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## **Physicians Citing Human Error as Top Communication Problem**

**Knoxville, Tenn. (PRWEB) Aug. 19, 2009** — In a survey of over 1,000 physicians across America regarding after-hours call management, human operator error was cited as the number one problem. More than one-third of respondents named it as a cause of frustration in their medical practice.

In addition, two-thirds said they used answering services to manage their after-hours calls. Of these, nearly 40 percent said they were dissatisfied with their answering service.

Medical answering services provide after-hours call management for physicians. Calls are answered by human operators, and messages or pages are sent to the physician on-call.

Human operator errors include contacting the wrong physician, inability to provide on-call physicians with accurate callback numbers, and providing inaccurate or incomplete patient messages. Errors occur because physicians have complex algorithms which determine who needs to be contacted, and how, for any given time. Human operators must manually interpret these instructions with each and every call.

With patient safety at the forefront of the healthcare industry, the survey suggests there is room for afterhours call management improvement.

The survey was conducted from January to March 2009 by PerfectServe, a Knoxville-based healthcare communications company, serving physician practices and hospitals nationwide. Over 75 percent of respondents were physicians in practices with fewer than four doctors, which account for nearly 70% of all practices in the United States, according to a February 2009 study by SK&A Information Services.

The PerfectServe physician-contact network automatically routes calls and messages to the right doctor, at the right time, in the precise way each physician wishes to be reached. Communication occurs faster, with greater efficiency and safety, because PerfectServe assembles and maintains the communications workflow for every medical staff physician, for every moment of every day. The company currently serves over 12,000 physicians in 150 markets across the U.S. For more information on the study, visit <http://www.perfectserve.com/resources/research.html>.