Cisco and Panurgy Help Magellan Revolutionize Child Welfare

In most U.S. counties, managed health care is not associated with child welfare. Fee for service is the main approach, with each provider tracking its own patient records. This disjointed record keeping often results in less-than-optimum care for the children. In Hamilton County, Ohio, however, this is no longer the case.

Magellan Behavioral Health—with the help of Panurgy (Chesapeake Region) and Cisco Systems—is revolutionizing child welfare services in Hamilton County. Under the new system, each provider enters its records in a database, so anyone working on a particular case has full access to up-to-date information. Not only is clinical data tracked, but billing is as well. When the provider submits a progress report along with services rendered, a bill is automatically submitted and paid. Such an integrated approach has never been implemented before, and Hamilton County is reaping the benefits.

> "The new system gives us the data we need to achieve our goals in a way that the county has not been able to do before," says John O'Keefe, Senior Vice President, Operations—Specialty Care Services at Magellan.

Identifiable Goals Set the Direction

Magellan and Hamilton County had clear goals for the network. First and foremost, they wanted an integrated clinical record for each child in the welfare system so that anyone, anywhere who was providing treatment, reviewing the case, or determining the next steps would know exactly what had been done in the past. "Basically, we wanted the left hand to know what the right hand was doing so we could provide the best quality care," says John O'Keefe, Senior Vice President, Operations—Specialty Care Services at Magellan.

Magellan and Hamilton County also wanted a paperless process. While they are not quite there yet with the clinical data sharing side, providers no longer submit bills manually. This scenario saves a lot of time and money for everyone involved. It has also given Magellan hope that the entire system will eventually be paperless; "all [they] have to do is add a little more sophistication to the applications."
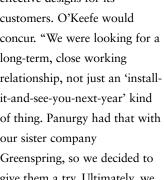
Examining the Business Issues is Key

Panurgy Chesapeake Region brings both depth and breadth to the planning table, resulting in creative, cost-effective designs for its customers. O'Keefe would concur. "We were looking for a long-term, close working relationship, not just an 'install-it-and-see-you-next-year' kind of thing. Panurgy had that with our sister company Greenspring, so we decided to give them a try. Ultimately, we are very satisfied with Panurgy, the partnership they offer, and their prices."

Panurgy's secret? According to Senior Vice President Gino Ruta, "We approach each project as a business—not a technology—challenge. We determine what the business issue is and then we solve it with technology. Once we understood what Magellan and Hamilton County wanted to accomplish, we started looking at providers who were affordable and met our customers' security and flexibility requirements.

"However, products weren't enough. They had to be backed by good service and support, both for the resellers and the end users. Cisco met all those requirements."

Solid Technology Completes the Picture

In addition to providing the security, flexibility, and performance that Magellan required, the Cisco solution met Panurgy's goal of using only one product brand in order to reduce any interconnectivity issues. The network, which supports approximately 40 locations and up to 400 – 500 users, includes:

- Three Cisco AS5200s as the main access servers
- One Cisco 3620 multifunction solution and two Cisco 1600 Series routers for access from other locations
- One Cisco 2514 dual-LAN router
- CiscoWorks network management software for any necessary remote troubleshooting
- SMARTnet™ maintenance support for onsite replacement service

Children Are the Real Winners

One of Hamilton County's primary goals for installing the new system was improved access to care. "Historically, setting up appointments for a child to see a social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist is problematic in the public sector," says O'Keefe. "However, we are held to a very stringent contract that says we can't have any waiting lists for outpatient services and that all patients have to be seen within five days of their referral. When we started reviewing the data we collected with the new system, we found out that only 11 to 18 percent of the kids were seen within five days, and in some cases, agencies didn't see referrals before 30 days."

As a result of this information, Hamilton County set up a new process whereby providers give Magellan set times each day for Magellan to directly schedule children and families into guaranteed appointments. "We now control the front door in a way that's not typically done in child welfare, or most services for that matter," says O'Keefe.

"And it looks very promising. The new system gives us the data we need to achieve our goals in a way that the county has not been able to do before. The providers have access to integrated information and the children receive the right level of care—faster."

Panurgy and Cisco Offer Lasting Partnerships

Panurgy and Cisco's teamwork approach and their fundamental belief in building close working relationships with their customers result in lasting partnerships that benefit everyone. "We've never had to worry about connectivity or response time with Panurgy," says O'Keefe. "All the deliverables were made absolutely on time, and to this day, I know if there's ever any issues, Gino's team will work with Cisco to resolve them quickly."

From Ruta's perspective, "Cisco supplies us with engineering support when we need it, and offers the products and services necessary for a creative and bullet-proof solution. The fact that we are a Premier Partner with Cisco gives our customers a comfortable feeling."

About Panurgy Chesapeake Region

With offices in Millersville, Maryland, and Alexandria, Virginia, Panurgy Chesapeake offers its clients single-source solutions that meet their business needs. Their staff of almost 100 qualified technology professionals, provides services to over 500 businesses and nonprofit organizations each year. The Chesapeake Region office is part of the larger Panurgy organization consisting of 1,100 people nationwide.

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