Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare builds connected health framework with Comcast Business.

Oregon nonprofit connects 10 major sites and 65+ smaller locations with suite of data, voice, and video services to facilitate mental health and addiction treatment services.

Situation

- Nonprofit supports 15,000 clients with mental health challenges, addiction, and homelessness
- 900 employees
- 75+ locations

Challenge

- Costly and complex patchwork of Internet and network services from an array of service providers

Solution

- Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service
- Comcast Business Ethernet Dedicated Internet
- Comcast Business Ethernet Private Line
- Comcast Business Ethernet Virtual Private Line
- Comcast Business Internet
- Comcast Business PRI Trunks
- Comcast Business TV

Results

- Scalable, high-performance network
- Connected locations allow for collaboration, improved client service
- Simplified and streamlined daily operations

"Once we rolled out Comcast Business, the difference was night and day compared to our previous experience!"

Brandon Gatke
CIO and Director of Operations
Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare

Healthcare provider serves children, families, and adults with mental health and addiction challenges

Founded in 2002 through the merger of several smaller nonprofits, Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare is one of the largest nonprofit healthcare providers in Oregon, with 75+ facilities and over 350 units of affordable housing in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Marion, and Lane counties. Its mission is to provide healing, homes, and hope for people living with mental health challenges, addiction, and homelessness. The organization has 900 employees that serve more than 15,000 children, families, and adults every year. In addition to housing, Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare provides community and clinic-based mental health and addiction, wellness, homelessness, and medical services.

"Our employees dedicate themselves to our clients. We help them with some of life's most difficult issues, so we take tremendous pride in all of our clients' successes – small and large!" said Brandon Gatke, CIO and Director of Operations, Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare.

Geographically dispersed IT Network difficult to troubleshoot and manage

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare operates in many different counties and out of many different locations that range in size from large facilities to residential homes. Through a number of consolidations and acquisitions, the healthcare provider came to have network services from a mix of providers, which made it difficult for all the facilities to work together. Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare could not cost-effectively or efficiently add capacity to its network with its multiple providers, which inhibited the organization's plans for growth.

"We need to plan for the future of our organization and technology plays a major role in that. Without a single technology provider that can meet our data and Internet needs and help us build our network, we can't advance the healthcare field and find better solutions for our clients," said Gatke.

COMCAST BUSINESS

As a healthcare provider, Cascadia had to adhere to strict regulatory and compliance information requirements and provide secure, reliable networking when upgrading its systems – which was difficult to manage with an array of network services from different service providers across its distributed enterprise. Additionally, with a patchwork of network services, which included DSL, bonded T1's, and regular business Internet that all connected through an open source VPN solution and were regularly operating at 5 Megabits per second (Mbps), employees were not able to access a shared corporate network. This made it difficult for employees to collaborate and share important client files in a timely fashion.

Added Gatke, "Access to our Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system is vital to our business – it's connected to everything we do, it's how we deliver and maintain care for the people we serve. But with latency issues, a huge portion of our daily operations were greatly impaired."

In addition to the larger facilities, Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare also has 65+ housing sites and smaller facilities that were receiving a mix of voice, television, and up to 15 Mbps Internet services from multiple providers. These services provide Cascadia's clients with entertainment and a way to stay in touch with friends and family, and give staff a way to access important client information and communicate with the larger organization. For both staff and clients, slow services would cause frustration and hinder daily tasks and operations.

"Managing so many different systems was a constant headache for us. We had to deal with countless service level agreements and billing was far from unified. Additionally, using a patchwork of service providers caused daily issues for our employees, which in turn impacted our clients because we couldn't operate in an efficient manner," Gatke said.

The organization wanted to consolidate all of its services under one provider in order to establish a shared, practice-wide network, simplify daily operations, and position itself for future expansion and growth.

Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare standardizes on Comcast Business Ethernet Network Services practice-wide

Creating and connecting an expansive Wide Area Network (WAN) that provides the security, reliability, and scalability required of a healthcare agency is a serious effort. Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare interviewed a number of different service providers, but ultimately chose Comcast Business because of the extensive reach of its advanced network, excellent client service, and ability to scale with the organization.

Comcast Business installed an Ethernet Network Service with up to 100 Mbps of capacity to connect the nonprofit's 10 largest sites, as well as a 300 Mbps Ethernet Dedicated Internet (EDI) line to the company's primary data center to facilitate EMR transfers and downloads across the organization. Comcast Business also established a 5 Mbps Ethernet Private Line (EPL) and a 12 Mbps Ethernet Virtual Private Line (EVPL) as a secure route to transfer data between the sites and the main data center in Portland, Oregon. These connections offer scalable capacity for future needs and provide redundancy for the network so that if any location experiences a service issue, it can stay up and running. Comcast Business also installed five PRI Trunks, which run over a dedicated fiber Ethernet circuit, in order to centralize the phone system that was previously unconnected from site to site.

With a new corporate WAN, employees at Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare experienced improved performance immediately. The shared, secure, practice-wide network encourages more collaboration between locations, which ultimately leads to a better client experience. Also, employees are finally able to send EMRs between locations without latency or downtime.

“Once we rolled out Comcast Business, the difference was night and day compared to our previous experience! Our latency issues disappeared and the quality of service increased. From an IT perspective, we’ve been able to better supervise our data networking, streamline communications and improve the overall quality of the network,” Gatke said. “From a business perspective, we’ve been able to increase productivity and simplify operations in order to spend more time with our clients.”

In addition to the enterprise services, Comcast Business deployed up to 75 Mbps Business Internet, Business Phone, and Business TV in the 65+ smaller facilities and residential locations. Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare employees are able to access important files much faster, and clients are able to stay connected to family and friends and watch TV for entertainment.

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