OhioHealth links diverse facilities to world-class services

Healthcare system turns electronic medical records into real-time assets and enables remote monitoring of newborns and the ICU with video/image/data sharing as well as high-speed voice. Network uptime and availability is maximized with route diversity, redundancy and disaster recovery support, while a central stroke network improves 'Golden Hour' outcomes.

OhioHealth's network includes hospitals, clinics, and physician practices across central Ohio. After more than 20 years with OhioHealth, System Vice President, Technology Jim Lowder believes the secret to success remains the same: "How can we leverage emerging technologies to support physicians and clinicians and improve patient services and care?"

Beyond rigid service offerings

OhioHealth first partnered with Spectrum Enterprise in 2004 to link facilities ranging from large-city hospitals to geographically dispersed community hospitals and physician practices. Lowder wanted to centralize resources and unite all facilities under OhioHealth's vision of being stronger by working together.

"How do we get world-class clinical services out into the rural regions, the community hospitals? ... certainly, that's where Spectrum Enterprise is involved."

—Jim Lowder

He recalls that he was looking for a telecom partner "who was willing to step outside what I would call the norms for the industry since we weren't getting cost-effective means to connect our facilities."

Translating telemedicine into real-world patient care

Today, OhioHealth's solution supports everything from monitoring newborns to saving patients from traveling a hundred miles to see specialists or get critical care. "These capabilities," Lowder emphasizes, "come from the technology that rides over our Spectrum Enterprise fiber circuits."

Those fiber circuits include 100 Mbps point-to-point Ethernet Private Line (EPL) circuits across 50 care sites, 300 Mbps Fiber Internet Access (FIA), plus up to 100 Mbps Business Internet Access service connecting the organization's smaller offices. This gives OhioHealth the speed and capacity for applications such as streaming two-way audio and video. For example, skilled ICU "intensivists" at a central metropolitan facility can now remotely monitor critical patients in hospitals without 24-hour access to on-site specialized ICU staff. "The eICU® doesn't replace the physicians

Jim Lowder, System Vice President, Technology, OhioHealth

Client profile

OhioHealth

Company
OhioHealth

Industry
Healthcare

Services
Ethernet Private Line
Fiber Internet Access
Broadband Internet Access
Fiber Connect Plus TV
Business Class TV
Business Class Phone Service

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and nurses that are at that facility," says Lowder. "But it's a level of oversight that ordinarily would not be available in a more remote location … having the connectivity … is critical."

The ability of Spectrum Enterprise to go beyond rigid service offerings has also supported OhioHealth in meeting HIPAA/HITECH requirements for system availability, disaster recovery, and redundancy. "I have the confidence," Lowder says, "that connectivity is engineered not only to meet regulatory requirements, but to meet our own OhioHealth requirements as well."

Lowder notes that EPL and FIA have expanded the reach of OhioHealth's Stroke Network, which accesses the first comprehensive stroke center across central Ohio. "With our Stroke Network …it's two-way audio, two-way video, and access to imaging can connect a stroke victim with trained stroke neurologists within the critical 'Golden Hour'."

Keeping pace with rapid expansion

A responsive implementation team has been a strategic advantage, allowing Lowder to close or open offices quickly. "The speed in which we can get things accomplished has been much better with Spectrum Enterprise than many of our other vendors," he adds.

"We've worked a lot on redundancy … to ensure there aren't single points of failure … That's where Spectrum Enterprise has been very good at working side by side with us to meet our requirements and be flexible."

—Jim Lowder

No matter how quickly OhioHealth expands, patient outcomes must never be put at risk because of network downtime. This is why Lowder has implemented a redundancy solution that features true route diversity, separate entrance facilities and failover supported by ring architecture.

Cloud-streamlined business functions

In addition to clinical support, OhioHealth's solution streamlines financial and administrative functions, including supporting the move toward ASP (Application Service Providers) and cloud services. "Things like billing and insurance verification are done real time and rely on Internet connectivity provided by Spectrum Enterprise," Lowder notes.

Harnessing new solutions

Through IT connectivity, OhioHealth supports knowledge transfer across all its facilities, making the entire organization stronger by working together. It's a highly successful strategy, but Lowder continues to evolve the strategy by expanding the fiber services to support mobile and handheld devices.

The bottom line, says Lowder, is this: "How do I leverage technology to enable and deliver world-class clinical services?" The more technology evolves, the more ways he'll be able to answer that question, and Lowder feels confident his Spectrum Enterprise team will help him find the right answers to keep OhioHealth at the forefront of healthcare.

Two-way audio and video access to imaging for Ohio Health's Stroke Network is enabled by the EPL and FIA connectivity.

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, is a national provider of scalable, fiber-based technology solutions serving many of America's largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes networking and managed services solutions, including Internet access, Ethernet and Managed Network Services, Voice and TV solutions, Managed Application, Cloud Infrastructure and Managed Hosting Services. Our team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit enterprise.spectrum.com.

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