PINE REST HOSTS ITS EPIC ENVIRONMENT WITH US SIGNAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer:
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services

Location:
Iowa and Michigan

Industry:
Multi-site Behavior Health Care Organization

US Signal Services

+ Hosted Private Cloud for EHR application
+ Enterprise Cloud for mission-critical applications
+ Managed Security
+ Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS)
+ Network Services
+ Professional Services

Results

+ Less than 15-minute RTO
+ Assurance of downtime mitigation and mission-critical app availability to support continuous care delivery and reduce potential productivity losses
+ Robust, agile IT infrastructure to support future telehealth initiatives
+ Hosted and protected EHR system
+ Freed up internal IT resources to focus on other initiatives and day-to-day operations

Business Challenge

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services is one of the five largest free-standing behavioral health providers in the U.S. Like most healthcare providers, the organization faces numerous challenges. Among them: ensuring those who need its services can access them, particularly in rural, underserved areas. In 2016, Pine Rest removed some of the geographical barriers with the debut of telepsychiatry — real-time "virtual" therapy sessions using secure video chat technology. That technology was enabled, in part, by reliable, cost-efficient bandwidth and other services provided by Pine Rest's long-time partner, US Signal.

Pine Rest is continuing to use technological solutions to help deliver the highest quality care. One of them is the upgrade of its enterprise-wide Electronic Health Record (EHR) system. Already in use by some of Pine Rest's partner hospitals, the new system will enable the integration of Pine Rest patients' behavioral and physical care for more comprehensive care and optimal outcomes.

It's a massive undertaking requiring substantial commitments of time and money, highly specialized expertise and stringent security measures. Adding to the pressure: the EHR system requires a customized IT environment built to the vendor's stringent guidelines, and the project must be completed in an extremely tight timeframe.

US Signal had recently deployed a customized Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) solution for Pine Rest, helping to ensure uptime for its key applications in the event of an outage. The healthcare provider was impressed by the solution's performance in preliminary testing, as well as by how quickly US Signal had developed and delivered it. Pine Rest knew that it could count on US Signal to help with the EHR project.

The US Signal Solution

US Signal's multi-component, hybrid IT solution is designed to meet Pine Rest's need for a robust, secure infrastructure for its EHR system; ensure its availability and that of its other mission-critical application in the event of a disaster; and help the organization prepare for launching more advanced, IT-dependent care solutions.

The solution includes US Signal's HIPAA-compliant Hosted Private Cloud to house the EHR system, and is being tailored to meet the design guidelines required by the EHR vendor. US Signal's Enterprise Cloud will house other mission-critical applications that don't require the same dedicated compute and storage infrastructure as the EHR system but do need high computing performance and low network latency. Rounding out the solution is a combination of Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS), network services, professional services, and managed security, all customized to meet Pine Rest's specific needs.

US Signal is working directly with Pine Rest and the EHR vendor to complete all steps of the project, including:

Groundwork: Project planning, interface and systems analysis, project team training, and project plan scope creation.

Direction: Project plan finalization, KPI identification, system and infrastructure design, and certification.

Adoption: System configuration, design sessions, and interface testing.

Testing: Integrated testing, content build, and training lesson plans.

Training and Go-Live: End user training, device deployment, go live readiness and go live.

Post: Live Optimization — Support, visits, surveys, and ongoing training.

A dedicated US Signal team leader/project manager will see the project through from start to finish.

Business Results

While the EHR implementation is still in process, Pine Rest is already realizing the benefits of working with US Signal on the project. Preliminary testing shows the DR component of the US Signal solution is meeting the healthcare provider's 15-minute RTO requirements. This helps ensure that any downtime will be minimized, saving Pine Rest from HIPAA non-compliance penalties, productivity losses and the potentially dangerous effects on care delivery if systems were to go down and stay down.

Pine Rest also has greater peace of mind knowing that its EHR system will be in a highly secure, hosted environment to protect its patients' data privacy — a compliance factor and an important requirement for earning and keeping patients' trust. In addition, the robust, agile infrastructure being put in place will enable Pine Rest to continue launching additional telehealth services, knowing that it can accommodate the technical requirements for bandwidth, compute and other resources.

The healthcare provider is seeing cost savings potential, since outsourcing key infrastructure to the cloud allows for a switch from capital expenses to operating expenses. Many of its IT resources are now freed up for other initiatives, helping the organization to continue meeting the needs of its internal customers.

US Signal is also working with Pine Rest to ensure its IT service portfolio is well integrated and balanced. The goal is to make sure it is cost efficient, positioned to help the organization meet the future needs of its patients and agile enough to keep pace with the fast-changing healthcare industry.

Pine Rest knows that it can rely on US Signal to continue being its partner, not just a vendor. As its director of IT systems stated, "our affiliation with US Signal has never been a typical vendor relationship. It's a partnership. We knew we could count on the US Signal team to come in, listen to our needs, and then come back to us with a solution specifically geared to meet those needs."

ABOUT US SIGNAL

US Signal is a leading data center provider, offering connectivity, cloud hosting, data protection, and disaster recovery services — all powered by its wholly owned and operated, robust fiber network, US Signal also helps customers optimize their IT resources through the provision of managed and professional services.

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