



BACKGROUND

Pathways Home Health and Hospice is a leader in Hospice, Home Health, Private Duty, and Care Management services. Pathways provides high-quality patient and family-centered care at home or in settings such as assisted living, nursing homes, or hospitals.

California-based Pathways was founded in 1977 and is affiliated with El Camino Hospital and Sequoia Hospital/Dignity Health. With offices in Sunnyvale, South San Francisco, and Oakland, and with healthcare providers working in homes and healthcare centers throughout the Bay Area, the ability to securely access files across the network of locations is a critical operational requirement.



Pathways Home Health and Hospice is accredited by The Joint Commission—the same rigorous organization that accredits hospitals—and has recently implemented the Epic Electronic Medical Records (EMR) solution.

THE PROBLEM

Pathways was working on a project to implement the Epic Home Health module. Organizations like Pathways, an independent non-profit organization, partner with larger hospitals and implement this module in conjunction with the sponsoring hospital's Epic implementation. In most cases, the home healthcare organization is owned by the hospital. Because Pathways is an independent organization, there were additional obstacles in conjunction with the sponsoring hospital's Epic implementation. "It was a significant challenge to share the Epic files with El Camino hospital," says Brad Miller, IT Director for Pathways. "We don't share the same Active Directory for user authentication; we don't share physical locations. This was a hurdle that we had to overcome."

In parallel to the implementation of Epic, Pathways was looking for another solution to automate the process of receiving and routing inbound faxes. Much of the healthcare industry still uses fax technology as a way of transferring patient records between healthcare providers. This causes multiple problems, including incomplete transmissions that have to be re-sent, additional steps to scan the paper files into the receiving systems, the lag time for providers in the field to have access to the data, and the requirement to shred the paper copies to maintain HIPAA compliance. Pathways was looking to automate this cumbersome and time-consuming process.

"It was great to be able to solve two problems with a single solution and also maintain vendor compatibility with our affiliate hospital."

Brad Miller
IT Director

THE SEARCH

With no way to easily and securely access files in the El Camino hospital system and pull them into the Pathways module, the search began for a secure way to transfer files. “We were fortunate that El Camino was already using SRT’s Titan SFTP Server,” says Miller. “They had already vetted the technology for HIPAA compliance, reliability, and performance. We also thought that it made sense to work with the same vendor.” As Pathways began to research the Titan SFTP Server, they discovered SRT’s Managed File Transfer platform. They scheduled a product demonstration and quickly realized that SRT could address both the integration with El Camino Hospital’s Epic files and the automation of receiving and routing the fax data.

THE SOLUTION

SRT assisted Pathways with evaluating the integration and automation capabilities of the MFT platform, as Pathways began to determine the necessary workflow for solving both of their issues. SRT recommended the WebDrive client, which mapped a network drive letter to the MFT server for both local and remote users. This was the perfect tool for enabling providers and staff to easily access files on the MFT server through the convenience of a drive letter.

SRT’s MFT platform was configured to automatically pull the necessary Epic files from El Camino hospital via a secure, HIPAA-compliant protocol. As records were transferred, they were routed to the correct folders in Pathways’ Epic system. SRT’s MFT platform immediately sent email notifications to Pathways’ departments, letting them know that the record had been received and allowing them to act immediately, instead of having to repeatedly check for the availability of the new record.

This implementation also included WebDrive licenses for partner health providers, which replaced the highly inefficient fax process with a simple drag-and-drop method. Because WebDrive works as part of the native Windows environment, no new training was required for partners needing to send records to Pathways. Significant manual effort for Pathways was eliminated.

“One additional and unexpected benefit of SRT’s MFT platform was the ability to automatically extract content from zip files and deliver it to the appropriate person,” adds Miller. Extraction and routing capabilities are just two of more than 150 available automation events.

SUMMARY

The key project objectives SRT’s MFT platform addressed were secure storage and transfers, as well as HIPAA compliance for their sensitive health-related data. To compliment this core capability, SRT was also able to provide automation capabilities to improve networking between Pathways and its partnered hospital. This, with easy, familiar access methods, made the transition easy on both the administrators and the end users.

SRT’s MFT platform enabled Pathways to take full advantage of the Epic Home Healthcare module they’ve recently implemented, and to eliminate a burdensome manual process for receiving health records from outside providers.

Miller summarizes, “It was great to be able to solve two problems with a single solution and also maintain vendor compatibility with our affiliate hospital.”

