



PINE REST CHRISTIAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OPENS DOORS WITH VMWARE CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE



INDUSTRY
HEALTHCARE / NONPROFIT

LOCATION
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

KEY CHALLENGES

- Provide better access to information and coordination of care across providers and sites
- Promote better patient experience and outcomes
- Meet compliance standards with more secure IT infrastructure
- Position business to expand programs and access with scalable and efficient cloud-based infrastructure

SOLUTION

Pine Rest selected US Signal, a Premier VMware Cloud Provider™ Partner, to host the Epic electronic medical record (EMR) solution on a VMware-based cloud infrastructure.

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services needed to deploy a new EMR in just eight months to holistically support its expanding inpatient and outpatient operations. Pine Rest selected US Signal, a Premier VMware Cloud Provider Partner, to host the Epic EMR solution on a VMware-based cloud infrastructure. The more secure, scalable environment underpins Pine Rest’s mission to improve access to behavioral health services for patients near and far.

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services is a nonprofit organization founded in 1910. It is the fourth-largest behavioral health provider in the U.S., with revenues of over \$134 million and nearly 2,000 employees offering a full continuum of services at 16 outpatient locations throughout Michigan and one in Iowa. Pine Rest served over 48,000 patients in 2017 via its inpatient and partial hospitalization programs with 198 beds, residential programs with 219 beds, outpatient and teletherapy services, addiction treatment and recovery programs, and services for children and seniors.

The Challenge

Pine Rest has seen more than 30 percent growth in patients served since 2010. With expansion in its reach and array of services offered, its existing EMR system, which didn’t allow coordination between inpatient and outpatient operations, was hampering the organization’s goals. Pine Rest wanted to better standardize registration procedures, information requests, and other electronic health record functions for improved efficiency and communications across its entire continuum of care. It needed to roll out the new solution quickly and with minimal disruption to its day-to-day operations serving patients.

Having once faced a system failure that jeopardized one week of employee payroll, the organization wanted to help ensure superior IT infrastructure resiliency without the time and cost inherent to building a new data center. The solution needed to help protect sensitive patient and employee data to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) as well as Michigan’s even more stringent mental health code requirements.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Implement a new EMR system in eight months, with minimal disruption to operations, to enable enhanced coordination of care across facilities
- Help safeguard sensitive patient and employee data
- Improve reliability and disaster readiness, without the cost of another data center
- Support growth in the organization's reach and array of services offered

Ultimately, Pine Rest wanted to provide more healing moments for patients within its community and expanding sphere of influence. For outpatient psychiatric consultations in high demand, for example, it realized telepsychiatry services, with high-quality video and audio interaction between the psychiatrist and the patient, could open doors for more patients in need who were unwilling or unable to visit a Pine Rest site in person.

To support growth in the organization's reach and array of services offered, Pine Rest looked to the cloud.

The Solution

Pine Rest selected US Signal, a Premier VMware Cloud Provider Partner, to host the Epic EMR solution and other business-critical applications on a cloud infrastructure based on VMware vSphere®. US Signal is a leading IT solutions provider, offering connectivity, cloud hosting, colocation, data protection, and disaster recovery services, all powered by its wholly owned and operated, robust fiber network.

The solution includes US Signal's HIPAA-compliant Hosted Private Cloud, tailored to meet Epic's stringent design requirements. US Signal also provides Pine Rest with a customized disaster-recovery-as-a-service (DRaaS) solution to help ensure availability of mission-critical applications, with a tested and verified 15-minute recovery time objective (RTO). Rounding out the solution is a combination of US Signal network services, professional services, and managed security, all fitted to Pine Rest's specific needs.

"We needed a trusted and reliable partner like US Signal to help advance our cloud-first strategy. We also wanted a partner that worked closely with VMware, because of its leadership in developing virtualization technologies to form the basis of our hybrid cloud infrastructure," said Bill Johnson, director of information services for Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services.

Business Results & Benefits

Pine Rest represented Epic's first deployment for a behavioral health provider. Despite the project's complexity, with the help of US Signal, the deployment was completed with minimal disruptions in just eight months, compared to a typical 18- to 24-month timeline.

"With the magnitude of the rollout and compressed time line of our project, there is no way we could have done this on our own or in the old way of standing up new data center hardware. Cloud is the new way. We now have a more scalable and secure environment with the help of US Signal and VMware. We have the gold standard for our EMR and IT infrastructure, one that supports Pine Rest's mission to heal the whole person," said Johnson.

With US Signal's HIPAA-compliant data centers and cloud infrastructure underpinning its environment, Pine Rest meets HIPAA and State of Michigan requirements. "We take privacy seriously, so it was important to have medical-grade IT, with high-quality data protection supported by the combined VMware and US Signal cloud solution," said Johnson.

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BILL JOHNSON
DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES
PINE REST CHRISTIAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

VMWARE FOOTPRINT

VMware Cloud Provider Program

PLATFORM

VMware Cloud™ infrastructure hosted by US Signal, a Premier VMware Cloud Provider Partner

The Epic EMR enables improved coordination of care across Pine Rest’s full spectrum of services as well as in partnership with other healthcare providers through Epic’s Care Everywhere health data exchange functionality. Better documentation and communication about key patient information helps promote a superior patient experience and patient outcomes.

“With visibility to a patient’s whole health record, we can better tailor their treatment and services. It’s a game-changer for the level of care we can now provide,” Johnson said.

As its operations expand, Pine Rest can rely on an agile, cloud-based infrastructure to support its growth, such as with the high-quality telepsychiatric connections that can make the same kind of impact for patients as in-person visits. This opens the door to serving even more patients, in a timelier manner, and in more rural areas.

Looking Ahead

With growing demand for its services, Pine Rest leverages site-based psychiatrists as well as psychiatrists in other parts of the U.S. to meet the needs of its own patients, in addition to patients of other organizations, such as hospitals and emergency rooms.

“With a cloud-first strategy, Pine Rest is well positioned to advance our mission of improving access to behavioral health services,” said Johnson.

