

North Central Health Care Case Study

Wausau, WI

CASE STUDY

North Central Health Care (NCHC) is a public agency serving the counties of Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon. North Central Health Care, with its main campus in Wausau, and additional offices located in Antigo (Langlade Health Care Center) and Merrill and Tomahawk (Lincoln Health Care Center) offers outpatient, day hospital, community support and inpatient services for mental/emotional problems; vocational, life skill training, early intervention, housing and care management services for the developmentally disabled; and assessment, individual and outpatient group counseling, intensive programming, day hospital, referral for residential and inpatient treatment, and education for alcohol and other drug problems.

Mental Health services has always been a “high touch” field, but North Central Health Care (NCHC) has successfully integrated high tech into its operations. Thanks to its long-term partnership with RMM Solutions, NCHC utilizes the latest technologies to connect facilities throughout three counties and support essential back-office functions.

The two organizations have forged a strong relationship thanks in part to RMM’s hands-on approach. RMM functions almost as an extension of NCHC’s in-house IT staff, helping to brainstorm solutions as well as plan and implement projects.

“RMM will sit down and talk with us about what needs to be done and the best way to accomplish it,” said Cathy Edens, IMS Director, North Central Health Care. “It’s a collaboration. They bring knowledge of the latest technologies and the expertise to put all the pieces together.



Experience Counts

The relationship began in the mid-1990s and has encompassed a wide range of projects. NCHC’s in-house staff handles much of the day-to-day maintenance and network support needs, calling on RMM to supplement those services.

“Over the years RMM has done many, many things for us,” said Edens. “We turn to them for their design and consulting expertise, and for implementation assistance for projects that affect our network. We’ve had a long history with them because we’re really pleased with their work.”

NCHC also depends upon RMM’s know-how during the planning and budgeting process. RMM helps Edens and her team anticipate technology changes for projects that must be scoped out a year in advance.

“A perfect example is the wireless project that we’re working on right now,” she said. “When we first looked at this project last year, RMM developed a configuration based upon what was available at that time. Now that we’re ready to move forward, RMM is reconfiguring the solution to take advantage of some of the security enhancements



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they've been seeing in the market. We're generally budgeting this year for next year's purchase, so that type of knowledge and adaptability is vital. RMM helps ensure that we stay on top of what products are available. We just don't have time to explore that kind of information internally."

Making IT Easier

NCHC also calls in RMM for third-party projects. RMM helps analyze how new hardware and software might impact the network, and configures all the needed components.

"Even though the solution may not come directly from RMM, we still use them for design and consulting," Edens said. "For example, in 2006 we converted to a new time-and-attendance system that allows our non-salaried staff to check in via PC, badge reader or telephone. That software didn't come from RMM but they helped us configure the servers and the data collection devices and, most importantly, ensure that the system will be available 24x7. While the software vendor provided hardware specifications, the real design and configuration came from our discussion about capacity, usage, things like that."

Although NCHC can buy equipment through a state contract, the organization looks to RMM to help facilitate those purchases.

"They will do product comparisons for us using their knowledge of what's available and where the market is headed," Edens said. "We will also use them to coordinate the state contract purchase because they keep us apprised of product availability, deliverability and other information. It just enhances the process and makes things easier on our end."

"More and more of our clinical information is being maintained electronically, so we need to ensure that our systems are always up and available...RMM gives us the extra protection we need."

Around-the-Clock Support

Last year, NCHC began utilizing RMM's ProActive managed services program for around-the-clock network monitoring and support. RMM helped NCHC identify critical systems and network equipment and created a customized plan designed to meet NCHC's goal of 100-percent uptime for those components.

"RMM monitors those systems continually. If there's a change in status — whether there's some sort of outage or if a piece of equipment is nearing some threshold — RMM notifies us so that we can take care of it before it becomes a major problem. And if it's a network issue that they need to handle, they will come out and take care of it right away," Edens said.

"That gave us the extra protection we need, especially as we continue to expand the use of our systems. More and more of our clinical information is being maintained electronically, so we need to ensure that our systems are always up and available."

When availability is critical, it's important to have a partner you can count on for expertise, experience and responsive support. North Central Health Care depends upon its technology infrastructure — and its long-term relationship with RMM Solutions.



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