

Covenant Health System Turns to FirstLight for Connectivity, Colocation, and Collaboration

CHALLENGE

New England-based Covenant Health System has long been associated with reliable, quality patient care in its communities. As with many multi-site healthcare organizations, among the pressing concerns for Covenant Health is ensuring that access to information is readily available between multiple campuses, as well as realizing operational cost savings to reallocate toward enhanced patient care.

Covenant Health System has three campuses across New England: St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, Maine; St. Joseph's Hospital in Bangor, Maine; and St. Joseph's Hospital in Nashua, New Hampshire. With multiple sites comes the logistical challenge of varying regulations, dispersed teams, and a complex technology landscape. Covenant realized it needed a more efficient, reliable way to procure connectivity for its healthcare system that would create a network built for current and future needs.

Covenant also faced the challenge of ensuring adequate and efficient data center facilities for their infrastructure, as well as the need to backup and store large volumes of data as a critical component of their overall data protection plan.

SOLUTION

Managing data, voice, Internet, and network operations efficiently and cost-effectively among doctors, staff, and patients is an enormous undertaking that requires best-in-class connectivity solutions, fresh thinking, and teamwork. Covenant Health found all three when turning to FirstLight – specifically in its E-LAN and network solutions.

Covenant Health's need for an affordable, scalable, and secure network solution led it to FirstLight's E-LAN offering to connect all three of its locations. It allowed for an efficient transfer of data using a single ethernet interface at speeds of up to 100 Gbps, enhancing productivity and reliability across Covenant's footprint.

"Connectivity was a major focus for us," stated Richard Chapman, Director of Network Operations for Covenant Health System. "We needed to push traffic in a logical way. Moving to an E-LAN system with FirstLight gave all of our hospitals the ability to connect to our data centers on diverse pathways. If one circuit drops, we can route to another site."

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMPANY: COVENANT HEALTH SYSTEM

INDUSTRY: HEALTHCARE

LOCATION: LEWISTON, ME | BANGOR, ME
AND NASHUA, NH

CHALLENGE:

- Connecting a multi-campus healthcare organization operating in two states and providing access to medical information among doctors, nurses, patients, and other staff efficiently, effectively, and securely.
- Maintaining on-site data centers resulted in high facility and labor costs and made it harder for IT staff to focus on other more impactful technology initiatives.
- Finding the best solution for HIPAA compliant backup and protection for large volumes of critical data.

SOLUTION:

- Covenant Health used E-LAN to streamline communication between sites and to the data center.
- Consolidated three Internet connections into two and upgraded firewall architecture.
- Moved infrastructure to FirstLight's state-of-the-art Data Center.
- Leveraged FirstLight's cloud for HIPAA compliant data backup.

RESULTS:

- FirstLight's E-LAN solution offered a way to connect multiple sites and offered a scalable, efficient, and secure way to connect multiple locations.
- Using FirstLight's data center for colocation space, Covenant Healthcare eliminated the need to maintain multiple data centers along with cooling, power, and hardware costs.
- FirstLight's cloud backup solution ensured HIPAA compliant protection of critical data and systems.
- The savings realized from E-LAN conversion, firewall consolidation, and colocation allows Covenant Healthcare to allocate more funds toward overall patient services instead of IT overhead.

Consolidation was also a priority for Covenant Health in order to optimize resources and simplify IT management. With the help of FirstLight, Covenant consolidated network resources and implemented best-in-class networking and security solutions to support a more efficient network architecture. Covenant had multiple data centers that needed maintenance, were using up valuable campus space, and required expensive power and cooling.

FirstLight's state-of-the-art data center provided Covenant with a streamlined, more cost-effective approach to its colocation needs. "We now realize big savings, less maintenance, more space to support our mission and we don't have to manage multiple data centers," explained Chapman.

After leveraging FirstLight's network and data centers, the choice to utilize FirstLight's cloud and data backup solution was a logical next step. Covenant protects its critical data using industry leading Veeam backup software and FirstLight cloud storage.

By using FirstLight's data center, Covenant is able to save time and money which is allowing it to focus on other technology improvements like its initiative to move toward a virtual desktop environment.

RESULTS

Covenant Health was able to build a mesh network with E-LANs, making communication between sites and to the data center significantly more efficient. Utilizing different routes and not relying on one circuit has streamlined network traffic and enhanced user experience and patient care.

Covenant also moved its primary Internet connection to FirstLight, along with backing up its PRIs and SIP Trunks. It plans to migrate even further toward SIP services for greater scalability, reliability, and cost savings.

By using FirstLight's data center, Covenant is able to save time and money which is allowing it to focus on other technology improvements like its initiative to move toward a virtual desktop environment. Covenant saw the immediate benefits after leveraging FirstLight's data center. "It gives us a chance to focus on implementation rather than worrying about where we have to put more servers, racks, and power. Now, we just focus on deployment," Chapman explained.

Covenant Health also uses FirstLight for backup cloud storage, an integral component of today's IT strategy for data-intensive healthcare providers. FirstLight offers cloud backup service using a highly secure, scalable, Veeam-powered data backup solution that doesn't require long-term hardware or software investments.

Looking to the future, Covenant plans to use another FirstLight data center to diversify its Internet connection and provide even greater redundancy. It also hopes to implement a cloud-based faxing solution leveraging SIP Trunks to simplify the transmission of patient medical records.

"When we save money on operating and capital expenses, the hospital is able to spend more money on front-line services for patients. And improved patient care is our mission and vision," concluded Chapman.

ABOUT FIRSTLIGHT

FirstLight provides a full complement of cost effective, high quality, scalable telecommunications services, including high speed Internet access, data center, monitoring, cloud, managed and voice services to retail and wholesale customers throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

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