Healthcare Labelling Guide:

Secure and functional hardware and software

WHITEPAPER

brother
at your side

Table of Contents

brother
at your side

In the course of running a hospital, general practitioner office or any health care facility, efficiency is an essential value.

Patient outcomes depend on personnel quickly and accurately exchanging information. This means labelling is an important consideration as labels and wristbands are key ways for medical staff to communicate patient information.

Each department of a care facility has its own device requirements, though they all share a few important similarities. All the hardware needs to be reliable, user-friendly and capable of keeping data secure as it is transmitted through networks.

Ideal use cases for health care labelling

Finding and deploying new labelling assets in a healthcare facility may be a transformational process. From badge printers at admissions to **patient wristband printers** on mobile carts and prescription label printers in the pharmacy, there are a wide array of opportunities for labelling to benefit the operation of healthcare facilities.

Some of the uses for labelling in healthcare mirror those in other industries, while others are highly specialised. As long as organisations have a reliable provider of print solutions, they can combine these deployments into a comprehensive and connected environment that will suit their needs.

Requirements across various departments include the following:

EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

Healthcare facilities are just like all other businesses in their need for clear labelling of equipment and assets. Features such as barcodes (QR codes) can help employees quickly and accurately enter the physical position of items into digital systems for effective inventory tracking. If the equipment in question is meant to be used in tough conditions — heat, cold, abrasion — the labels should be tough enough to withstand such an environment.

Labels may contain data such as the last time equipment was inspected or calibrated to ensure it gets the upkeep it needs. Organisations can also opt for labels with tamper-evident features that will help with loss prevention and inventory control measures. Expensive and sensitive assets such as computers and medical equipment are easier to keep track of when they are securely labelled with these tags.

LAB SPECIMEN AND SAMPLE LABELLING

The ability to print labels on demand for lab specimens and samples is essential. Laboratory workers performing tests need to know what they are working with. The accuracy and clarity of their labels can help ensure the results of tests are correctly noted.

The labels applied to specimens and samples need to have strong adhesive in order to remain applied and legible when exposed to moisture or changes in temperature. Considering the need to refrigerate lab samples, these temperature resistant labels, tested to the extreme, are a must. Top-quality labelling materials can withstand up to temperatures between -80 and 150 degrees celsius, as well as exposure to chemicals. A label printer with a small footprint located right in the lab allows researchers to be sure they have the tags they need to track their work, thus lowering the chance of human error and boosting efficiency.

ON-DEMAND PATIENT WRISTBAND PRODUCTION

Patient wristbands allow healthcare workers to quickly determine details about the patients they are assisting. A clear and readable patient wristband can provide information that saves time during medical emergencies. The wristbands should be tough enough to remain legible over time and wear.

Portability is a great advantage for the labelling printers used to produce patient wristbands. These small-footprint devices can be deployed at admissions or travel on carts to patients' bedsides. The wristbands they produce can create a connection between a person and their digital medical records, allowing medical professionals to look up data in a hurry.

FOOD LABELLING FOR HOSPITAL CATERING

Exchanges of data between patient records and hospital catering services is carefully managed under a standard called HL7. This ensures patients receive meals that meet their dietary requirements and not cause negative allergic

reactions all while ensuring this data is kept private and secure. Using small-footprint label printers to print out meal information when the food is prepared allows catering teams to have access to the most up-to-date data regarding patient location and dietary needs.

Those labels can be used to seal food packaging, and they clearly state which patient the meal is for. This means upon delivery to the room, hospital personnel and the patients themselves can be sure they're getting food that has been chosen to suit their needs and won't cause adverse reactions.

SAFETY LABELLING ACROSS WARDS

Safety and warning labels are important parts of any facility. When used in healthcare they serve the same role, and they can be customised to suit requirements in each ward. Safety warnings on equipment that should not be touched, areas that are off limits and settings that cannot be changed must hold up over time to prevent safety risks from reoccurring.

Whether the labels identify specific risks or create a general system of warning signage for a whole facility, users can take advantage of portable label printers to get the warnings they need on demand. The resulting labels will look far more professional and remain where they need to be compared to handmade temporary versions.

DISPOSABLE NAME TAG CREATION

Creating disposable identification labels is a way around one of the healthcare-specific challenges with personal IDs. Namely, it can be hard for staff to make their lanyard-worn ID cards visible when wearing personal protective equipment, or keeping these cards sterile. Printing temporary ID labels and attaching them to PPE is a way for healthcare workers to conveniently show who they are and confirm they have been vetted to access an area of the facility. They can then discard the single-use labels with the PPE at the end of the shift.

The same types of printers used to create these disposable name tags can also serve at the front desk for visitor identification purposes. Temporary name badges for guests can be connected to visitor management software and contain elements such as photos and barcodes for better oversight of guests' movements and identification.

Devices and consumables for healthcare

To meet those demanding healthcare labelling requirements, operators should seek out high-quality devices and consumables. The right combination of printers is essential for creating an environment that will meet industry standards and deliver operational benefits that can lead to better patient outcomes.

LABELLING MATERIALS

A truly high-quality labelling tape combines several attributes: This type of label should stick to virtually any surface while being resilient enough to stand up to abrasions, liquids, heat, cold and UV rays. In hospitals and other healthcare settings, it is also important to seek out tapes that meet sterilisation requirements. TZe laminated tapes from Brother are up to these standards, making them a good match for any high-pressure environment from labs to patients' bedsides and beyond.

LABELLING PRINTERS

The printers used by hospital staff should be convenient and easy to use, combining reliability with a long life. In a healthcare environment, a weak link in the labelling system could become a liability for reasons ranging from lost efficiency to compromised security. Therefore, the ideal printers combine the following attributes:

◢ **Small footprint:** Printers that are small, light and easily portable can serve in numerous departments, or even travel between patients' rooms as part of a cart. Battery-powered label printers especially are ideal for use on the go, or even deployment in an ambulance to print patient ID wristbands before arriving at the hospital

◢ **High print quality:** Labels must be legible to deliver efficiency benefits. Trying to make sense of a blurry label is a waste of time and more importantly, can lead to serious, potentially life-threatening human error. Therefore, administrators must seek out high-DPI label printers that can create features such as photos or 1D or 2D barcodes, including QR codes

◢ **Security features:** Ensuring printers are up to medical records standards when transferring data wirelessly is an important priority for healthcare organisations. Networks at these facilities can't afford any weaknesses

◢ **Ease of use:** A printer that is complex or fragile is not useful to any member of the hospital staff. Key features from an ease-of-use perspective include fast, simple media roll changes and simple to use functions
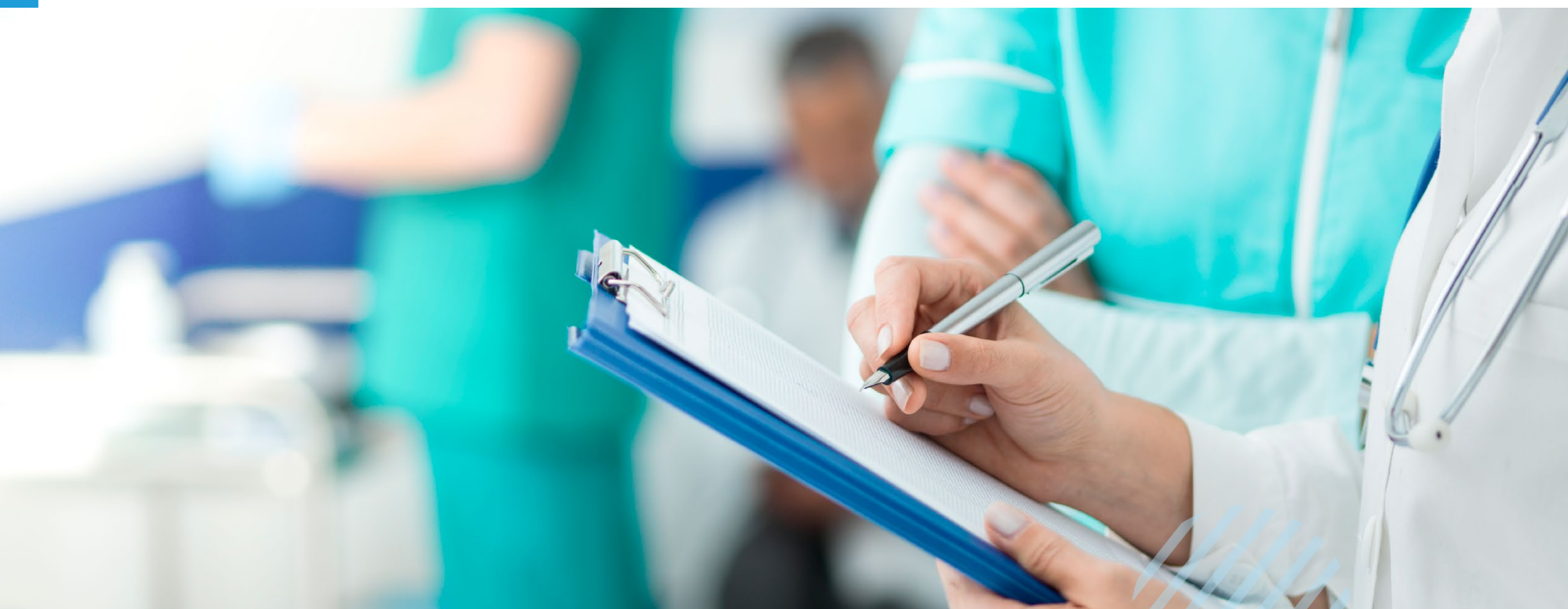
Labelling as part of an MPS deployment

Healthcare facilities' need to get the right label printing hardware and software for their requirements and this is a trait they share with companies across sectors. This means they can take the same approach as so many other organisations and invest in a Managed Print Services (MPS) solution.

An MPS engagement starts with an assessment to determine what types of devices and management frameworks a particular facility needs. In consultation with experts, administrators can select a lineup of new devices and consumables — purchasing through such a model enables a high degree of cost transparency.

MPS deployments can come with centralised management of networks, allowing users to securely access their new label printers from approved devices including PCs, smartphones and tablets. By connecting the print networks with hospital information systems and electronic medical records, they can create a unified, transparent and secure data environment.

Getting started with healthcare labelling

The challenges associated with healthcare labelling are largely to do with the unique environment in hospitals and other practices. Organisations that implement high-quality systems will find that its deployment is having a positive impact on their internal efficiencies, one that can improve every element of operations, patient care included.

With an unprecedented lineup of devices and label options and a long history assisting organisations with unique requirements, Brother is the ideal partner for a healthcare labelling refresh. Whether it takes place as part of a full-scale MPS deployment or simply as a quick update to a hospital's device lineup, the introduction of new labelling capabilities is a great way to improve capabilities.

A consultation with a Labelling expert is the ideal first step in making such a transformation.

View Case Study

brother

at your side

Brother Empowers

Brother Solutions

LinkedIn

YouTube

brother.com.au