



Future-proofing healthcare

Berger Health System lowers TCO by 25% while boosting performance with HPE

Objective

Upgrade network for improved reliability, performance, and integration capabilities

Approach

Engage with HPE Technology Services and Horizon Systems to replace Cisco network with HPE Converged Campus solution

IT Matters

- Enables seamless migration to new network fabric with zero unplanned downtime
- Delivers intuitive, open solutions that can be managed by a broader range of IT staff
- Integrates with existing legacy solutions, maximizing past investments

Business Matters

- Reduces IT staff requirements by one FTE by driving out complex, proprietary solutions
- Lowers TCO by 25% vs. previous networking environment
- Offers superior systems visibility and management with industry leading software tools



Berger Health System serves Ohio with excellence in medical focus areas including cancer, cardiology, sports medicine, pain management, sleep disorders, and more. Berger replaced a Cisco network with an HPE Converged Campus future-proof solution that dramatically lowers TCO while improving performance.

Not all that glitters is gold

Providing quality healthcare in a connected world is tricky business. With all the focus on security, electronic health record management, and government regulations, where does patient care fit in?

At Berger Health System, care comes first. It's what they call The Berger Way. For more than 80 years, the group has combined the most renowned physicians and caregivers with the most appropriate technology. It's one reason Berger has the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for safety and quality measures, and is recognized as a Top Performer on Key Quality Measures.

“One reason we chose HPE is its commitment to open standards and integration. Getting away from proprietary systems is one big step to future-proofing our network.”

– Andy Chileski, CIO, Berger Health System

The network as a lifeline

In order to deliver the services, applications, and access doctors and nurses require when they need it, Berger relies on a network architecture that is every bit as meticulous as its medical staff.

“Our network is the lifeline to all our applications and patient records,” explains Andy Chileski, CIO at Berger Health System. “The quality of our patient care depends on it.”

The road to reliability

So when its aging Cisco network was nearing the end of its lease, Chileski and team took a serious look at the emerging leaders in the networking field. Turning to their trusted technology partner, Horizon Systems, for advice, the team was surprised by how much had changed since its last network investment.

“We all had to do a ton of research to see what was going to be compatible with our carts, our medical equipment, and our wireless phone system,” Chileski relates. “What we discovered is that Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) has grown the breadth and depth of its network offerings by leaps and bounds during the last few years.”

Berger Health has relied on HPE BladeSystem servers, HPE rack mount servers and HPE 3PAR and EVA storage in its data center for years, and was already impressed by the quality of the gear as well as the support.

Solid solutions

In the end, Berger Health and Horizon Systems—in conjunction with HPE Financial Services—leased HPE Networking solutions to replace Cisco from core to edge to wireless, including two HPE FlexFabric 11908-V Switch Chassis at the core, HPE FlexFabric 5900 and 5500 EI Switch Series Ethernet switches at the access layer.

The team also selected HPE Intelligent Management Center (IMC) Enterprise Software Platform, a set of comprehensive wired and wireless network management tools that provide end-to-end business management of IT, scalability of system architecture, and accommodation of new technology and infrastructure at Berger Health.

Built into the very fabric of the solution is HPE Intelligent Resilient Fabric (IRF)—an innovative switch platform virtualization technology that allows Berger Health to dramatically simplify the design and operations of their data center and campus-wide data networks.

Avoiding migration drama

When it came time to install the network, Horizon Systems and HPE Technology Services designed a staged replacement of the Cisco gear to avoid any potential service disruptions. HPE Technology Services provided a turnkey solution that included Installation Services and Education Services.

“The transition was really smooth,” reports Chileski. “The whole installation was designed to minimize downtime while bringing new services online quickly. And that’s exactly how it went, which is really important to us as a healthcare organization.”

For the technology end-users at Berger Health, it was a pleasant surprise. “Our nurses are happy, and that’s a good thing for everyone,” Chileski relates. “They know they’re spending less time waiting for applications and data, so they can be more responsive to patient needs.”

IT staff savings included

In the data center, there have been more benefits. Not only has the number of help desk calls for network hardware failures diminished significantly, but Chileski has been able to trim his IT staff by one full-time employee. “When we had a Cisco network, we needed a full-time Cisco employee on staff, and all they did was manage and repair Cisco gear,” Chileski recalls.

Since upgrading to HPE Networking Solutions, the team at Berger Health finds it more intuitive to manage the network. “The HPE network is not as complicated—we just don’t need a dedicated, high-end Cisco network person on staff anymore,” Chileski explains. “HPE Technology Services taught us what we needed to know, and as a result we were able to reduce our staff by a full-time position.”

By reducing operating expenses in addition to lowering overall TCO by 25%, Chileski and team have implemented a solution that makes everyone happy.

Intuitive management

The ease of management has other benefits as well. “Because we can understand the network better, it means we have a qualified pool of employees who are capable of resolving issues instead of just one specialist,” Chileski says. “It means the responsibility can be shared, and we can be more responsive to the needs of the hospital.”

The IT staff also gets a better idea of what’s going on in the network with IMC. “Being able to see everything from a single screen is a big plus,” Chileski says. “It’s like a one-stop shop to see everything—not just the network—and it plays well in other people’s sandboxes too.”

Integration in action

In order to fully upgrade the network, Chileski and team needed to find a way to integrate the aging Cisco IP phone system that connects its campus. Cisco wanted to continue its lock-in of Berger Health by telling them that only a Cisco network would support their VoIP system. The reality is Cisco was wrong.

“There was initially a small hiccup in getting our old Cisco phones to work with HPE PoE switches,” explains Chileski. “But HPE Technology Services came in, wrote a piece of code, and immediately, our old VoIP phones worked great and we had no issues. HPE’s switches were tested and interoperated seamlessly with the non-HPE equipment in our network.”

Case study

Berger Health
System

Industry

Healthcare

Customer at a glance**Hardware**

- HPE FlexFabric 11908-V Switch Chassis
- HPE FlexFabric 5900 Switch Series
- HPE 5500 EI Switch Series

Software

- HPE Intelligent Management Center

HPE services

- HPE Financial Services
- HPE Technology Services
 - Installation Services
 - Education Services

Future-proof networking

So how does Berger Health address the need for continuous endpoint improvements, unforeseen demands for wireless, and ever-changing security threats?

“One reason we chose HPE is its commitment to open standards and integration—something we’ve already seen with the HPE networking switches interoperating with our Cisco IP phone system,” Chileski says. “Getting away from proprietary systems is one big step to future-proofing the network.”

And with the ability to deploy software-defined networking (SDN) apps, the team already has the tools it needs to meet future challenges. “With SDN, we have options for security, flexibility, and scalability that will continue to improve our network as new apps become available.”

With lower operational costs, a streamlined IT staff, and an SDN-enabled network, Chileski and team are poised for future success. “This network upgrade has really been a great experience,” Chileski sums up. “HPE has really proved itself to us, and now we consider them much more than a technology vendor. We consider HPE our partner.”

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