CloudWave and Marshall Browning Hospital: A case study

The benefits of cloud-hosted EHR infrastructure proved to be about much more than just cutting costs.

By MEDCITY NEWS

Marshall Browning Hospital's Chief Information Officer, Brian Schandl

With the help of CloudWave's technology, Illinois-based Marshall Browning Hospital gained autonomy and efficiency through the power of a cloud-hosted EHR infrastructure. But the benefits to the migration proved to be about much more than just cutting costs.

Overview

Du Quoin, Illinois-based Marshall Browning Hospital (MBH) is a 25-bed critical access facility that relied on IT services provider CloudWave to convert its MEDITECH Electronic Health Record (EHR) infrastructure to a standalone cloud hosting environment in a bid to gain both efficiency and independence in its IT infrastructure.

Company

Founded in 1919, the Marshall Browning Hospital provides quality medical, surgical and emergency health services to the residents of Du Quoin, Illinois. The hospital is an accredited institution before the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and by the College of American Pathologists.

Business goals

Leveraging the efficiency of a cloud-hosting environment, MBH sought to avoid hiring the full-time employees that would be needed for their IT department to support the EHR infrastructure. The migration would, additionally, save the organization from investing millions of dollars in capital and operational expenditures that a cost/benefit analysis had shown to be inefficient.

IT goals

At its core, the objective of the migration project was about autonomy. Because MBH's infrastructure was integrated with that of another facility, management saw an opportunity to obtain autonomy in terms of EHR governance through cloud hosting. But first, the data and infrastructure needed to be separated and safeguarded.

"That arrangement fostered intercommunication and economic benefits for us," said MBH's Chief Information Officer, Brian Schandl. "But only as long as this integrated infrastructure existed. Once we learned of our partnered facility's intent to migrate to a different EHR, we were faced with a unique challenge. As a small 25-bed critical access facility, we lacked the power and network infrastructure to stand MEDITECH up on our own."

Schandl said the organization's work with CloudWave was key to obtaining its autonomy in terms of EHR governance, and the project was both efficient and effective.

Additionally, there was a need to determine a timeline and method for the turnover of hardware. CloudWave's award-winning customer support system and experienced team of specialists were able to assist the organization in that process.

"The biggest obstacles we faced were separating our MEDITECH system from that of the healthcare organization that we were partnered with," Schandl said, as well as determining the timeline and processes needed to relinquish the hardware.

"We were able to overcome these challenges through the expertise and hands-on assistance we received from CloudWave in our transition to cloud hosting," the CIO said.

Solution

Schandl was first introduced to CloudWave by MBH's MEDITECH Marketing Representative. At the time, the intent was to work with CloudWave to provide the hardware to move MEDITECH on-premises. However, they decided not to go that route.

"Since CloudWave also provides cloud services, we decided to evaluate their OpSus Live hosting solution as an option" said Schandl. After a thorough evaluation of several cloud providers, we made the decision to move forward with CloudWave's OpSus Healthcare Cloud."

Hospital management cites four key factors during the decision-making process:

- CloudWave's OpSus Live solution included built-in disaster recovery.
- CloudWave's support is fully-staffed in the U.S. and available 24/7/365.
- The customer portal provides insight into real-time system monitoring. Since MBH is a small facility with limited staff, that feature was of extreme value.
- Hardware refreshes, upgrades, and maintenance are performed as part of the engagement with CloudWave, avoiding the need to invest in onsite hardware maintenance.

Benefits

Aside from the efficiency and practicality of having a cloud-hosted infrastructure for its critically important data, MBH quickly learned how many benefits there were to the cloud-hosted platform after sustaining a crippling ransomware attack.

"Because our EHR was hosted by CloudWave, our MEDITECH system was not impacted in any way," Schandl said. "Their engineers worked with us as partners to help restore our other systems to full operations."

Additionally, any changes to the company's infrastructure at OpSus are planned well in advance, and there's constant communication on the work being performed; from upgrades to hardware refreshes.

"Due to the redundancy that's built into the OpSus cloud, these changes don't involve the downtime that would be necessary if our systems were in an on premises data center," Schandl said.

Lessons

Schandl has a simple word of advice for any institution looking to migrate its infrastructure to a cloud-based environment:

"Don't look for a hosting vendor," the CIO said. "Look for a hosting partner."

It was CloudWave's strong experience in healthcare IT and deep understanding of the healthcare environment that proved valuable for the team throughout the migration process.

"Look for a partner that will work with you to establish IT goals and ensure they are met with the highest level of quality and efficiency possible," Schandl said.

CloudWave provides IT infrastructure and cloud-based technology solutions designed to help hospitals achieve operational sustainability. Our best practices have been established through our deep background in healthcare and experience operating, supporting, and managing IT systems for hospitals both on premises and in our OpSus Healthcare Cloud. CloudWave is a member of HPE's Preferred Healthcare Partner Network and Cloud 28+. For more information, visit www.gocloudwave.com.