

# 13th Annual Spok Survey Reveals the State of Healthcare Communications in 2023

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150+ healthcare industry professionals weigh in on the current state of healthcare communication, navigating through the latest innovations, challenges, and more

ALEXANDRIA, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- **Spok, Inc.**, a wholly owned subsidiary of Spok Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: SPOK) and a global leader in healthcare communications, released the results of its thirteenth annual survey on communications in healthcare. This year more than 150 executives, physicians, nurses, IT personnel, contact center representatives, and more from around the U.S. responded with eye-opening input about the state of communication at their respective organizations.

The survey is designed to assess how clinical communication is handled in U.S. healthcare organizations, as well as the trends, challenges, and predictions shaping this critical capability. The survey results unveiled three major takeaways: 1) Unified communication is essential for modern healthcare; 2) Addressing burnout is imperative and 3) Diversity in communication devices remains relevant.

“Despite the challenges hospitals and healthcare systems face, we realize that effective and efficient communication is crucial for improving patient safety and outcomes and mitigating the risk of clinician burnout,” said Vincent D. Kelly, chief executive officer of Spok Holdings, Inc. “While budget and resource constraints remain the biggest challenge for healthcare leaders when considering new technology, the quality and safety of patient care remains paramount.” Key findings in the 2023 survey include insights into the evolution of mobile devices, the continued importance and usage of pagers, priorities for clinical communication and collaboration platforms, and clinician burnout and the role of communications.

## Current communication challenges and devices

- For the fourth year in a row, respondents cited budget and resource constraints as the No. 1 obstacle to advancing hospital communications. Consistent with previous years, this obstacle far outranks all other challenges in advancing hospital communications (49%). Also, the emphasis on user education has notably increased from 3% in 2022 to 7% in 2023.
- Although smartphones continue to be the No. 1 supported device for clinical communications, there was a continued decrease in their usage (61% in 2023 compared to 74% in 2022, and 79% in 2021). This could be attributed to both security concerns and cost implications. The healthcare IT industry's needs are continuously evolving, and the role of smartphones might be redefined in the face of emerging technologies and changing operational requirements.
- Similar to 2022, encrypted pager usage continues to rise steadily, which could indicate a return to simpler, more cost-effective communication. Overall, pagers remain important tools for hospitals and health systems, and this year's responses emphasize the dynamic nature of device adoption in the healthcare IT landscape.
- The concern about the security of patient information and proprietary health system data communicated through potentially unsecure tools continues to evolve. Respondents indicating they're "Not concerned" has been on the rise since 2021, suggesting perhaps a growing trust in communication tools.

## Clinician burnout and the role of communications

- A concerning 76% of healthcare workers still report some level of burnout, although those who felt extreme burnout decreased from 25% to 16% within three years. This might indicate improved interventions, better support mechanisms, or perhaps a post-pandemic stabilization. Almost 70% of IT executives rated that level of burnout as "a great deal" or "considerably" – the most affected group in 2023. Clinicians were not far behind, with almost 60% indicating high levels of burnout. This year's data highlights the continued importance of addressing burnout in the healthcare sector, as it affects everyone from top executives to staff members
- Addressing staffing concerns and improving support from leadership emerged as top strategies to mitigate burnout.

## What's next for healthcare organizations

- When asked about the current status of IT projects, 47% say it's "business as usual" for IT, down from 52% in 2022. This slight decline suggests that while most projects continued to run smoothly, a few might have encountered challenges or shifted priorities.
- In general, approximately 60% of respondents intend to resume IT projects within the next 12 months, which suggests a collective optimism or plan to get most of these projects back on track relatively soon and also

recognizing the importance of IT projects to improve healthcare operations and patient care.

The responses from the 2023 survey yield valuable information that can help the healthcare industry tackle their biggest communication challenges and guide planning efforts in the coming months and years. Having secure communication among care team members is paramount for clinical communication and collaboration (CC&C) platforms. Although the mix of communication devices continues to shift, the value of having a single platform to communicate with all devices is key. Pager use continues to rise, suggesting that a significant majority of hospitals and healthcare systems continue to implement them in their device mix.

If you're interested in more survey results, you can download the report [\*\*here\*\*](#).

## About Spok

Spok, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Spok Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: SPOK), headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is proud to be a global leader in healthcare communications. We deliver clinical information to care teams when and where it matters most to improve patient outcomes. Top hospitals rely on the Spok Care Connect® platform to enhance workflows for clinicians and support administrative compliance. Our customers send over 70 million messages each month through their Spok® solutions. Spok enables smarter, faster clinical communication.

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