

Suwannee Valley Nursing Home Case Study

Advancing Patient Care With Speed and Continuity

Since 1969, Suwannee Valley Nursing home has been providing quality long-term care and short-term rehabilitative services to the community of Jasper, Florida. So much of its ability to deliver top-notch care is dependent upon reliable Internet and phone service, and Suwannee needed a solution that would support the growing needs of its staff and clientele.

Challenge: To Enhance Efficiency and Accelerate Processes

With the majority of its staff utilizing web-based applications to perform day-to-day tasks, Suwannee's administrator recognized the need for a faster, more reliable network than the DSL lines they had. The facility's analog PBX phone system had also become cumbersome in that it required a technician to make a service call to Suwannee in order to make any needed moves, adds, or changes to patient lines.

"Almost everything we do here is Internet based. All of our medical records, all of our nursing care, everything is electronic," stated Danny Williamson, Administrator at Suwannee. "Our old DSL service, which was less than 25 Mbps, wasn't fast enough to keep up with all of our internal and external communication, patient file uploads and downloads, and federally mandated information transmission."

The facility's analog phone system was established at a time when it was necessary for each patient to have his or her own dedicated phone line. However, since many patients now have their own cellular phones and do not require landlines, this system was no longer cost effective. Moreover, any time a new patient who did wish to have a landline was admitted, or an existing patient was changing rooms but wanted to keep the same phone number, a technician had to come to Suwannee to make the change.

The combination of slow or intermittent connectivity and an antiquated phone system would disrupt the flow of business as well as patient care. It became clear to administration that a faster, more reliable network with additional bandwidth and an updated, flexible voice solution would be needed to better support the facility's operations and accommodate its future growth.



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Solution: One High-Speed Network for Voice and Data

The administrator at Suwannee Nursing Home consulted with their longstanding provider Kinetic Business by Windstream, as they appreciated the strong relationship they had with the company and the superior service they always received. When planning Suwannee's future telecom solution, Kinetic Business had to address the need for faster, more reliable connectivity. They also recommended that Suwannee upgrade to a more modern, streamlined phone system that would allow for moves, adds, and changes to be performed by the facility's staff. It was essential for the solution to have the ability to accommodate future growth, as Suwannee was about to begin construction of a second building on the adjoining property.

Kinetic Business proposed a converged network solution, Dynamic IP, consisting of a fiber-optic connection with 100 Mbps symmetrical speeds to support both Internet and voice communications. With its new VoIP solution, all Suwannee administrative staff member desktops have a phone attached to an ethernet cord that runs to a single wall jack, with another cord running from the phone to the

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computer tower. Phones and computers connect to the fiber optic network through the same wall jack. Since the network connection provided by Kinetic Business dynamically allocates the bandwidth and prioritizes voice as needed, both voice and Internet connections are powered by a single

network without compromising voice quality even during simultaneous use. This claim is substantiated by reports from Suwannee that the voice quality on the VoIP technology is as good as or better than the analog system it replaced.

Future Benefits: Primed for Expansion

The new high-speed fiber-optic network is fully equipped to support Suwannee's daily operations and the requisite transmission of prescriptions to pharmacies and medical records to state agencies.

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Not only did staff and patients experience a smooth, one-day transition to the new network connection, but Suwannee is fully prepared to have its voice and data technology extended to the new 13,000 square foot building once it is completed. The fiber is already in place, and once the facility is ready, Suwannee will be all set for plug-and-play operation.

Another benefit of the updated solution is that as the facility's clientele of younger, more tech-savvy residents grows, it has enough bandwidth to support the additional tablets and smart phones they'll likely bring with them. As a result of the cost efficiencies provided by the single-network solution, Suwannee can now also offer in-room phone service as an extra amenity free of charge to those who request it, as opposed to passing those costs on to residents on the previous infrastructure.

"Aside from the reasonable up-front cost of procuring the new network, the ongoing expenses are on par with what we were paying before. When you compare the upgrade in service to what you're spending, it's head and shoulders better. It's a very worthwhile investment."

