

Freestone Medical Center: **TRANSFORMATIVE IT CREATES COMMUNITY HOSPITAL OF THE FUTURE**

SITUATION

Freestone Medical Center in Fairfield, Texas, relied on an on-premise IT infrastructure to handle its data-processing, Internet and telecommunications systems. But as the years passed, the system's hardware and software applications grew more costly and cumbersome for the 37-bed acute care hospital.

The small rural hospital's on-site IT costs included hardware replacement and software license renewals that annually racked up hundreds of thousands of dollars in expense, siphoning a large portion of the hospital's limited yearly IT budget. The system's increasing operating expenditures also absorbed funding that was planned for the hospital's clinical operations.

The mounting cost of operating the hospital's IT network also included cooling, electrical, fire suppression, physical security, and other items that were needed to keep the facility's data-dense infrastructure humming along.

Another drawback of the hospital's on-premise model was long wait times for delivering parts for equipment repairs – a significant challenge for a rural acute care facility operating around the clock, seven days a week.



The hospital also incurred the continually growing expense of protecting its data against potential cybersecurity attacks.

Besides the system's cost impact, operating an on-premise system was an increasingly laborious task for the IT director, the hospital's only IT staff member, to effectively manage and monitor on a daily basis.

SOLUTION

CHC Consulting migrates hospital to a cloud-based system

Four years ago, Freestone Medical Center, which serves Freestone County and surrounding communities, decided its on-premise system was no longer an efficient way to handle its IT operations.

After reviewing its options, the hospital settled on using a cloud-computing environment, which offered a more costeffective, secure and reliable alternative to its legacy system. CHC Consulting, which provides management services to the hospital, was called in to work with the IT director in finding the right cloud solution. CHC Consulting, the management and

“Reimagining our IT platform in the cloud made sense not only from a hardware perspective but also from a capital, manpower, and security resource perspective. Advanced cloud technology enabled our hospital to deploy best-in-class resources and get the most bang for the buck, hit as many bulls-eyes as possible and, most importantly, protect our patient’s data. By leveraging CHC’s IT infrastructure and cybersecurity platform best practices and implementation expertise, we now have resources at our disposal that we otherwise would not have, along with redundancy and security.”

— Freestone Medical Center CEO, Melissa Wilson

consulting arm of Plano, Texas-based Community Hospital Corporation, has extensive experience in deploying cloudbased systems in hospitals and healthcare systems across the country.

The first step in the process was educating the hospital’s administrative team on the benefits of cloud-based systems, as well as assuring that the shift to this technology would not disrupt the hospital’s operations.

Hospital management learned that migrating to the cloud would virtually eliminate capital expenditures for IT server infrastructure, considerably reduce IT operating costs, increase data security and business continuity, enhance patient care, improve performance of clinical and business functions, and provide new opportunities for growth. Satisfied that a cloud environment was the best option, management approved the transformative project.

CHC, Cloud Service Providers Help Build Next-Gen Community Hospital

To ensure a smooth migration, the IT Director and CHC Consulting collaborated to develop a best-practices roadmap for creating an efficient and secure cloud environment. To accomplish that goal, CHC leveraged its

strategic partnerships with cloud services providers to create and support the hospital’s IT infrastructure.

Those services included moving a wide range of the hospital’s functions to the cloud, including electronic health records, picture archiving and communications, unified communications tools, telecom services for the hospital’s remote services, a digital board portal, and remote support for system, network and security administration.

It took just about a year to complete the whole process of transitioning the hospital’s legacy system to a cloud-based system.

RESULTS

The hospital’s cloud conversion has greatly benefited its ability to process a daily deluge of data with a more stable, flexible, secure and cost-efficient system. Overall, the cloud solution has led to marked financial and operational improvements in the hospital’s delivery of healthcare, creating a model for the community hospital of the future.

Freestone Medical Center’s cloud deployment also freed up its IT director from the day-to-day server management and maintenance activities to focus on more strategic IT issues facing the hospital and its operations. 



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