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## Takin' care of business

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So, you have a to do list that has been just growing and growing – you've been having nightmares that if you don't get your car in for an oil change soon the engine will blow up, but you just don't have the time. Well, Presbyterian/St. Luke's in Denver has someone for you to call.

Giving people what they need to get through the week is something Todd Wheeler, CEO of Concierge Colorado at Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center knows a lot about. With his business card stating that CEO stands for "Chief Enthusiasm Officer," Wheeler is more than excited to help those in the health care industry with everything from buying a stamp to a marriage proposal.

"We want to make sure we have an impeccable sense of order in our office because these people live such frenzied and frenetic lives," Wheeler said of people who work in health care industry.

"I started Concierge Colorado in February 2000, and for the first two years I was focusing on commercial real estate, residential properties and individual services."

Last year, Wheeler's company was asked to work with PS/L, replacing an existing service.

"We're kind of an information and vendor broker," Wheeler said of his company. "We work with over 250 meticulously screened and pre-qualified vendors, so if you came to me with something, I'd know who to go to and get it done.."

Wheeler said he started the business based on a need for people who could get things done.

"It's a need-driven market," he said. "We like to take care of staff; we like to take care of nurses. Over 50 percent of the services we provide here at the hospital are done for nurses."

And they do take care of the staff. The top five services people request are shopping, automotive, mailing and shipping, research and pick-up items.

"It's truly an employee benefit," Wheeler said. "The hospital pays us to be here to manage the program. The only thing the employee pays for is the

service. If we go out and get a \$29.95 oil change done for you, all you pay is the \$29.95. One of our tag lines is 'we do what you don't want to do, don't have time to do or don't know how to do – we do the don'ts. We turn 'to dos' into 'to dones.' "

According to Wheeler there is a large population at the hospital who just don't have time to get anything done, and that population could be anyone at the hospital. Wheeler takes care of the big stuff and the small stuff.

"We take things back to Target or pick things up at the mall. We do birthday parties for your kids. We take away the stress of both when to do it and how to do it."

Not only picking up and dropping things off, Concierge Colorado also does things like research, such as finding a good bed and breakfast in New England on the weekend of April 7 or where someone can get a mother's antique wedding dress cleaned.

How can they keep it all straight? Well one of the key elements of this organizational behemoth is a Web-based system that allows concierge employees to log on from anywhere to find out what's going on at what time and who is handling it.

"Doing more than 500 requests a month with just two people – we have to be on top of our game," Wheeler said. "We want to be the number one concierge service in the health care industry and most of the people we deal with are nurses. The whole idea of serving people and taking care of people has been very important to me."

According to Wheeler, the primary challenge in health care is budgeting, but he helps with that as well. The area of money is an area where Wheeler said his company is really helping the hospital.

"Based on X amount of requests that would have taken X amount of time, I can show you how that helps. Let's take 500 requests. If you needed to get something done it would take, on average, about two hours. Five hundred requests times two hours is 1,000 hours per month that we are returning back to the hospital in recovered productivity. Now, let's just say at a very low level of \$25 an hour, that's \$2,500 a month in recovered productivity."

First time you've heard of a concierge service at a hospital? You're probably not alone. In fact, there are only four in the state of Colorado and only a "splattering" of them around the country, according to Wheeler.

"They're not common at all, but they are becoming more and more common," Wheeler said. "More than 20 percent of our users say that our services have saved them from using paid time off hours to get things done, which is huge for a CFO to look at."

Wheeler also is an advocate of customer feedback, giving everyone a card to fill out every time they use the service. "How can we see how good of a

job we're doing if we don't ask?"

Night shifts? Still works. The service will get a set keys from you a day or so in advance and get your car out of your driveway at your home while you're sleeping after your shift. They'll take it to the shop and bring it back before you wake up.

The concierge service also can help the hospital's recruitment and retention rates, according to Wheeler. "The main concerns in health care today are recruitment and retention and we are a key, key component of that – low cost, high return.

"People who work in hospitals are the busiest people I have come across – you just can't get time with them and unhappy nurses do not make happy patients – doesn't happen."

With everyone wanting to get outside in the summer weather, Wheeler said they have been tuning up a lot of mountain bikes for people while they're working.

"Ski season will be nuts," he said.