

NEWS RELEASE 03/22/2021

Children's of Alabama Begins Next-Generation Healthcare Transformation with an Aruba ESP-Based Network

Leading Pediatric Medical Center Streamlines Operations, Saving up to 33% on Maintenance Costs, and Enables IoT with more than 100,000 Connected Devices

SANTA CLARA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company (NYSE: HPE), today announced that Children's of Alabama, ranked among the best pediatric medical centers in the nation by US News & World Report, is deploying an Aruba ESP (Edge Services Platform)-based network to further the transformation of its healthcare services. Using Aruba wireless, switching, management and security solutions, Children's of Alabama is implementing critical new capabilities that improve patient experiences, while streamlining operations and reducing costs.

Children's of Alabama provided care for children from every county in Alabama, 42 other states, and seven foreign countries last year, representing more than 677,000 outpatient visits and 15,000+ inpatient admissions. One of the largest pediatric facilities in the country, Children's operates a main campus of three million square feet, as well as 14 remote clinics, and is the primary site for the University of Alabama at Birmingham's pediatric medicine, surgery, psychiatry, research and residency programs.

Children's had previously used Cisco networking equipment but as the provider began evolving its patient care, moving to Epic for electronic health records (EHR), and adding services such as telemedicine and video-intensive care, remote operations for poison control and call centers, and location services and wayfinding for patient-facing applications, the IT team realized it needed a more secure and cost-effective solution that could grow with its needs. In addition, with more IoT, specialty medical, and mobile devices connecting to its network, Children's needed to determine how to both secure these devices and leverage their data to enable quicker decision-making, provide better care and services to patients, and adapt to the changing COVID-19 pandemic environment.

"Things move so much more quickly now, and our existing architecture really wasn't keeping up," said Children's of Alabama CIO, Bob Sarnecki. "We had Wi-Fi capability, but that's not the same as really delivering a solid mobile experience for things like video visits or for securely connecting the approximately 100,000 IoT devices on our

network such as workstations, IV pumps, beds and HVAC controls."

According to Sarnecki, the IT team had also embarked on an open architecture journey to allow staff to bring in their own devices – so long as they could be connected to the network securely – but this was becoming an increasingly difficult management challenge with their existing network. The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded these issues, causing Children's to accelerate initiatives for delivering healthcare services remotely.



"We can't really think in terms of physical locations anymore because our virtual presence has expanded significantly since COVID-19 started," said Sarnecki. "We need to be able to deliver healthcare securely, wherever and whenever it's needed."

These combined challenges led Sarnecki and his team to consult with partner, Layer 3 Communications, and ultimately, implement an Aruba network. Using Aruba Wi-Fi 6 Access Points (APs), Remote Access Points (RAPs), CX-Series Switches and ClearPass for both wired and wireless network access control, Children's has unified operations, management, and security, reducing maintenance costs by 25-33 percent as compared to its previous Cisco network. More importantly, the new network is enabling a host of

healthcare applications and services that allow Children's to elevate the quality of patient care.

"To manage a patient in a modern healthcare environment, we need a network that can support our EHR transformation, device tracking, patient tracking, IoT, remote medicine, wayfinding, and applications we may not even know of yet," Sarnecki commented.

The Aruba network is becoming central to enabling Children's telemedicine program – often the only means of delivering care during the pandemic. When COVID-19 hit, Children's immediately integrated Zoom into its scheduling applications, began sending patient notifications via text message, and fully integrated its clinical systems within just three weeks. Children's is now seeing about 150 patients each day via telemedicine and the network is vital to facilitating this service.

In addition, Aruba RAPs have enabled remote work for many of the staff at Children's. Employees of Children's Poison Control Center, which also services the entire state of Alabama, are using RAPs to connect their workstations, phones and headsets to the corporate network from their homes. Telephone triage, IT, and administrative staff are also using RAPs to work from home securely and efficiently, and the Children's heart clinic, located 200 miles from the main campus, is using them to connect physicians and staff to critical resources. Sarnecki noted that many of the contractors Children's employs for EHR work, who previously would have been onsite for two-year periods requiring hoteling and associated expenses, can now be assigned a RAP to conduct their work remotely, too.

As Children's continues to enhance patient care, the IT team is evaluating additional Aruba solutions that can help support the transformation. With location-ready Aruba APs already installed, IT is assessing wayfinding applications to help visitors and patients navigate their way through the facilities, allow quick and easy patient registration, and enable tracking of both patients and equipment throughout the hospital. They are also assessing User Experience Insight (UXI) for easier identification and remediation of network problems before they occur and to ensure an optimal user experience.

With its new infrastructure in place, Sarnecki is confident that he and his team can tackle their ambitious plans for continuing the medical center's transformation.

"With our Aruba network, we are building an architecture that will support state-of-the-art, 21st century healthcare," he said.



© Copyright 2020 Hewlett Packard Enterprise Development LP. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for Hewlett Packard Enterprise products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. Hewlett Packard Enterprise shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.