PATHS Supports Healthcare Employees During Pandemic with Nutanix Frame Remote Access

Desktop-as-a-Service solution provides secure, compliant remote connectivity for hundreds of workers at home and at healthcare sites

INDUSTRY
Healthcare

BENEFITS
- Secure remote connectivity to healthcare applications enables provider to maintain operations during pandemic

- Scalable solution can easily expand in hours to accommodate new applications and business needs

- Consolidated management simplifies administration and saves administrators time

SOLUTION
- Nutanix Enterprise Cloud OS

- Nutanix Frame

- Nutanix Flow

- Nutanix AHV

- Nutanix Prism management software

Applications
- Patient billing systems

- Physician billing systems

- Hospital registration systems

- Microsoft Applications

- SQL Based applications

- Informix

BUSINESS BENEFITS

For PATHS, LLC, providing nonstop access to the network infrastructure has always been essential to its healthcare operations. When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, the company's IT challenges escalated quickly. A leader in the healthcare revenue cycle industry, PATHS needed to provide secure, dependable remote access to employees at dozens of hospital and healthcare sites, as well as hundreds of employees working from home. Nutanix Frame opened up the possibilities for remote connectivity, enabling Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS) that enabled employees to access their apps on any device, from any location. With Nutanix Enterprise Cloud, PATHS can move forward with a flexible solution that is simple to manage and can quickly scale to take on new users and applications.

> "Nutanix Frame enabled us to provide secure access to support 200 people working from home. We've had no issues with respect to connections. We are deeply appreciative in being able to continue to work with our clients, deliver our work product, and keep our business open."
>
> – Tony Mackiewicz, Principal, PATHS, LLC

CHALLENGES

Physician and Tactical Healthcare Services (PATHS) was founded in 2000 to deliver tailored healthcare revenue cycle solutions at a competitive price. The company works with all types of healthcare providers, from large academic

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hospitals to smaller physician practices, and implements tailored programs for their unique requirements. The network infrastructure is fundamental to powering its operations across a variety of sites.

"We represent approximately 40 hospitals and healthcare systems in the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware," said Tony Mackiewicz, Principal at PATHS. "We do a lot of revenue cycle management work on a combination of systems, such as billing systems, registration systems, and physician systems. There is a lot of connectivity going back and forth."

Although PATHS was working with advanced software, portions of its network were aging, slow, and unreliable. Mackiewicz and his staff were looking for a more stable, secure solution that was easier to manage and provided a modern, scalable platform that the company could grow on.

"We wanted to rebuild our systems infrastructure so that we could deploy additional software and make our processes more efficient," said Mackiewicz. "We were also seeking to enhance our security to make it easier to comply with all the HIPAA, HITRUST, and other healthcare compliance needs."

SOLUTION

PATHS chose a Nutanix Enterprise Cloud solution to support its operations, and was working with its technology partner Cortrucent Technologies to complete its migration when the Covid-19 pandemic struck. Mackiewicz and his team had to rapidly pivot to support hundreds of offsite workers, but fortunately Cortrucent and the new platform were up to the challenge.

"Once Covid-19 hit, we had to gear up quickly, because schools were closing, concerns emerging about staff at higher risk to the virus, and social distancing requirements meant staff could not come in to our offices to work," said Mackiewicz. "Cortrucent and Nutanix adapted the platform to utilize Nutanix Frame DaaS to enable workers from home to connect directly into our systems and processes with their own equipment."

PATHS employees connect and work with a variety of different hospital financial systems, including revenue applications including Epic, governmental and Independence Blue Cross (IBC) healthcare systems to support our hospitals and physicians clients. "We have about 70 people in hospitals that connect back to us, and about 200 people connecting to various hospital systems from our multiple office locations," said Mackiewicz.

With Nutanix Frame, employees can access the healthcare systems and applications they need via a reverse proxy connection to the providers' VPNs. It is coupled with multi-factor authentication and an identity provider (IDP), providing security and flexibility to connect employees to a healthcare system from any PC at any location and securely over existing employees home based Internet connections

CUSTOMER OUTCOME

The Nutanix Frame solution enabled PATHS to respond to the pandemic challenges immediately with a solution that is easier to manage and much less complex to set up and operate than a traditional VDI solution.

"The ease of management via a single pane of glass on Nutanix Prism made sense for our organization," said Mackiewicz. "Putting the Frame broker in the cloud was also a benefit, because we didn't require 10 to 15 servers in a Remote Desktop Server (RDP) farm."

"Under our past environment, network administrators had to work with a variety of different servers and hypervisors, including VMware and HyperV," said Mackiewicz. "Nutanix lets us consolidate all that, bringing everything together under one pane of glass. We expect it will save staff a great deal of time, so they can focus on more important issues that switching between systems for upgrades and other tasks."

Consolidating disparate network elements onto the Nutanix hyperconverged platform has also improved the agility and scalability at PATHS, enabling the organization to respond to change quickly and cost-effectively.

"With our previous environment, buying additional servers as we took on more applications simply became unmanageable," said Mackiewicz. "Nutanix Prism provides analytics that help us plan in advance for growth. We can buy a few extra nodes, and fold them into the cluster in an hour or two. It makes it easy and cost effective to grow and scale, without interrupting our business and constantly spending more."

NEXT STEPS

With the Covid-19 response in control, Mackiewicz and his team have returned to longer-term planning to expand the Nutanix platform. "We are working to get Nutanix hardware to support DR stood up," said Mackiewicz. "We are setting up advanced replication using Nutanix DR runbooks, to help us orchestrate and automate failover. We are also evaluating Xi Leap for cloud-based disaster recovery."

Security is always important in healthcare, and PATHS has to answer to hospitals and meet compliance requirements for third-party audits. To enhance security for its healthcare applications, PATHS is also deploying Nutanix Flow, which offers enterprise-grade micro-segmentation for better protection against network threats.

"The support and service that Nutanix provides has really stood out," said Mackiewicz. "Their commitment and support to get this working was an awesome experience that you don't see every day."

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