Medical Foundation Enjoys Significant Cost Savings and Continued Access to Patient Data from Retired Legacy Systems Through Legacy Data Access

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Tom Colbert
VP of Information Technology and CIO, Sansum Clinic

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

✔ Located in Santa Barbara, California;

✔ Has provided service to the communities of Santa Barbara County for nearly 90 years;

✔ Sees an estimated 150,000 patients (500,000 visits) annually;

✔ Offers over 300 free health education classes and seminars each year on a range of health care issues.

CHALLENGE

✔ Easy, cost-effective and continued access to data from two legacy systems being retired.

SOLUTION

✔ Secure, Web-based access to its vast amount of retired data with significant cost savings.

BENEFITS

✔ Reduced capital expenses;

✔ Full, online access to data 24/7;

✔ No loss of data detail or integrity;

✔ Rapid deployment.

Nestled along the longest east-west trending section of coastline on the West Coast of the United States, Santa Barbara, California is often referred to as the 'American Riviera.' Only 92 miles north of Los Angeles, it is the largest city and the seat of Santa Barbara County. The county is known not only for its Mediterranean-like climate but also for its beautiful beaches, most of which lie along a unique south-facing stretch of coastline.

While visitors to the area enjoy the warm weather and ocean view, residents of Santa Barbara enjoy advanced and comprehensive care from Sansum Clinic, a non-profit medical foundation and the largest healthcare provider between Los Angeles and San Fransisco. Serving the communities of Santa Barbara County for nearly 90 years, Sansum provides patient care through over 150 staff physicians practicing more than 30 medical specialties at its multi-specialty and specialty clinics throughout the county. In addition, Sansum Clinic is the fourth largest private employer in Santa Barbara County.

CHALLENGE

Experiencing approximately a half million patient visits each year, Sansum Clinic houses a significant amount of patient data. The clinic had built two legacy systems to house this data, one a practice management system that had been running for 20 years and the

other a specialized claims system that had been running for ten. Although the clinic knew the two systems needed to be taken out of service and replaced with something more modern and advanced, they wanted to have continued access to the data from those systems and didn't want to host it themselves.

"We were looking for a solution that provided us with Web access to the data from our retiring systems and could be implemented fairly quickly," explained Tom Colbert, Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer for Sansum Clinic. "Our goal was to find a vendor that had experience with healthcare data, one that wasn't so big that they couldn't cater to our specific needs."

SOLUTION

Colbert found such a solution through Georgia-based Legacy Data Access (LDA), an IT services organization providing the healthcare industry's most comprehensive set of software tools for working with data from retired systems. The company stores legacy revenue management, clinical and ERP application data from systems that are being retired. Its LegacySuite application offers a comprehensive solution set of data storage, real-time Web access, receivables management and reporting capabilities for retired healthcare applications without the need for a conversion and allows the data to work for the facility with immediate savings and benefits and no loss of detail or integrity.

"LDA met all our criteria and was able to take a challenge from us and customize a creative solution accordingly," remarked Colbert. "Although we had some unusual data structures with our old systems, they dealt with those issues aggressively and successfully. Not only were they not afraid of dealing with many iterations of the same solution, they had no limit to the customization and worked with us until we were satisfied."

Through LDA, the team at Sansum Clinic is able to provide easy access to data from both retired systems while enjoying both vendor and internal support. The clinic has online access to its data 24/7 through a secure and encrypted Web application, where the staff can view records online, download them to a PC or print them through the Internet. Through the LegacySuite solution, Sansum Clinic has the ability to post adjustments, payments and notes to the corresponding account information and segregate off-loaded balances and transactions from LegacySuite balances and transactions for audit trail purposes.

RESULTS

In addition to freeing up resources in its IT department, LDA is saving Sansum Clinic approximately $400,000 per year between what they were paying to support the old systems and now being able to provide access to those systems from LDA. Staff members that would otherwise have been assigned to deal with the retired systems are now able to move on to other necessary tasks.

According to Colbert, "LDA offers a well-built, well-crafted yet simple solution. They were nimble and demonstrated that through being flexible in delivering a solution that was tailored to us. Although we haven't needed much support since the initial installation, the people at LDA are there when we need them - they're willing to do what they say they'll do. I've already recommended them to my peers in the healthcare industry. They really deliver."

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