



Gulf Coast Health Care, LLC

Aerohive has enabled high-performance connectivity for health care patients, nurses and visiting family members

Requirements

- Create a secure, stable collaborative wireless network environment for its 44 affiliated long term care facilities.
- Reduce costs and IT resources required to deploy new WLAN at remote healthcare centers.
- Needed a powerful, scalable network for patients that can also excel at handling the use of mobile, distributed electronic clinical documentation at or near the point of care.

Results

- Deploying Aerohive has enabled high-performance connectivity for health care patients, nurses and visiting family members.
- Centralized management and zero-touch deployment has significantly reduced deployment time and cost, and enabled quick problem resolution.
- Mobile applications with high-performance connectivity have increased nurses and doctors productivity and improved the delivery of patient care.

About Gulf Coast Health Care, LLC

At Gulf Coast Health Care, “May I Help You?” isn’t just a question or a slogan – it’s the company’s core philosophy. Gulf Coast Health Care provides administration and consulting services, including but not limited to information technology services, to affiliated operating companies in the senior housing, post-acute, and long-term care industries. Gulf Coast Health Care services 44 skilled nursing and assisted living facilities in Florida, Mississippi, and Alabama, with the majority, 34, in the Sunshine State. The facilities provide residents with a wide range of service from therapy (physical, occupational, and speech) to long term care. Whether assisting a family with the difficult decision to move a loved one into a nursing

home, or providing residents with the highest quality of care, the skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities are committed to making a real difference in the lives of those it serves.

The Challenge

All such healthcare organizations face technology challenges, especially when they’re spread across several states and are dealing with a combination of aging facilities and increasing wireless demands. That’s where Aerohive came in.

Gulf Coast Health Care had three main reasons for needing an Aerohive enterprise-class wireless network. One is to assist the facilities in providing their residents and guests with access to the Internet, which helps maintain the connectivity so many of us have come to expect in all settings.

The second reason is visiting associates and doctors at the facilities, so they can be connected at all times. The third priority is for the facilities’ nurses and other staff, so they can provide even better, more efficient, care for their residents. Gulf Coast Health Care affiliated facilities increasingly uses a point-of-care platform for health care and electronic medical records, and the devices used at the bedside or in the hallways require a reliable, scalable Wi-Fi network.

“Gulf Coast opted for Aerohive for its ease of management, rich functionality and ability to provide an integrated wireless network that will cost-effectively scale alongside business growth. After some initial tests, the choice was clear.”

—Jon Dossey

IT Director for Gulf Coast Health Care

Before Aerohive, Gulf Coast Health Care did not have a wireless network in its affiliated facilities.

"We were looking down the road a few years, and we decided we really needed a wireless network to provide mobility to our associates," said Jon Dossey, IT Director for Gulf Coast Health Care.

The Solution

The IT team chose Aerohive following an evaluation that included Aruba and Cisco. Gulf Coast opted for Aerohive for its ease of management, rich functionality and ability to provide an integrated wireless network that will cost-effectively scale alongside business growth. After some initial tests, the choice was clear, Dossey said.

"Just the fundamental architecture (of the competitors) wasn't going to work for the way our network is designed," Dossey said.

He likes the intelligence that is on each Aerohive AP, which makes setup and management much easier for him and his team. "We didn't want to have to put a controller at every single site," he said, and they didn't want to backhaul the traffic all the way through the LAN and WAN.

As for command and control, the Gulf Coast Health Care team uses the HiveManager Network Management System (on VMWare) virtual appliance for zero-touch configuration and management. HiveManager is an out-of-band NMS for simple policy configuration, firmware upgrades, and monitoring of up to thousands of Aerohive 802.11n access points and routers. A revolutionary new user-interface makes it easy and intuitive to create and deploy unified LAN and WLAN policies across your entire network. HiveManager offers real-time topology, performance, and client information to simplify troubleshooting, capacity planning, and security remediation of both WLANs and remote office networks. HiveManager also enables customer access policies based on identity and device type.

With the privacy aspect of patient care, Dossey appreciates that Aerohive's security and encryption features allow the solution to be deployed in a HIPAA-compliant manner. "We are using Aerohive's encryption features, because we are transmitting very sensitive information over these networks and obviously it's crucial that this information be protected," he said.

Dossey has been particularly impressed with what he can do with HiveManager. "The HiveManager virtual appliance has enabled us to drop these Aerohive Access Points in without having to do a major infrastructure overhaul in each location," he said.

The Results/Benefits

Gulf Coast Health Care currently has deployed approximately 600 Aerohive APs with somewhere between 9 to 21 at each affiliated facility. The rollout has gone smoothly, and all facilities have complete blanket Wi-Fi coverage provided by Aerohive.

Gulf Coast Health Care affiliated facilities utilize a variety of programs under the umbrella of a platform called PointClickCare, the most widely used electronic healthcare records (EHR) platform for long-term care. PointClickCare offers Web-based solutions designed to help long-term care providers manage the lifecycle — including admission, medications, and discharge — of resident care.

One of the main modules of PointClickCare is the Electronic Medication Administration Records (eMAR) platform. eMAR is a platform that utilizes barcode-reading technology to monitor the bedside administration of medications. eMAR is also used to track medication inventory, medical records, verification process and decision-making at the bedside.

Gulf Coast Health Care affiliated facilities also use Aerohive to handle a voice-over-IP platform using Cisco Unified Communications Manager and Wi-Fi-enabled VOIP phones. Nurses have added wireless IP phones on their medication carts. "At night, when the facilities have less staffing, they'll forward the main line to the carts. So far it's been pretty successful," Dossey said. Based on the success of the wireless phones on the carts, Gulf Coast Health Care is considering rolling it out to all affiliated facilities.

As to whether he'd recommend Aerohive to others, Dossey said absolutely. He particularly appreciates the lack of a controller, the ease of use and setup, and the low solution price point.



Contact us today to learn how your organization can benefit from Aerohive wireless LAN architecture.

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