



United Urology Group cuts
calling costs 75% while ensuring
patient calls go through



“Customer service is first and foremost. When you deal with our daily volume, there are bound to be issues. They’re rare now, but when they happen you’ve got to have somebody you can rely on. To get an engineer who knows what they’re talking about, knows our account, has the tools at their fingertips and jumps right in...there’s massive value to that.”

Mark Zawodny

Director of Clinical & Business Systems, United Urology Group



United Urology Group (UUG) is a nationwide physician-led urology practice headquartered in Maryland and operating in 5 states with 200+ providers and 500K+ patient encounters/year.

UUG is also a managed service organization (MSO), helping physicians who want to grow their practices but don't have in-house expertise for back-office functions such as electronic medical records or phones. UUG's national platform provides the support to allow practices to scale more quickly both in market and beyond, with best-of-breed tools and software to ease check-in and registration, plus a call center to handle patient calls.

UUG's call center platform can expand nationally, it spans all time-zones, and that scale allows for cost savings, so they can take calls more efficiently. That improves patient satisfaction, access to providers, scheduling appointments, getting what they need from their doctor.

PAIN POINTS

Upgrading from Outages to a Platform that Scales

The hardest part of choosing a modern vendor is taking stock of what you have. We talked to vendors who promised it all, a completely managed solution end-to-end. But at the end of the day, they don't understand your business or your workflows. That's something only we can do. We also had to clean up the previous 10-12 years—things nobody could take off our shoulders.

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Before Commio, we'd inherited an ancient platform that served a single region. When we went national, we'd just scratched the capabilities but were investing in old technology that had major issues—outages, carrier issues, the phone system itself. Having patients be able to reach their doctor, be able to make appointments, is critical. We needed to make a change.

Getting a new platform set up after gathering all that data, figuring out what good looks like in a new system, and cleaning everything up, is easy. Technology these days, both on the phone side and the carrier side, makes it turnkey to deploy handsets, remote workers, new carriers...it's incredibly easy.

GOAL

Finding a Provider that Shared UUG's Values

We needed a partner that understands in healthcare, that any downtime is unacceptable. Uptime and customer service are critical. We look at it like this: That's a patient—somebody's grandfather who can't get through, who has cancer. Imagine trying to get test results while thinking you might have cancer. That's the mindset we need to ensure we have that level of service.

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I'd used Commio elsewhere for outbound least cost routing. The platform as it's evolved, with inbound and outbound intelligent call routing plus all the carrier redundancy, is particularly attractive. The most attractive part, though, is the service: if there is a problem, being able to reach an engineer who understands the problem quickly. We've only had very few, very tiny issues, but we reach a Commio engineer right away. With our previous carrier mix and platforms, it could be hours—and by that point tiny things become very big. So the deciding factor was not only Commio's carrier mix and technology, but also customer service.

When we were getting set up and had questions, it was very easy. Commio helped ensure we understood set-up requirements, configuration specs, and best practices—and conversely, we shared our own uptime and response requirements. Our account manager was very responsive. I can't say enough good things about the account management and support teams.



HIGHLIGHTS

OPPORTUNITIES

- An outdated platform with frequent call outages
- Poor customer service, resulting in excessive downtime
- High carrier bills and other telecom costs
- Concerns about HIPAA and 911 compliance

SOLUTIONS

- Upgrade the platform with modern technology
- Find a provider with superior customer service
- Solve call issues before they're serious
- Get the numbers they need for nationwide coverage
- Ensure that compliance laws and requirements are met

GOAL

Protecting Patient Data with HIPAA & Carrier Exemptions

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Anytime you deal with patient data, you have to keep HIPAA top of mind. When you use a cell phone, there are call records somewhere. Changing providers doesn't affect that. The record still exists and on its own is not considered personal information. Further down the line into our call center and the IVR, then we're dealing with HIPAA because we collect patient information.

We may record calls for quality, so we must ensure they're encrypted and use the proper messaging with the caller. So downstream there are HIPAA concerns, but in terms of the carrier relationship, it's not an issue to have call detail records; they exist with any VoIP carrier like Commio.

GOAL

Reducing Costs & Maintaining Service

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When you use technology from the stone age, costs increase—and not just for the platform. Carriers want you to use the newest technology, so they incentivize you by hiking bills till it becomes incredibly expensive. To support telecom across our entire operation was hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and we've got that down to about a fourth now. I'm excluding calls related to our new IVR because we're doing some special things there, but apples-to-apples we're saving about 75% over before—it's an incredible transformation.

I'd look at service first prior to price, but if you can cut costs because you're able to take advantage of the newer technologies and services Commio provides, that's icing on the cake. Commio's pricing is so competitive I don't know how they do it.

GOAL

Adding Phone Numbers for Optimal Coverage

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We ported almost 300 numbers from a variety of carriers over to Commio. I've done ports before, and Commio's process is one of the best. The on-ramp to getting in was relatively easy, so that was a huge relief. Importing is one of those administrative things nobody likes to do, but it truly was a very low impact process.

As we add offices and add more onto the platform, we've added DIDs. Finding the right area code and number combinations is important. Commio didn't have anything in one of our locations, but there's a Request button and I had the numbers I needed within an hour. So even if you can't find the combination you're looking for, the ability to request it and get it quickly is impressive.



OUTCOMES

- UUG has the telecom services and technology they need for a national platform
- Communications costs cut by 75%
- Issues resolved internally in real-time with transparency, carrier redundancy
- UUG resting easy knowing expert support is a phone call away
- Patient calls go through the first time, every time

“We've been with Commio three years. We started small; as we've evolved, grown our usage, and taken on projects to start scaling our business on the telecom side, Commio has been easy to scale with us. Service is our number one concern and you guys have knocked it right out of the park—it's been a great relationship. I can't say enough good things about you guys.”

GOAL

Resolving Issues with Transparency & Redundancy

With Commio we're able to log into the portal if we get reports of any call quality issues. We can look up the call, see the time, get extensive details, identify where in the line the problem is, and respond. We've only had to temporarily turn off an upstream carrier once or twice, but it's instant. You don't see that granularity or ability to self-manage from most providers, and again, uptime is absolutely critical. So having these tools is amazing and critical for us.

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These tools help us be proactive, as well. When we hear things like, “Hey, we're seeing repeated problems on this call route,” we can aggregate across our entire platform calls that are following the same path to find a problem that needs to be addressed.

thinQ by Commio is smarter than any other platform right now. With any of the national carriers you're stuck on their network and if there's a problem, you're out of luck. Having the option of being able to make changes in real-time is huge.

GOAL

Ensuring 24/7 Expert Support

Here's a comparison. An old carrier was switching to fiber, so they shut off a segment and never let anyone know. We called support, it took four days for them to understand the problem, and there was no resolution. It was a nightmare—not just for us, but those patients trying to reach us.

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By contrast, a doctor said a hospital couldn't reach him via a Commio number. I went on the portal and saw something upstream but couldn't quite figure it out. It was a Saturday. I called and got an engineer; he identified the upstream carrier and we turned it off. We were back up within an hour, and the hospital could reach the doctor. That's the level of service we need.

GOAL

Keeping Patients Safe with E911

E911 is critical to every healthcare business. Our urology offices deal with elderly patients and we have surgery centers, so complications happen and of course we need the ability to dial 911.

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In our previous network it was expensive and difficult, and sharing an address didn't work well so we risked being non-compliant. Deploying e911 was game-changing—being able to confidently say to our staff and doctors that when you call 911, we've got the right address for every phone in the office. To deploy e911 and be compliant with the law...to set up an office to be e911 compatible within 5 minutes...it's just incredibly easy.



Need to ensure call quality and deliverability?
Rest easy with expert 24x7 support?

There is a better way.

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