

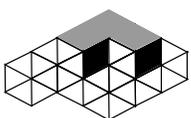
# Managed Information Technology Services

**Enabling hospitals to  
*“do more with less”***

**Sponsored by TruBridge**

**Reported by Porter Research**

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## **Introduction:**

TruBridge contracted with Porter Research to interview several of its hospital clients using the IT Company's managed services in order to learn more about their decision to select TruBridge, and the subsequent results of that choice. The quote “*do more with less*” encapsulates a common theme expressed by all of the hospital IT professionals who were interviewed.

Though the TruBridge managed service(s) varied from hospital-to-hospital, the obstacles faced by each client CIO or director was similar. Each hospital IT leader is grappling to implement and maintain a network infrastructure necessary for today's healthcare environment, while working towards tomorrow's [defined and yet-to-be-determined] Meaningful Use requirements.

The hospitals represented in the study also had many commonalities, specifically in total bed count as well as departmental staff and budget constraints. The facilities are comprised of three rural, 25-bed critical access hospitals and one 33-bed, physician-owned, surgical hospital.

The following four Challenges are examples of how hospital IT department heads are using TruBridge managed solutions to achieve IT success, while working within their onsite personnel and budget limitations.

## **Backup and Recovery**

**Challenge 1: If the hospital data center was totally destroyed, we have to be able to recover all medical records in less than 48 hours.** The Board of Trustees of county-owned Henry County Health Center (Mount Pleasant, IA) charged the lofty disaster recovery task to its CIO Stephen Stewart. “We have been working for quite some time, the entire four years that I've been here, on incremental steps to get to that point,” explains Mr. Stewart.

Since then, Henry County Health Center has adopted several TruBridge solutions, including its Cloud Backup managed service, in order to establish a more comprehensive disaster preparedness model that works in conjunction with the hospital IT department's local backup and redundant servers. The seamless disaster recovery model offers multiple recovery points to mitigate the risk of losing crucial data. As the hospital migrates more clinical care and physician applications from a paper environment into an electronic format that is integrated into the EMR, it becomes acutely important that the complete medical record is retrievable in a timely manner as outlined by the hospital Board's strategic goal on *Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Planning*.

“The data is what is irreplaceable. Having a copy of the data through a cloud backup service means you can recover it faster than you could from tape or any other media and *it's there* and *it's available...*and



that's why we focus where we focused. We have already attested to Stage 1 Meaningful Use, and are so far along in the electronification of our medical records that we pretty much cannot do business without it," says Mr. Stewart.

"What we found as we dug into this disaster recovery initiative is that TruBridge and their whole backup strategy includes some customized routines that they have created and is proven to work. My initial concept was to get it to the point that I could have one solution that fits all. I could take all the data and put it into a pile of my choosing and then replicate that data to alternative locations and then stand up a server, a mini-server farm in a remote location to recover everything. Well, I've got that today with TruBridge.

"We now have live copies of our data in three places: It is in [the hospital's main] Data Center, and every 30 minutes it is copied to a HA-Metro Warm Server that is located on the opposite end of the campus. The data is also copied to TruBridge's cloud environment every twelve hours. And if TruBridge's Mobile, AL data center ever had a problem, then I'm covered in their [redundant] data center located in Atlanta, GA."

Elaborating further on the decision to use TruBridge's managed data recovery services, "There is also the security of knowing that your most important data asset, which is the core hospital health information system and electronic health record, is in the hands of the experts who created it and know everything about it and that they are serving as your backup agent. It doesn't make sense for an organization as small as ours to do it on our own...then we would be completely responsible for the backup ourselves."

As Mr. Stewart contemplates the hospital Board's worst-case scenario, in the event that its data center was totally destroyed, "I would alert TruBridge about the situation so that they could map our virtually stored HIS data, from the last update, to match our specific application parameters that would be accessible through their DR Global Warm Server. Once the server has been activated, I could establish a VPN lock to any Internet-connected computer so that hospital personnel would have virtual access to functional clinical applications populated with the restored data. I estimate that the hospital would have operational access to our data again *within a day*. So, TruBridge's Cloud Backup service has certainly helped us exceed the charge that the hospital Board gave my department to be able to recover all medical records in less than two days."

Mr. Stewart also adds, "TruBridge's pricing model for the service was extraordinarily good, and far more competitively priced than what I found other solutions to be. They probably do represent the most critical core piece of functionality to our business. So from the standpoint of having that piece of our *Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Planning* solved rather easily and rather quickly, they provide a price value equation that could not be beat."



**Challenge 2: As Meaningful Use moves from a paper-based to an electronic medical record, it is very important that the business model is affordable.** Ross Hurd, CIO of Lake Chelan Community Hospital (Chelan, WA), knows only too well how imperative it is to maximize your resources, overseeing a three-person IT department that has achieved a unique distinction...“We are one of the few small, critical access, independent hospitals listed as one of the top-most wired hospitals in the nation, according to the American Hospital Association.”

In 9/2011, the hospital began using TruBridge’s managed service for a Disaster Recovery Global Warm Server. As Mr. Hurd recalls his history of working with TruBridge on disaster recovery issues, “We had daily backup tapes, weekly backup tapes, monthly backup tapes, and we sent an encrypted backup tape...we still do this...back to TruBridge where they restore it in one of their virtual networks and then they verify the files to make sure that it was a successful restore.”

To expand beyond the backup tape drive and library effort, the hospital contracted with TruBridge to use its DR Global Warm Server. The managed service would allow hospital operations to continue seamlessly if -- for instance, in the case of a disaster -- its server room was taken offline and the IT staff had to move to another location. A secured Internet connection could be made to TruBridge’s cloud environment so that all data, within 12 hours current -- including its operating systems, applications, patches, and documentation -- could easily and securely be accessed.

“Our live HIS data is stored on an onsite server and we have an onsite warm server as backup. If we lose the primary server hardware, we have the redundant that we just kick over to and it will keep the hospital up and running. We also have the live data copied to TruBridge’s cloud environment twice a day that can be used as a quick accessible offsite backup of hospital data. I get a report that assures me that our virtually stored data is correct. I can verify that patient data was copied over from the previous day,” explains Mr. Hurd. “This means that user logins and patient records are Cloud-accessible to keep the hospital up and running 24/7/365 if hardware failure happens and my department is busy restoring our infrastructure.”

He also points out other intrinsic benefits related to TruBridge’s disaster recovery and business continuity planning service. “TruBridge has provided a business model for their DR Global Warm Server that is very affordable. And all of the work is basically on their end. Each year there’s more budget cuts, more charitable care. But technology remains a requirement. As Meaningful Use moves from a paper-based to an electronic medical record, it is very important that the business model is affordable.

“As a critical access hospital with budget cuts, FTEs [full-time employees] are a cherished component. There are three of us in the IT department...myself, an IT manager, and an applications specialist,” Mr. Hurd emphasizes the importance of good staff and resource management. “I think our hospital has done a really good job with [resource management], because we are still in the black during a very difficult time. TruBridge has made us more efficient. They actually come here and job shadow us and show us how we can do more with less. We are going to be forced to do more with less.”

Lake Chelan Community Hospital has already attested for Stage 1 Meaningful Use.



## Cloud Computing

**Challenge 3:** We needed to replace our internal server, which was dying rather quickly, but it could easily cost over \$100,000. That was the situation facing the Director of IT at Surgical Specialty Hospital of Arizona (Phoenix, AZ), Yong Wang.

“I felt that a Cloud-based service model was exactly what we needed. To have someone host our service...when you rent their service, you rent their equipment. Then the expense actually becomes a monthly service charge, which is much more affordable for us,” explains Mr. Wang.

The innovative Cloud Computing service from TruBridge allows enterprise IT infrastructure to be quickly provisioned and scaled in order to meet the hospital’s specific needs. Hospital personnel can connect to TruBridge's cloud through either a secured Internet connection or dedicated connectivity, accessing system environments, file servers and third-party software.

Surgical Specialty Hospital was already using TruBridge managed cloud services to support its billing and registration systems. In 6/2010, the hospital implemented TruBridge’s Cloud Computing service for HIS. Then in 7/2011, they expanded to the IT Company’s Cloud File Server and Cloud Active Directory, and most recently, in 9/2011, implemented its Email Hosting and Email Encryption service.

“Cloud computing can save us a lot of money; I estimate at least \$60,000 a year. It is expensive to set up a new server from the hardware, software perspective...and we don’t have the onsite staff to maintain it. By going with TruBridge, we could pay a low monthly charge and be able to get the same level of functionality and support that you usually would not be able to get with the budget that we are looking at right now.

“There’s also the issue of support...because we don’t have to maintain a lot of staff to support those applications. Whenever our users have any problems, then they can call TruBridge’s help desk. Users can actually do it directly without going through the hospital IT department. That frees up a lot of manpower here, so we can concentrate on other things. Our overall experience with a Cloud environment has been pretty good and, as I said before, it will save us a lot of money.”

Surgical Specialty Hospital plans to attest for Stage 1 Meaningful Use in Q1 2013.



## IT Security

### **Challenge 4: Balancing between IT requirements, government regulations, and the bottom line.**

Travis Albright, director of IT at Woodlawn Hospital (Rochester, IN), notes how operating a four-person IT department for a community hospital involves increasing pressures on several fronts, especially from external factors, “With government rules and regulations and changes taking place, the requirements placed on our department are increasing more than ever before. And all of these governmental requirements have to be completed in the time frame that they want them done.”

Describing the decision to use TruBridge’s managed IT security services, Mr. Albright explains, “Having a small IT staff presents us with a lot of challenges. I thought TruBridge was a perfect fit, offering a way to help with some of those obstacles as far as finding areas that sometimes require very specific training and education levels to take some of the pressure off of me and my staff...and do it in a way that’s secure and appropriate.”

TruBridge’s IT security services fortify the hospital’s perimeter and end-point security and keep important information safe. In 12/2010, the hospital implemented TruBridge’s services for firewall management, which ensures that networks are secured at the front door to the world. In 1/2011, they added Internet Content Filtering Service, which controls the types of websites users are able to access. Also, anti-virus and mal-ware protection is provided for PCs, laptops and servers. In 5/2011, the hospital expanded to include Email Hosting and Encryption Services.

“The main factor for the firewalls and the e-mail encryption is to prevent a breach of data and patient records. I was happy to have professionals [from TruBridge] who are dedicated to just that area of IT. They are very familiar with security and some of the issues that we’re presented with...not only us, but other hospitals as well. Every one of their client hospitals is facing a similar set of issues.

“TruBridge has been very cost effective. The needs of the hospital are only increasing, so TruBridge’s managed service offers an economical solution as opposed to adding FTEs [full time employees]. When you add FTEs, you are also adding on the insurance and benefits and the other associated costs. So to me, and to the hospital administration, this is a good way to go. We are a non-revenue generating department within the hospital...we provide a service to the rest of the facility, but we don’t bring in any money. It’s very difficult to request and be granted FTEs in a situation like that. So we have to work to get the proper balance between departmental staff levels and IT requirements, and keep the bottom line for the hospital. TruBridge’s business focus is on medium-size and small critical-access hospitals, so they already have a mindset that is similar to ours to help us achieve this balance.”

Woodlawn Hospital has already attested for Stage 1 Meaningful Use.



## **Conclusion:**

TruBridge's IT Managed Services are designed to enable community hospitals to “do more with less” by providing a solution that is both *Effective* and *Efficient*, as demonstrated in Challenge 1, whereby Henry County Health Center (Mount Pleasant, IA) implemented TruBridge's HIS Cloud Backup service to exceed its own original data recovery goal, in a worst-case scenario, from less than 48 hours to within two-to-four hours.

TruBridge's IT Managed Services are also built on a business model that is *Affordable*, as shown in Challenge 2, when Lake Chelan Community Hospital (Chelan, WA) implemented the IT company's disaster recovery services during a time of operational budget cuts and increasing expenditures.

Surgical Specialty Hospital of Arizona (Phoenix, AZ), in Challenge 3, avoided a large capital equipment purchase through the use of cloud-computing services. The hospital's IT department *Lowered Operating Costs* by eliminating the need for onsite hardware and maintenance, and the necessity for related onsite personnel.

TruBridge provides Woodlawn Hospital (Rochester, IN), in Challenge 4, with *Professional Expertise* for managed IT security services to help the facility's IT staff navigate through the ongoing and complicated government requirements that are a crucial component for hospital participation in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement.

With today's demanding requirements and tomorrow's looming Meaningful Use regulations, hospital IT staffs can be easily stretched thin and even overwhelmed. TruBridge's comprehensive suite of IT Managed Services can take over the day-to-day management of a hospital's IT infrastructure in a way that is proven to be *Effective, Efficient, Affordable*, helps *Lower Operating Costs* and includes the *Professional Expertise* of more than 450 clinical, financial and IT specialists, enabling hospitals to thrive in a challenging healthcare IT environment.

### **About TruBridge**

TruBridge brings years of expertise in delivering effective business, consulting and managed IT services created for the unique challenges faced by rural and community healthcare providers.

TruBridge offers a broad range of services, from consulting and managed IT to full business process outsourcing that spans the revenue cycle from end to end. Our professionals have been helping hospitals and other healthcare institutions become more efficient at serving their communities for over 30 years. Today, more than 450 dedicated, trained experts stand ready to do the same for other organizations, enabling them to overcome the unique challenges they face every day.

[www.trubridge.net](http://www.trubridge.net)

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Porter Research helps its clients become high-performance businesses within their industries by delivering actionable market intelligence and research insight. Porter diligently works to understand and assess each client's unique needs and build a customized business-to-business research program to achieve the desired goals. Combining unparalleled experience, proven methodologies and knowledge-based analysis, Porter provides the unbiased results that clients need to make informed strategic business decisions. For more information, visit

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