

Borgess Health Offers Remote Network Access to Doctors While Keeping Patient Records Secure

Summary

Company: Borgess Health Alliance

Industry: Healthcare

Challenges:

- Provide doctors with remote access to electronic medical records
- Ensure private patient information remains secure
- Replace outdated, costly technology

Selection Criteria: Borgess Health needed a secure and cost effective solution to enable remote network access for doctors and other essential personnel.

Network Solution: Pulse Secure VPN

Results:

- Implemented Pulse Secure VPN
- Introduced a secure way for doctors to review electronic medical records from the comfort of their homes
- Maintained patient privacy while providing an added convenience for busy doctors and staff
- Reduced IT costs for the healthcare network

Borgess Health Alliance, headquartered in Kalamazoo, Michigan, is a comprehensive healthcare network serving more than 1 million people in 15 communities across southwest Michigan. The group of hospitals includes Borgess Medical Center, Borgess-Lee Memorial Hospital and Borgess-Pipp Hospital. The group offers specialty services such as emergency, cancer, radiology, rehabilitation and women's health, with nationally recognized programs in cardiovascular services, neurosciences and orthopedics. Borgess Health Alliance is a subsidiary of Ascension Health.

As a healthcare network, Borgess Health's first priority has always been the protection of patients' private medical information. However, at the same time, many of their physicians were looking for a way to view electronic medical records (EMRs) remotely. While the administration wanted to appease their medical staff and provide them with remote access to charts and data, they had to ensure that the solution was secure and provided the ability to restrict access based on a person's role within the hospital system.

Selection Criteria

In 2005, when Borgess Health was evaluating their technology needs, they were still using dial-up modems, which made it difficult and time consuming for doctors to place orders, and a WatchGuard VPN to allow remote access for the IT department only. Further, the hospital system was paying an exorbitant fee to have T1s, fiber optic cables, physically run directly to the homes of 4-5 physicians whose remote access to files was vital. At that point, the costs were high and the capabilities of the technology in place were limited.

Solution

Then the Pulse Secure reseller, NetWorks Group, approached Borgess Health with an innovative solution. The easiest way to solve the problem that the organization was experiencing was through an SSL VPN. The Pulse Secure offering revolutionized the way that Borgess Health's physicians and staff operated.

The adoption of the Pulse Secure technology at Borgess Health Alliance fostered a better work-life balance for the organization's medical staff. Doctors with extremely busy schedules were able to leave work at a reasonable hour, have dinner with their families and then check records and finish up paperwork from the comfort of their homes. Previously they were forced to either stay late or drive back into the hospital later in the evening if they had forgotten something.

Additionally, the installation process was seamless. There wasn't a need for the IT staff to physically install a separate client at each doctor's home. In the same breath, physicians did not have to immerse themselves in the intricacies behind the technology to receive the benefits. It just worked with no disruption of workflow.



Results

With the introduction of the Pulse Secure SSL VPN, Borgess had the capability to extend remote access to 1,200 employees, not just medical staff, and enabled 50 employees to work 100 percent remotely. And while many could benefit from the added convenience, Borgess Health's IT department was able to customize VPN access based on department, position and role within the company, ensuring they were continually protecting the private medical information of the over 1 million patients they serve.

"The Pulse Secure VPN not only generated immediate cost savings for our organization compared to the T1 lines previously in place, but it also saved our physicians' valuable time," said Jeff Johnson, information security technical specialist at Borgess Health Alliance. "The benefits of the VPN were also passed on to our patients – our top priority – ensuring their private medical data remained secure, while at the same time enabling their doctors to focus more on care and less on logistics."

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Jeff Johnson
Information Security Technical Specialist, Borgess Health Alliance

About Pulse Secure, LLC

Pulse Secure, LLC is a leading provider of access and mobile security solutions to both enterprises and service providers. Enterprises from every vertical and of all sizes utilize the company's Pulse virtual private network (VPN), network access control and mobile security products to enable end user mobility securely and seamlessly in their organizations. Pulse Secure's mission is to enable open, integrated enterprise system solutions that empower business productivity through seamless mobility.

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