



Fixing Hospital Cellular Coverage without Invasive Surgery

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

DAS is expensive to install, maintain, and rebuild. One multi-state health system carries carrier traffic on its existing Wi-Fi instead, at 28 locations.

No place is worse to lose signal than a hospital. Patients and families are coordinating care for elderly parents or young children, or waiting on news from the surgical floor, or texting from a bedside at 2:00 am – and they need their phones to work. Dense concrete cores, shielded imaging suites, and deep interior floors stop the outdoor carrier network at the door. In most venues, a dead zone is an annoyance. In a hospital, it cuts people off at the exact moment connection matters most.

For years, health systems dealt with the coverage constraints in two ways, and both are failing. Guest Wi-Fi behind a captive portal trades one frustration for another: splash pages, manual passwords, unencrypted traffic, and a network that crawls during streaming. The alternative, a distributed antenna system (DAS), rebroadcasts a carrier signal indoors, but the standard fix is on life support: expensive to install, expensive to maintain, and perpetually due for another rebuild.



One health system decided to stop rebuilding, retire its DAS, and move to 100% Wi-Fi carrier offload on the Talus Communications Airbridge network. Across 23 hospitals, plus pediatric centers, physician offices, and outpatient clinics (28 locations and 10,654 access points in all), the existing Wi-Fi now carries carrier traffic, with phones automatically and securely connecting.

Why Hospitals Are Moving Off DAS

For decades, the standard answer to interior connectivity problems has been a DAS, a network of indoor antennas that rebroadcasts carrier signal inside a building. A DAS does its job well, but it is tremendously expensive to install and maintain, and it only keeps working as long as you keep upgrading it. The health system was faced with two options: fund another multi-year rebuild of its cellular plumbing or find another way to carry the load. With expenses being capped, the obvious answer was to weigh alternatives.

Fortunately, there was another option. Wi-Fi carrier offload moves cellular traffic onto a venue's existing Wi-Fi network using Passpoint (Hotspot 2.0): subscribers' phones authenticate automatically with the SIM credentials already on the device – no app, no sign-in, no settings. Offloaded traffic is encrypted end to end with WPA3-Enterprise, and phones keep voice, text, and data working everywhere on campus through Voice over Wi-Fi. [Talus Communications](#) is leveraging its Airbridge solution; the health system is putting the enterprise Wi-Fi it already owns, the access points already on its walls and ceilings, to work carrying carrier subscriber traffic through its existing network. Compared to a multi-carrier DAS overhaul, the model cuts infrastructure costs by 60 to 80 percent.

The Rollout, by the Numbers

The rollout covers 10,654 access points across 28 locations in Missouri, Illinois, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. The first location began carrying traffic in late July 2026. The large hospital campuses started coming online in the second week of September.

From September 8 through September 14, 2026, those locations carried more than 145 terabytes of data for nearly 12,000 unique carrier subscribers, across more than 750,000 sessions.



One hospital campus in Janesville, Wisconsin came online on September 9. Within days, it was the busiest enterprise Wi-Fi site on the entire network by data volume, carrying 79 terabytes in a single week. Three more campuses, in Midwest City, Oklahoma, St. Charles, Missouri, and Madison, Wisconsin, sit right behind it. The remaining locations are activating through the fall.

Most of that traffic tells a human story. Based on usage patterns, most of the data appears to come from patients and family members streaming video from their beds and waiting rooms. That is what connectivity in a hospital is for: passing the hours, staying in touch, and feeling a little less isolated.

What a DAS Alternative Looks Like for Health Systems

"As a technology advisor and systems integrator, clients keep asking for the same thing: a cost-effective solution for indoor coverage that reaches every corner of their facilities without triggering another multi-year capital project," said Steve Rovarino, President of [Talus Communications](#). "Our Airbridge system leverages a facility's existing enterprise Wi-Fi. Integrating Airbridge solves the coverage challenge without a complex construction plan.

For a health system with an aging DAS, the coverage question changes. It is no longer which side funds the rebuild. It is whether the Wi-Fi already on the walls can carry the load.

This health system joins a growing set of venues and cities, including the [City of Redondo Beach](#) and multiple [K-12 districts](#) using the Airbridge to close coverage gaps without new capital spend. As of September 2026, the Airbridge network has more than 140 active sites, serving more than 500 people every day and offloading over 1 petabyte per month.

Want to bring Airbridge to your health system or venue? Email info@taluscomms.com

