GROWING HEALTHCARE PROVIDER STANDARDIZES ON ARUBA WIRELESS TO IMPROVE PATIENT OUTCOMES

ENSIGN SERVICES

Improving operations at more than 130 healthcare-related facilities by deploying an enterprise Wi-Fi network wasn't good enough for Ryan Rushton. He envisioned positive impacts on each location's patients, too.

"We wanted to improve care by giving our therapists access to their technology tools while working with their patients throughout a facility," says the Director of IT for Ensign Services.

In addition, Ensign needed a flexible and scalable solution as its affiliates and customers at The Ensign Group, Inc. (Nasdaq:ENSG) and elsewhere, were acquiring new facilities almost every month.

With a strong track record of rapid expansion, and additional growth on the horizon, Ensign Services provides comprehensive "back office" support, including IT services, to a broad spectrum of skilled nursing and assisted living services, physical, occupational and speech therapies, home health and hospice services, urgent care services and other rehabilitative and healthcare services.

"To handle expanding needs we were migrating to our industry's market-leading clinical software, PointClickCare, and rolling out Electronic Medical Records (EMR)," Rushton says. "To facilitate those upgrades, we needed reliable, secure Wi-Fi throughout our clients' buildings."

BETTER THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

By installing a WLAN, each facility's healthcare staff could work with patients anywhere, providing a more accurate representation of a patient's condition. "It helps provide better real-time care," says Rushton. "Patients can receive immediate results as well as view historical information about their recovery process."

Deploying wireless also permitted leveraging completely new therapeutic approaches. "For rehab, patients can use gaming systems, such as the Nintendo Wii, which are enabled by Wi-Fi," Rushton explains. The Ensign Group has dubbed the popular and engaging rehabilitation therapy "Wii-hab."

In addition to a secure staff WLAN, Ensign Services also wanted to provide Wi-Fi access to each facility's patients, residents and guests. "Providing Wi-Fi to the people under a facility's care allows them to stay connected with family," says Rushton. "This enhances the overall experience."

BENEFITS:

- Aruba WLAN improves real-time care delivery and permits leveraging new therapeutic approaches such as "Wii-hab" at healthcare facilities across the U.S.

- Implemented physically-separate, secure access for staff and guest users to meet organizational goals and regulatory requirements.

- Enabled adoption of new electronic documentation systems such as Electronic Medical Records (EMR) and clinical applications such as PointClickCare.

- Provided wireless access at all facilities by deploying approximately 800 access points and 100 controllers.

- Utilizes 50+ zero-touch, controllerless Instant Access Points for select remote locations.

"With an Aruba WLAN, healthcare staff can offer engaging new approaches, like 'Wii-hab,' to provide better real-time care as they work with patients anywhere within a facility."

– Ryan Rushton,
Director of IT, Ensign Services

ARUBA
networks

Starting with a pilot project at its Mission Viejo, California, Service Center and a nearby client's skilled nursing facility, Ensign Services evaluated options from several providers including Cisco and Aerohive as well as Aruba Networks.

"One key reason for selecting Aruba was the company's dedication to wireless – rather than wireless just being one aspect of its offerings," explains Rushton. "Another reason was the technical expertise of the sales engineers."

EXCEPTIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Naturally, furnishing Ensign with exceptional technical assistance didn't end with the sale. "Aruba representatives spent countless hours after we purchased, which built a really strong partnership," Rushton says. "They steered us in the right direction, helping us correctly architect and configure our network."

"If we'd selected a different manufacturer," he continues, "they'd have referred us to an external resource for deployment, which would've added to costs and complexity. With Aruba, professional assistance is all just part of good customer service."

To meet HIPAA standards and other regulatory requirements, Ensign deployed two separate networks. One delivers access for patients and guests and the other for internal employees.

"We didn't want to just virtually segment access," Rushton says. "Instead, we provide physically separate access."

WI-FI FROM DAY ONE

Due to the overwhelming success of the pilot, Ensign immediately rolled out the Aruba network to 60 facilities. Then, it continued adding locations as new acquisitions were made.

"Today, all of our clients' buildings are Aruba-enabled," Rushton says. "In fact, we've made Aruba the standard. As new facilities are acquired, we remove any existing Wi-Fi and install an Aruba solution on day one."

For some locations, Aruba's zero-touch, controllerless WLAN solution enables fast, secure, resilient enterprise wireless deployment. Called Aruba Instant, a single dynamically-selected Instant Access Point automatically distributes the network configuration to other Instant APs.

Overall, Ensign Services has deployed approximately 800 access points and 100 controllers at its clients' facilities.

"We really love working with Aruba," says Rushton. "Our partnership has ensured that every one of our 120-plus client facilities benefits from a secure, reliable and high-performance wireless network."

ABOUT ARUBA NETWORKS

Aruba Networks (NASDAQ:ARUN) is a leading provider of next-generation network access solutions for the mobile enterprise. Its Mobile Virtual Enterprise (MOVE) architecture unifies wired and wireless network infrastructures into one seamless access solution, enabling entities of all sizes to securely address the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) phenomenon, dramatically improving productivity and lowering capital and operational costs.

Based in Sunnyvale, California, Aruba has operations throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific regions.

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