Client Website**

[www.uhn.ca](http://www.uhn.ca)



University Health Network

Toronto General Hospital Toronto Western Hospital Princess Margaret Hospital

**CLIENT CASE STUDY**

# University Health Network (UHN)

**The Challenge**

Although the University Health Network is Canada's largest teaching hospital, it has relatively small patient relations department: 2 full-time and 2 part-time employees. UHN has used RL Solutions' feedback management software for many years with the patient relations staff members manually inputting the data from paper forms into the system. This resulted in a huge amount of paperwork; UHN even had a part-time administrative assistant who just did data entry. Also, the data was usually 2-3 months behind because the team didn't have enough time to catch up.

Eventually, the department decided to make the switch to using RL Solutions' web forms. These web forms offered greater functionality because patient relations staff could track all feedback in a centralized location, instead of using cumbersome paper forms. This would save them valuable time and effort, and allow them to create better reports, gather more data and, ultimately, improve quality of care. These reasons were enough to convince UHN to move to an online version of RL Solutions' feedback management software.

software for  
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### Organizational Snapshot

Providing care to the community for more than 200 years, University Health Network is a major landmark in Canada's healthcare system. It's also the country's largest acute-care teaching hospital, affiliated with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. The UHN is the umbrella organization that includes Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto General Hospital and Toronto Western Hospital. While each hospital retains its own identity and base of support, the members interact and depend on each other. Building on the strengths and reputation of its three hospitals, UHN aims to bring together the necessary talent and resources to provide exemplary patient care, research and education.

### **The Solution: RL Solutions' patient feedback software facilitates centralized complaint management**

UHN has thousands of employees at several different sites. Therefore, unlike a small hospital, training staff on how to use feedback management software presented a big challenge. So, instead of staff inputting feedback directly into the system, UHN's patient relations department controls all of its feedback centrally. The patient relations department is a centralized corporate department; it was an organizational decision to locate a standardized process for complaint management. Because of this departmental structure, the team has also become a resource for staff members who want to resolve issues with patients before they become official complaints.

Approximately 30% of UHN's patient relations cases are reported by staff looking for help resolving issues. These proactive inquiries give the patient relations team an opportunity to proactively resolve a potential complaint. "Sometimes, it turns into an official complaint but 80% of the time, a head's up doesn't turn into a complaint. We can't know for certain though, so we track everything in Feedback," explains Vas Bakas, a Patient Relations Coordinator with UHN. By preemptively contacting the patient relations department, front-line employees get help from experienced staff who are trained in conflict resolution. And by tracking everything online through a web-based system, UHN can quickly access files, run reports and provide backup for colleagues.

### **The Result: Real-time reports for key departments reduces their complaints and increases internal customer satisfaction with data**

This proactive intervention approach is obviously working: UHN has implemented quality improvement initiatives that have resulted in staff awareness and better customer service. The patient relations team also uses RL Solutions' feedback software to build monthly and quarterly reports with patient feedback data for certain hospital departments. Ms. Bakas acknowledges the success of these reports: "By providing this information, we have seen a decrease in patient complaints over time."

For one department, the monthly report shows the number of complaints and compliments for that month, the site, the date of the feedback and what it was about. The quarterly report further includes

"We know that our staff are reading our feedback reports because we've seen the changes in the hospitals."

**Vas Bakas, Patient Relations Coordinator**  
University Health Network

information on the types of feedback received (including sub-categories), the person or group involved and how long it took to resolve. Since RL Solutions' system generates the report automatically, all the patient relations team has to do is send a quick email, a far cry from the mountain of paper reports that the team used to create.

The data in these reports has helped the departments determine where to focus their efforts to improve quality of patient care. For example, when another UHN department requested to receive monthly customized reports, the staff noticed how many of their complaints were related to attitude and took major steps to improve this issue. By putting the information directly in the hands of the people who can change the department's behavior, it has helped empower UHN's employees to improve.

Ms. Bakas says that her team "is really looking forward to learning more about customizing its reports." As they become more comfortable with RL Solutions' web-based feedback forms, they're able to provide better data to the executive team. UHN's patient relations team reports directly to the CEO so the data has visibility at a senior level and it's currently included in UHN's annual report. With timely, accurate data pulled from its web-based feedback management system, UHN's patient relations team will continue to create its own annual report, which is also publicly available. These reports will break out feedback data by site, person involved, theme (i.e., quality complaint, wait time, etc.), the time it took to resolve the complaint and more – all in hopes of improving its patients' quality of care.

RL Solutions designs innovative healthcare software for patient feedback, incident reporting & risk management, infection surveillance and claims management. At RL Solutions nurturing long-lasting relationships with our clients is what we do best. We have over 600 clients, including healthcare networks, hospitals, long-term care facilities and more. RL Solutions is a global company with offices in Canada, the United States, Australia & the UK.

Want to know more?



**Please contact RL Solutions  
for more information**

Phone: 1 888 737 7444

Email: [sales@rl-solutions.com](mailto:sales@rl-solutions.com)

Web: [www.rl-solutions.com](http://www.rl-solutions.com)