



Cloud Computing Lifts IT Performance for Rural Hospitals

TruBridge Brings Scalability, Security, and Resiliency to Cloud Environments

From reducing the need for new hardware purchases, to expanding storage capacity, to streamlining management processes, the business value of cloud computing has only hit the tip of the iceberg.

The Relevant Role of Cloud Computing: A Deep Dive

In the healthcare space especially, cloud capability is being deployed to contain and control vast streams of data while fulfilling critical healthcare mandates. For instance, healthcare providers are transitioning to electronic health records (EHR) systems to demonstrate meaningful use or face reduced Medicare reimbursements. As a result, they have more electronic records and digital images to manage than ever before.

Rural and community hospitals' limited financial and personnel resources make cloud computing particularly appealing to this segment. On the whole, cloud computing is clearly in hot demand. According to a CIO.com survey, the number of healthcare companies using cloud technology has jumped to over 30% in the past year. ¹

According to a study conducted by Accenture, about 15% of U.S. health care systems are using cloud-based storage to support their medical imaging. ²

In this white paper, we will take a deeper dive into:

- **Specific challenges rural hospitals face**
- **Areas of concern for managing data growth and compliance**
- **Advantages that the cloud brings for rural hospitals**
- **TruBridge's cost-effective, secure cloud solution**

Delivering High Quality Patient Care with Limited Resources

The primary objective of a rural or community hospital is to ensure that patients' needs are met. Even with modern EHR systems in place, meeting that objective can be a daily struggle. Cost and management complexities of these systems can stunt the delivery of consistent, quality care. Moreover, these groups are tasked with overcoming management hurdles with a limited pool of qualified human resources.

Other common challenges that healthcare organizations face include:

- Regulatory and compliance requirements, especially security and privacy related issues
- Recurring capital expenses for hardware/technology upgrades
- Supporting effective DR/BC solutions

Rural hospitals are under more pressure than larger hospitals because of the size and scale of their operations. According to the American Health Association (AHA), these hospitals receive a higher percentage of Medicare patients since rural populations are older than average urban populations, with smallest hospitals having the lowest margins. ³ They also get the short end of the stick when it comes to government payments and funding. This means less capital and budget flexibility to update IT systems or add personnel.

Tackling Rapid Data Growth Head On

Despite the disadvantages that rural hospitals face with limited resources and funding, they must find a way to manage their growing data. Storage capacity looms as a major concern for organizations that are already maxed out. Reliable storage and backup is also critical to meet HITECH and data retention laws. Outdated hardware systems simply lack the scalability required to handle these storage demands.

Cloud offers an offsite path for simplifying storage and access of critical files of all types. By deploying the cloud to store critical data, rural and community hospitals can:

- Deliver solutions to strengthen privacy and security requirements
- Offload the architecture and management of these systems to industry experts
- Accelerate systems scalability
- Transfer CAPEX to OPEX
- Gain enterprise-class DR/BC

Meeting HIPPA and Meaningful Use Requirements Through the Cloud

While there is an urgent push to transfer physical paperwork and documentation to EHR systems, it's hardly an overnight endeavor. Rural hospitals have to spend valuable time to find the right EHR vendor, prepare their IT environments for conversion and implementation, and have their systems ready for upholding Meaningful Use requirements.

According to MedCity News, a dependable cloud service provider (CSP) can help organizations manage their records and prepare for deployment, all while meeting the proper security and regulation requirements.⁴ The right CSP will:

- Review all documentation and best practices pertaining to cloud security
- Place a strong emphasis on encryption and management of the encryption keys in the cloud
- Deliver a HIPPA complaint solution that is flexible and cost effective, with less effort

“*Healthcare providers are transitioning to electronic health records (EHR) systems to fall in line with HIPPA compliance, and as a result, they have more electronic records and digital images to manage than ever before.*”

SOURCES

¹ CIO.com: Healthcare IT in 2012. <http://www.cio.com/slideshow/detail/83055>
Wall Street Journal: "Where Do You Keep All Those Images?" <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323419104578374420820705296>

² Wall Street Journal: "Where Do You Keep All Those Images?" <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323419104578374420820705296>

³ American Health Association: Rural Health Care Issues. <http://www.aha.org/advocacy-issues/rural/index.shtml>

⁴ MedCity News: <http://medcitynews.com/2013/11/hipaa-compliance-cloud-qa/>

Building a Cloud Solution Around the Needs of Rural Hospitals

To attain the maximum cost, management, and storage benefits that the cloud brings, rural and community hospitals need an implementation partner that understands the healthcare industry and the challenges at hand.

TruBridge is a cloud managed services partner that works exclusively with the healthcare industry. We are deeply engrained in healthcare processes and procedures. From a security standpoint, we help you meet various compliance requirements for HIPPA, HITECH, and other regulatory bodies.

Backed by leading-edge IBM hardware—built on the backbone of IBM servers and storage—and our unique cloud-based services, hospitals and practices can lean on us for all of their cloud support needs. By backing up, hosting, and provisioning IT systems in our cloud, we are able to:

- **Reduce or eliminate** new capital spending on IT to optimize budgets
- **Simplify** regulatory compliance by providing secure, HIPPA-compliant repositories for privileged information
- **Leverage** an enterprise-class infrastructure for greater resilience, scalability, and flexibility
- **Hosting versatility** within the cloud for email servers, file servers, EHR Systems, and other systems
- **Ease management of systems**
- **Run daily system backups** with off-site storage for archived data
- **Provide** a complete, redundant environment for systems housed in enterprise class SOC 1 Type II data centers



**Want to learn more about
our Cloud Services?**

**Contact TruBridge to
learn more.**



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