Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA)

Making Regional Interconnectivity Secure

The Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA), including Stratford General Hospital, Seaforth Community Hospital, St. Marys Memorial Hospital and Clinton Public Hospital, as well as another Enterprise hospital outside of HPHA: Alexandra Marine and General Hospital (AMGH) was formed to respond to the many challenges facing the healthcare system by working closely together and sharing resources when appropriate. One area that has benefited from utilizing shared resources is the implementation of the MEDITECH HCIS unified system and the subsequent implementation of Interbit Data's NetAccess, NetFax, and MPrint products.

"The first step in achieving Ontario Ministry of Health's vision of an interconnected and integrated region for health related services was to implement the MEDITECH solution throughout the five hospitals so that all the hospitals can communicate cohesively and provide better patient care in doing so," says Russell Dick, Director I.T. at all of the HPHA/AMGH hospitals. "Secondly, given the pressure being applied to the industry to access patient information, we needed a way to secure the communications without reducing quality of service."

To accomplish their goal to provide more secure access to patient information from remote locations, they partnered with Interbit Data.

Providing Remote Access to Physicians

Ontario allows licensed physicians to practice at any of the hospitals within the region once they receive privileges at that site. Giving the physicians access to patient information from anywhere at anytime is a huge benefit because it ensures that the patient gets more immediate and better care. Using NetAccess gives the physicians access to the information from their office, their home or in another hospital with the confidence that this highly confidential patient information is secure.

"The NetAccess product has enabled us to provide a service to our physicians that allow them to securely monitor their patient's care from anyplace and at anytime," says Dick. "Physicians can utilize their time more efficiently while caring for their patients more effectively, thus contributing to the "Continuum of Care model.""

Delivering Patient Reports

Getting patient reports delivered to the right person efficiently is a challenge at most medical facilities. Delays between when the information is available and the fax actually gets delivered can reduce the quality of patient care. Add the geographic component of the five hospital enterprise into the mixture and that challenge can be overwhelming.

Fax delivery is a reliable report delivery mechanism that physicians depend on to receive the pertinent information about their patients so that they can determine the appropriate treatment. However, due to the physical nature

of a fax report, it is important that delivery goes to the right person needing that confidential patient information. The Enterprise hospitals have implemented a faxing solution that removes many of the issues that used to plague them with their old FAXBOX solution and was actually one of the beta sites at the inception of NetFax.

NetFax is designed to replace dedicated fax appliances and seamlessly integrates into the MEDITECH system allowing direct faxing to users defined within MEDITECH. Reports can be sent on demand or scheduled, automating the delivery of many standard reports. NetFax is cost-effective and simplifies the setup and usability of faxing reports.

"One very important application for us is delivering the lab results to the appropriate physician who ordered the tests," explains Dick. "The referral lab that runs the tests has their equipment connected to the MEDITECH system which can read the bar code on the specimens. The test data is then delivered directly into MEDITECH and then the reports are immediately faxed to the requesting physician. The turnaround time is very fast, and the patient is given the appropriate treatment in a very timely manner."

Delivering Reports Electronically

The hospitals need to deliver many different types of reports to many different medical resources. Sending standard reports may not satisfy the needs of all the different roles. One of the products that help the Alliance give better service to the physicians, nurses, or other hospital staff is MPrint.

MPrint simplifies file capture and printer sharing, enabling you to share printers that are not on the network or deliver reports automatically to PC hard drives. Because the product works based on a set of user defined rules, you can customize the information that is sent to your recipients so that they get only the information that they need, when they need it.

"MPrint is a marvelous tool that has helped us cater to the needs of our clients," said Dick. We can customize the reports for the individual or group with the specific information that they need. It also saves us time and money. We reduce our use of paper by delivering the reports to a hard drive. We also don't need to cable all the printers onto the network since MPrint can direct the report to a PC that has a local printer connected to it."

Servicing Those Who Service the Patients

The physicians, nurses and supporting staff need up-to-date information to do their jobs and it needs to be delivered in whatever format they need – print, fax, or in email. The NetSolutions products from Interbit Data help the IT staff at many medical facilities cater to the needs of the health care staff. "Being able to provide the information that they need without delay is critical to insuring that the patient gets the quality of care they need," claimed Dick. "Without their products, we wouldn't be as responsive as we need to be in this demanding industry."