

C.M.I.A. NEWSLETTER

Central Coast Chapter

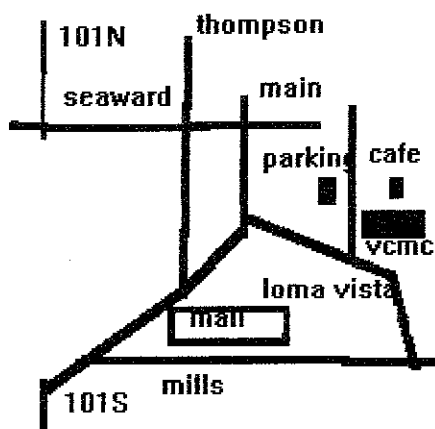
P.O. Box 360

Camarillo, Ca 93011

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The March meeting will be held at Ventura County Medical Center on Thursday the 22nd in the new small cafeteria conference room. Dinner is at 6:00 pm with the monthly meeting to follow. Please RSVP to Randy Cook at 805 652-6676.



Directions: From the North, exit at Seaward Ave, go left and cross over the freeway on Seaward Ave. Take Seaward to Main St (four stoplights) Make a right on Main and go to Loma Vista. Left on Loma Vista. Pass CMH hospital on right, VCMC is on the left. Parking is off street on left across from Medical Center. Cafeteria conference room downstairs in the new cafeteria addition behind the hospital. From Ventura South, Exit on Main St. Make an immediate right on Mills Rd (before the Mall) Take Mills to Loma Vista (4 lights) Make a left, VCMC is on the right as you head downtown.

Anatomy for Biomedics will be the presentation, from the postponed February meeting.

Please note the date and time--THURSDAY THE 22nd at 6PM. Not a Tuesday!!!

A roundtable will be held after the presentation to discuss scheduling of future meetings and meeting sites. This chapter is what you make of it, so be present to brighten up its future.

Please return the membership renewal with your check ASAP to the mailbox or at the meeting if you haven't already done so.

Alcohol used for cleaning: We use alcohol to clean many medical items. One of my employees went to the hospital. He absorbed alcohol through the skin and it made him very sick. Now we all use gloves when working with alcohol based sprays. He was in the hospital for a week. I did not know how serious this was. He recommended using gloves with any chemicals. We do now!!! Always use gloves for any chemicals. Douglas Back

Was it isopropyl? The same alcohol that's in hand disinfectant? sanpedrodave

Isopropyl Alcohol **98 % Technical Grade industrial solvent**. We buy it by the gallon.

On Behalf Of Bordett, Walter Are you sure skin was the route? Inhalation is a lot more likely the cause if cleaning was the activity at the time.

YES. Take it from a former tanker truck transport operator, **isopropyl alcohol at strengths above 90% is a contact skin poison**. It is dangerous stuff to play with. Reagent alcohol is much safer on the skin, although the methanol isn't safe at all but it's only 5% by volume. Ray Brown

We need to look at this practice of using harsh and flammable solvents to clean our equipment close to electrical & ESD locations. What would you all consider a safe alternative cleaner? This thread is starting to make me a little nervous about cleaning with this stuff. I use standard 70% ipa all the time. As a side note...JACHO just put out a blurb today about a clinician who got a hand burn when reaching for a nurse call control just after washing her hands with alcohol base skin disinfectant. The carpet created the static spark which lit across the hand and created a 2cm flash burn to the skin surface. Man, that's something sanpedrodave

Yeah, and that probably happened last winter... static electricity is here all the time, but it's most obvious during the winter months when the drier air doesn't draw off some/most of the charge. Dry air allows a higher charge, plus people wear more clothes that have synthetic cloth, such as nylon, that builds up a charge quick. And ethanol has a lower flash point, the point in which given a spark, you could have a fire. Sad but true. We don't directly get the JCAHO Sentinels, but I'm sure it'll end up in an ECRI Health Device Alert here in a couple of weeks. (sigh) Just goes to show, ya can't regulate every single thing that a nurse does. Otherwise we'd have robot nurses. I know, I know, wait a few years and we might have one, just in time for me to retire and actually need one. lol. Time to go home. :-) Ray Brown

Several years ago I was cleaning some badly soiled equipment, and none of the solvents I had tried would work. I gave up and sprayed some Windex on a cloth rag to clean the CRT. My rag hit that grime, and off it came. Good old "warm soapy water" seems to work quite well. Unplug the equipment, disconnect the batteries, etc..... John Wolken

Generally we use a good warm soapy water solution for most of our cleaning. However, for 'sticky' stuff we will use one of the citrus based solvents to remove most of the gunk and then soapy water afterwards. We have used warm water (no soap) to clean circuit boards -BUT- you have to dry them properly afterwards. Isopropyl or RGA (95%) works best to remove water from circuits. (used with PPE- gloves) Robert Harbick Clinical Engineering Manager

GE Service Line. April 1st changes:

According to GE's tech support help line, as of 4/1/07 they will not speak to you unless you have a **P.O. #, service contract or a warranty**. Looks like we'll be adding another line to their WALL of SHAME. It's a message you get on hold when you call 800-558-7044.

Is this for all of the Groups, Rad., Lab (Abbott), Datex, IT, Marquette, etc? If anyone has some info they would like to share, please do so. Thanks, Jeff Frontier

Yes, they will be requesting a P.O. The poor gals at the response center are getting blasted, and they're only the messenger. I know for sure it affects GE-OEC C-Arms, Marquette monitoring, Datex-Ohmeda. Seems to me the last message said if tech support call was less than 15 min, no charge. I've made a few short calls, paid \$200 (the S-RAM part they sent was defective from the box. Ended up paying BIG bucks to get a service rep here since the problem was "more than just the RAM") I agree, when it comes to my input in equip purchase, I have to look at GE's new customer service policy

Ya, and don't you love it as they explain this is being done to "serve you better". I'm surprised they didn't offer that bridge in Arizona too. I explained to the Tech Support gal many of us are on purchase evaluation committees. This move will go a long way for me to NOT recommend GE equipment when doing equipment selection and recommendation. Ron Steinblock.

I certainly hope this is not the case. I helped make this a GE monitoring facility, and I can help make it a different vendor's facility and will, if this comes to pass. I have managed to have input in getting rid of vendors equipment that have this extremely poor customer service policy.

Usually 1 or 2 bills to the director for tech support are enough to make them believers as well, and it usually aides in the speedy replacement process. I would think that the folks from GE and others that listen to this list would take some friendly advise from some of us that also have contacts at the corporate purchasing level. This decision to squeeze the pennies out of customers instead of looking at the dollars lost in initial or return business, will definitely make an impact on your bottom line. I submit you need to rethink which direction that line will take. Care to ask the salesmen out there how much this policy change will hurt their chances of getting a foot in the door of many facilities that are aware of this policy change? Besides, you get such a good return on the prices you charge for parts, that you really don't need to add insult to injury by trying to charge for parts ID or tech support to tell us which is the most likely overpriced part to replace first. Alan Ormsbee, SR BMET

Alan, I could not agree with you more. I believe that Datex Ohmeda Anesthesia units are the best. Their past customer and technical support is one of the strongest reasons for my opinion. The new policy beginning April 1st as confirmed yesterday by Datex Ohmeda Customer service will make me rethink my views. Our system will seriously look at Drager for the 3 Anesthesia units we plan to replace next year. We were also Planning to replace our nearly 20 year old Emergency Room equipment with GE as the rest of our facility. We will definitely be rethinking MFGs now. Joe Joseph D. Giardina, Jr.

I expressed those same feeling to my Materials SVP and our Sr. Contract Administrator. I also included my message to several of my GE sales representatives. Lets all stop by the GE booth this year in Boston and have some dialogue with GE about their kind gesture to charge us for asking for help. Tsk Tsk sanpedrodave

I was informed yesterday during an in-case problem that I needed a PO # to talk to GE Tech support for a MACLAB/CARDIOLAB problem. ((\$495/hr)

To me, that has all the possibilities of a MedWatch type of event. If I am calling for tech support during a case, I will insist on talking to someone in a higher position of authority and I mean STAT! Damn the PO, full support ahead, the money can be determined afterwards. I would definitely document this and present it to your Safety Committee, CEO, COO and any other E I E I O that you can get to listen. Pressure can come from the top, and this policy change needs to be getting the highest visibility it can. It will take many of our decision makers and purse string holders to get the attention of the companies that charge for their tech support in such a reckless fashion as this, to get the point across that this will not allow them to be at the bargaining table with other vendors that don't put "post purchase hostage techniques" ahead of true customer support (ESPECIALLY when it could mean some ones life!) Alan Ormsbee, SR BMET

Has anyone received a letter from GE about this? My sales rep (for monitoring) recently mentioned that changes were coming, but did not provide any details. When I expressed dissatisfaction he stated that **other vendors, such as Philips, also charge for this support.** I am not familiar with the patient monitoring side of Philips, so I would like to know if that is true. Does Philips ask for a PO to obtain support for patient monitoring? I agree with the posting by Alan & Dolores Ormsbee that this is not a wise decision by GE. **Curiously, while our GE MacLab was under warranty we were required to issue a PO for tech support after hours.** However, when the extended service contact began, after the initial year, those calls were at no charge. We were all scratching our heads over that policy. Michael O'Brien

You discovered another great thing about G.E. Their warranty coverage is only normal business hours, usually 8 - 5. Evidently you paid for more extensive coverage after the warranty Brian

Below is what I received back from my rep:

"Starting April 1st, tech support for monitoring and cardiology products will be billable. If customers are under warranty or a contract, tech support is not billable. Tech Support will provide the first 15 minutes of phone support at no charge. Once a call last 15 minutes, the customer will be billed for that increment and each 15 minutes after that. The draw back here is that it sounds like a PO# will be required prior to talking to tech support if you do not have a warranty or contract. GE will always work with customers after hours and should never refuse support. We do have some new service offerings that range from Tech Support ONLY up to full Comprehensive Agreements that include parts, labor, pm and tech support. **Most other companies have been charging for these services and GE is just beginning to charge for this service.**" Scott Mazure

"Most other companies have been charging for these services and GE is just beginning to charge for this service." Like who? And I guess if other companies have been charging, how does this make them any better than their competitors? This is great! It'll turn into a price war, i.e., who charges LESS for their services? Then they'll go back to not charging anything. mbereite

Has anyone heard how much they are going to charge? Craig

Philips charges \$199 per hour, 1/2 hour minimum. On site service is \$199 per hour, 3 hour minimum. This is for normal business hours on weekdays. No idea what they charge at other times. Unfortunately the FSR's will suffer as most customers will try to call them directly for help and avoid the tech support dept completely. This means more work for them. Philips is the only company I know of that charges so far.

While I realize that this is a bit late for the topic, I figured I would add my controversial 2 cents worth. All three of the biggies are this way. They know that tech support and the knowledge base underlying it (you did not think ALL support people were genius' did you?) are highly valuable commodities. The cost of maintaining this base and the support centers are far from free as well.

Wall of shame material? Depends. A Sizeable German OEM would not talk to anyone not one of theirs unless it was patient on table..... and then it depended on who you got for support as to whether you got what you needed. So they are all playing the same game. What level of value did I receive for my money will determine if I feel good about the call/cost or ripped off. If I could get things going again and not have to have the case pulled and the remaining canceled, then the call was worth it. If the answer gave me the impression I was talking to a inexperienced database file reader, then I would want my money back for sure. In all honesty, if paying for tech support and getting to the board/component more quickly than otherwise I would be less reluctant to give a PO for phone support. Actually I would happily pay the fee if recommended parts could be returned w/ no restock fee if they did not fix the problem. What good does it do to get down to a suspected part or two knowing you will get to eat at least one of them AND pay for the tech support? More than once I have used an OEM as messenger/deliverer by having the call into the FE and recommending they bring the parts X, Y, and Z, as they can return them. They make a couple hours of service, I get a form of part return insurance. Sounds Stupid huh? Sure, but when you have one half of an interface between two \$1000 00 boards and only one is needed..... gotta play the game.

Shame is just a relative thing, Frank Freedman SJHMC PHX

Just my 2 cents worth here. The cost of support is going up, there is no way to keep those costs down and maintain a decent level of support. **The question is whether it will be bundled into the cost of the product or charged on a case by case basis.** There are pros and cons of both. **If I am some of the contract service organizations that hand new techs a manual and an 800 number and call them trained I will want it to be bundled,** especially since I am not buying the equipment. **If on the other hand I am buying the equipment and have invested in quality personnel and training I don't want to subsidize the service organizations.** The irony is that GE probably wants their techs (GE Clinical Services) to get free support when they are the contract service organization.

Manufacturers can greatly decrease the potential cost of post sales support by improving on the design and taking into account human factors issues prior to releasing a product. A good design should include intuitive user interfaces (depresses the learning curve and reduces apparent complexity), ruggedness for the primary and probable use environments. Easy PM procedures with quick access to maintained parts are desired.

Customer technical support also needs to be a direct feedback into the engineering process. Fundamentally, whenever a customer has a question or a problem it is due to a deficiency in the product design, documentation, or implementation. This can be something as simple as the documentation being too complex or confusing for the user to even attempt to read it first, to changing the function of a commonly labeled and positioned button.

Customer support at one time was viewed to be a financial loss control. Now companies have realized that they can make money off of the captured audience (clients) by selling them a new consumable item, (Customer support).

It looks like facilities need to start negotiating their product lifetime costs for customer support from vendors now when they look at purchasing a new system.

Jason A. Brookbank President Brookbank Biotech, Inc.

Negotiating lifetime costs at time of purchase could only be done via a lifetime service agreement, which even if you could find an equipment manufacturer willing to offer one, would not be financially advantageous to purchaser. It would be like buying a lifetime maintenance agreement on a brand new car, such an agreement would undoubtedly be designed to economically favor the manufacturer. So, you would only be adding to your lifetime costs. The only real way to manage and reduce equipment lifetime costs is through the assumption of risk. For example, how many years can you reasonably go without a service contract on that new 32 slice CT without getting burned by a \$250,000 tube failure? Manage your risks well and your hospital can save significant bucks. Manage them poorly and you'll pay the price. J Walsh

I'm not sure I understand why you think the cost of telephone tech support is going up?

The last few times I spoke with Philips tech support the person was at home (I could hear dogs barking, children crying, etc) I also had to wait over an hour to get a call back from them after I opened a ticket. This indicates to me that they have a very thin staff of techs to answer calls (unless they were super busy, happened to me every time though so I don't think that's the reason it took over an hour). **Working at home and having less techs sounds like they are decreasing their costs. So now they charge and the actual support is exactly the same as it was when it was free except they are saving money now.** Can you explain how their costs are increasing for telephone tech support? P.S. I don't mean to single out Philips. I have issues with their products but then I have issues with a bunch of other manufacturers too. Todd Langevin

I used to do both tech support and field service for a medical equipment manufacturer. With tech support, one of us would support that particular product from home after hours & weekends on a rotating schedule. As a field service rep, the same applied. Only if something had to be shipped overnight or a tech was needed on site would anyone be charged (and this meant billable customers). This was 16 years ago. It sounds like nothing has changed with the exception of the way calls are dispatched (very delayed) and now phone support has a price tag after 15 minutes. Side bar here, I'm still waiting for GE tech support to call me back on a DSTI problem I had on Sunday afternoon (the outgoing message said a 15-20 min. timeframe for a response). mbereite

Our customers report that Philips Ultrasound will not provide any tech support directly to customers. They defer the call to field service. James D (Jim) Carr VP of Operations and Quality, Sonora Medical Systems

This was the case when they first merged w/ ATL, (they assumed the posture of the more strict ATL) as I had just gone to 45/55/7500 Sonos school, but, now, after I faxed over my training certificate, which, ironically they GAVE to me, I don't have to do that anymore. They do insist on you having been trained on a product, however. W Walker

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