St. Francis Health–Mooresville Surgery Center

PROFILE

Franciscan ST. FRANCIS HEALTH

Industry
Healthcare

Corporate Headquarters
Indianapolis, Indiana

Employees
22

Annual Revenue
$4.6 million

Website
http://www.stfrancishospitals.org

THE NUMBERS

• Zero CapEx costs
• TCO 35 percent lower

IN BRIEF

Objective
St. Francis Mooresville Surgery Center decided to bring its billing in-house, but to maximize the value of that strategy it needed to deploy the billing software on a cost-effective, highly available platform.

Solution
The surgery center partnered with Cloud Proven , which now hosts the application on a VMware virtualized private cloud.

Business Impact
• Costs are significantly lower
• Monthly flat-fee cost structure allows simpler budgeting
• Data, patient privacy are protected by state-of-the-art security
• Additional compute resources can be allocated easily if needed
• Adds disaster-recovery capability
• Enables application high availability

With VMware Private Cloud Hosted by Cloud Proven Networks, St. Francis Mooresville Drives Cost Efficiencies of Business-Critical Billing Application

"A VMware virtual cloud was an easy decision. Not only did it eliminate any up-front hardware capital costs, it also gave us more horsepower, redundancy and data security."

— Keith Jewell, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for St. Francis Health

All healthcare providers struggle to find a balance between meeting high standards of patient care and keeping costs under control. Franciscan St. Francis Health of Indianapolis, Indiana, is no exception as it demonstrates its commitment to the health needs of the disadvantaged. So when the provider's joint-venture surgery company, St. Francis Health–Mooresville Surgery Center, began searching for a new billing software solution, it did more than evaluate software functionality. It also looked for opportunities to lower its operational overhead.

That search led the surgery center to VMware® virtualization technology.

Billing Application Critical to Center Operations

St. Francis Health–Mooresville Surgery Center, one of several surgery centers within the St. Francis Health network, operates from the network's Mooresville, Indiana, campus. Specialties it offers include general surgery, gynecology, urology, orthopedic surgery, ophthalmology, podiatry, otolaryngology, plastic and reconstructive surgery, colorectal care, and pain management. And while clinical applications form one vital component of the center's technology infrastructure, the other key piece is its billing software. "Our billing system is critical to our ability to manage the center," notes Keith Jewell, senior vice president and chief operating officer for St. Francis Health. "Without it, we are out of business."

For many years, the surgery center outsourced its billing processes to the administrative offices at the system's main hospital. Then, as part of a periodic review of its operations, the center's leadership team decided to bring its billing application in-house; it selected AdvantX medical billing software.

When the team began considering how to implement the software, however, it became concerned about capital costs. Purchasing the hardware would have cost at least $40,000; supporting it afterward would have added another $68,000 over the next 3 years. The surgery center also had concerns about data security, data backup and compliance. It doesn't have IT staff resources with expertise in those areas. And it didn't have the space to house additional servers—particularly given the stringent requirements of such space, such as dedicated fire suppression.

vmware®   **CLOUD PROVEN NETWORKS**

Then **Cloud Proven** Management, a service provider specializing in medical-practice business management, offered to help St. Francis Health–Mooresville Surgery Center identify a more cost-effective way to deploy the new billing application. "St. Francis has a longstanding relationship with **Cloud Proven**," Jewell notes. "They are a leader in practice management and have advised us in a number of areas. We welcomed their suggestion that we host our billing software externally."

Cloud Proven offers third-party hosting as one of its services, but St. Francis also considered other hosting providers. It weighed several criteria—including pricing structure and the providers' ability to support compliance with regulations like the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)—and determined that **Cloud Proven** offers clear advantages over other providers. "Solutions offered us a flat fee structure, which we liked better than the 'pay for use' model used by other hosting services," Jewell notes. **Cloud Proven** also offers extensive expertise in data security and compliance. "They offer technologies like intrusion detection and data loss prevention as part of their hosting package. We knew our patient records would be secure and maintained in compliance with HIPAA."

So the surgery center contracted with **Cloud Proven** to architect an offsite private cloud to run its AdvantX application.

State-of-the-Art Security Without Compromising Performance

The private cloud—a VMware vSphere® environment running on IBM and SuperMicro blade servers and Dell Compellent storage systems—took **Cloud Proven** only a few days to configure. "It would have taken us weeks to purchase, configure, test and deploy in-house servers," Jewell says.

The cloud environment is also unique because it leverages virtualization for not only the standard menu of VMware benefits—improved availability, high fault tolerance and cost-efficient use of computing resources—but also to enhance the environment's security capabilities.

"All application activity passes through a series of filters," explains Jeff Bills, vice president of information technology, **Cloud Proven**. This includes systems that monitor for potential malicious activity, a virtual switch that sends traffic for inline inspection by a Palo Alto Networks firewall and security restrictions limiting who can access specific applications. On conventional servers, such robust security checks would likely slow application response times. But within the **Cloud Proven** cloud, VMware vSphere can allocate additional resources on the fly to handle secure processing. "With VMware virtualization, we don't have to restrict customers' resources to a specific number of physical servers," says Bills. "We can support intensive security protections dynamically to avoid impacting application performance."

Cloud Proven also leverages VMware vShield™ to segment virtual zones within its virtualized environment. VMware vCenter CapacityIQ helps Solutions gauge application performance and determine which resources St. Francis Mooresville requires. vSphere High Availability helps maximize application uptime, and VMware Data Recovery ensures that the surgery center's data and applications can be restored in the event of hardware or datacenter outages.

Cost-Effective Platform Maximizes Application Value

Bringing its billing operations in-house proved to be a smart decision for St. Francis Mooresville: its collection rates are higher, and its administrative costs fell from 5 percent of collected dollars to 3 percent. And because the billing application is hosted on a VMware cloud managed by **Cloud Proven** , the infrastructure costs are 35 percent less than they would have been had the surgery center purchased and installed its own hardware.

Because **Cloud Proven** charges for its hosting services on a flat-fee basis, St. Francis Mooresville Surgery Center can precisely budget.

The application's availability has been excellent, and the surgery center knows that its data is both secure and regularly backed up.

St. Francis Health is ranked among the top 5 percent of U.S. hospitals for overall clinical performance. And as is suggested by the surgery center's experience with VMware virtualization, it's possible to maintain high standards for patient care while also watching the bottom line. "By hosting our billing software on a VMware private cloud, we help keep the costs of our care under control," Jewell concludes. "And when we do that, we've made the right decision for our patients."

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

VMware Products:
vSphere 4.1
vShield
vCenter CapacityIQ
vSphere High Availability
vSphere Distributed Resource Scheduler
vSphere Distributed Switch
VMware Data Recovery

Applications:
AdvantX medical billing software

Partner:
Cloud Proven Networks

Platform:
IBM and SuperMicro servers
Dell Compellent storage
Xsigo virtual I/O
Arista Networks switches with Arista vEOS
Distributed Virtual Switch
Palo Alto Networks firewall

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