Sophisticated solution for a small hospital

Comanche County Medical Center takes advantage of secure, hosted MEDITECH solution to comply with regulatory requirements and improve disaster recovery.

**Business need**
A small IT staff at Comanche County Medical Center needed to upgrade and support the hospital’s MEDITECH system.

**Solution**
The organization chose the MSite MEDITECH Hosting Solution, a secure, private cloud that offers MEDITECH support and disaster recovery.

**Benefits**
- Simple migration to latest version of MEDITECH
- Improved patient data security through HIPAA-compliant private cloud
- More time for IT to focus on helping end users

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Ismelda Garza, CIO, Comanche County Medical Center

**Industry:** Healthcare  
**Country:** United States  
**Employees:** 300  
**Website:** comanchecmc.org
Supporting the IT infrastructure of a hospital is challenging enough. But when your IT department has only three people, the stress is off the charts. “We feel the weight of the hospital on our shoulders,” says Ismelda Garza, CIO of Comanche County Medical Center, a 25-bed critical-access hospital in Comanche, Texas. Garza and two other employees manage the center’s 30-plus IBM servers and critical applications on-site.

Perhaps the most stressful part of the small IT team’s work is supporting the hospital’s MEDITECH Healthcare Information System, used by more than 100 physicians, nurses and administrative staff every day. “Our MEDITECH system is a critical part of daily life at the hospital,” Garza says. “There is constant pressure to make sure it is always available so patient records can be accessed.” That pressure was compounded when Comanche needed to upgrade to the latest MEDITECH software version in order to demonstrate compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Meaningful Use Criteria. “We needed to implement MEDITECH’s Meaningful Use priority pack, which would require the purchase of additional servers to support it,” Garza says. “But with a small staff, it was exceedingly difficult to continue to implement, maintain and support more servers.”

Comanche also needed to consider the costs of adding more servers to its data center. “Costs are always a factor for a small critical-access hospital,” says Garza. “It was costing us a lot to keep the data center here, from power costs to refreshing outdated servers, and even the staff hours required to manage it all.” To solve the challenge of upgrading to the latest MEDITECH version and refreshing the organization’s existing MEDITECH servers, Comanche decided to explore the possibility of a hosted cloud-based solution.

### Comanche chooses a hosted private cloud solution

As it searched extensively for a managed solution, Comanche discovered the MSite MEDITECH Hosting Solution. With MSite, Dell hosts MEDITECH applications for customers in a secure, state-of-the-art private cloud while offering technical support and maintenance for a predictable monthly fee. “At the time, nobody else was offering a solution like that,” says Garza. “We liked the idea of having our MEDITECH servers managed for us, and knowing that our patient health information would be more secure made the decision to go with them an easy one.”

MSite also gives customers assistance in upgrading to the latest versions of the software, as well as disaster recovery capabilities. “The disaster recovery piece was an added bonus for us, because we were backing up data on tape, but we needed a more secure, off-site solution,” Garza says.

Comanche worked directly with Dell Services to set up the MSite solution and ensure that the hospital migrated smoothly to the latest MEDITECH version. “They were very helpful. There were only two of us on staff at the time, and we really relied on their expertise to get us where we needed to be,” says Garza.

Using MSite, Comanche has eliminated the upfront investment and continuing maintenance costs of running its MEDITECH platform onsite at the organization’s data center.
Cost-effective MEDITECH hosting and Meaningful Use compliance

Comanche was able to quickly and easily upgrade using the MSite solution. “It was so fast and easy for us to get onto the newest version of MEDITECH by going with MSite,” says Garza. “We couldn’t have implemented and supported it ourselves as efficiently, with just three people on staff. And we didn’t need to deploy several new servers, which saves us money.”

By migrating to the new MEDITECH will be able to show Meaningful Use compliance. “We are required to demonstrate Meaningful Use, and in order to help achieve that we had to upgrade to MEDITECH’s current priority pack,” says Garza. “MSite made that move simple. My staff and I were not as involved in the upgrade as we had been before MSite.”

Better system security and more time to help end users

Because Comanche no longer needs to manage and maintain internal MEDITECH servers, the small IT staff can offer more assistance to end users. “We don’t have to worry about uptime or server maintenance for MEDITECH anymore,” says Garza. “Now we can focus on building MEDITECH applications and making them better for our users, as well as completing other important projects.”

The hospital has also improved security, because MSite is a HIPAA-certified private cloud. “It’s critical that our MEDITECH data is safe and secure, because we’re dealing with confidential patient health records, and we need to comply with HIPAA regulations,” says Garza. “Having our data in the cloud with MSite gives us that security.”

A complete solution in the cloud

Comanche now has the business continuity it needs, with the help of the MSite solution’s hosted backup and recovery capabilities. “Our MEDITECH backups were not happening daily before MSite, and when they were getting backed up, I wasn’t always sure they were making it off-site,” says Garza. “That kept me awake at night, worrying about the loss of patient data if a catastrophic event occurred and hit our data center. Now, I sleep better knowing that MSite is backing it all up for us and the data is off-site.”

The hospital was confident enough in MSite to move its picture archiving and communication system (PACS) for radiology images to the Cloud Clinical Archive. “Even though we’re a small, rural hospital, we now have the same level of sophistication as much larger hospitals by using cloud solutions,” says Garza.

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