Large North Carolina Medical Group Deploys Pure and Cohesity for Modern Storage Solution

Industry: Healthcare

Use Cases: Data Protection and Test Dev

Solution Partners: Pure Storage

Piedmont HealthCare

> " The usual indication of a successful introduction of a new solution is if the implementation is considered a 'non-event'. The introduction of Cohesity at PHC was disruptive, in a very positive way! The team is still jockeying for day-to-day ownership of backups, something I've never seen before!
>
> – Mike House, Chief Information Officer, Piedmont HealthCare

Introduction

Piedmont HealthCare (PHC) is the largest physician-owned and directed multi-specialty medical group in North Carolina, providing comprehensive healthcare for the entire family. The provider has more than 50 locations throughout the state of North Carolina, with more than 200 physicians and providers, and over 1,000 employees.

Challenges

Piedmont HealthCare has two data center locations. The company began to experience significant challenges with its existing secondary storage solution, and EMC Networker was due for a contract renewal, prompting PHC to take a deeper look at its overall secondary data infrastructure. The IT team manages a large array of infrastructure, including over 100 virtual machines in Citrix and SQL environments, as well as large quantities of files and scanned images to maintain patient information and electronic medical records.

The existing solution was cumbersome and took a lot of time and dedication in order to keep it up and running properly, including an agonizing process for adding additional virtual machines. If virtual machines were added, this was a tedious 10-15 step process. Failures were common and often required more than a week of troubleshooting and mandated opening tickets for resolution. The IT team did not have modern capabilities like auto-discovery and auto-protect, and was running on an old version of Java because the current version could not be loaded under the existing architecture.

Piedmont Healthcare turned to a trusted solution provider to identify a comprehensive secondary data solution, including replacing its primary storage. The company aimed for the following capabilities in a secondary storage solution:

- Simplified management and intuitive user interface
- Ability to meet SLA windows and eliminate downtime
- Auto-discovery and auto-protect capabilities, as well as functionality beyond data protection
- Ensure solution upgrades could be done in-house and without additional cost

Solution

After taking a look at technology from Cohesity and Rubrik, and after a successful demo of Cohesity's capabilities, PHC chose Cohesity for its OpEx savings, overall ease of use and intuitive interface, and additional capabilities such as built-in apps like Password Detector, allowing the company to eventually be able to scan files that are backed up for stored passwords. Cohesity has many capabilities that will allow the medical provider to work with end users to store and analyze private data securely.

PHC deployed Cohesity 2500 hyperconverged node appliances for secure backup for over 100 VMs, up to five SQL backups, as well as one physical server. Pure Storage is used for the primary storage solution, with more than 9T of data capacity. Pure and Cohesity were deployed at the same time, implementing a modern infrastructure with seamless integration between the two solution providers to ensure simplified management and a smooth rollout.

"The seamless integration of Cohesity and Pure at Piedmont HealthCare has allowed faster RPOs and RTOs due to frequent automated snapshots. By using snapshots from Pure, recovery is practically instantaneous because the snapshot is available on the array itself. This process is completely automated and the built-in policies from Cohesity allow us to focus on our end users instead of spending time troubleshooting in our data center," explains Byron Williams, IT Infrastructure Manager at Piedmont HealthCare.

Results

From the decision to deploy, the IT team at PHC realized immediate benefits with Cohesity. Time to install the entire solution took only a day and the ease of installation, including de-motioning machines from EMC to Pure, was effortless. Backup times are significantly improved. Previously, a partial SQL database backup would spill over into production and take up to 10 hours, while now a backup is complete in less than two hours. File servers would back up in barely four hours and are now complete in under an hour or often just within minutes. Backups never spill over into production and are staggered at night and hardly take any time.

The Google-like search capabilities have also greatly improved the IT team's ability to recover and restore files. Before the company would have to drill down to a particular virtual machine or driver, but now the IT team can search by file name and pull up a snapshot date, and immediately download or restore the file.

PHC is also looking ahead to expand its use of Cohesity's test/dev features and possibly leverage file sharing services in the future. The IT team can now test Windows patches in Cohesity before rolling out to a production environment.

Piedmont HealthCare has realized many benefits with Cohesity including:

- Up to 40% in CapEx savings for the company
- Features like auto-discovery and auto-protect expanded ability to respond to end users
- The company saw a 2:1 data reduction ratio with Cohesity, freeing up more than 60% of its storage cluster and seeing great capacity benefit with Cohesity data deduplication
- Upgrades are now possible without bringing down a machine, and without outside vendor assistance in significantly less time and with no excess cost
- A modern secondary storage solution enabled faster file recovery and significant time savings

Recap

Piedmont HealthCare aims to provide the very best care for its patients, and Cohesity has matched this vision with providing superior customer support as the healthcare provider modernized its entire storage infrastructure from top to bottom. The joint solution of Cohesity and Pure has not only given the company tangible cost and time savings, but has also prepared PHC to meet the demands of explosive data growth, as well as future expectations and requirements for secondary data management.

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