

The Organization

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The Solution

A SonicWALL VPN links all of the SonicWALL network security appliances, mostly SonicWALL TZ 170s, and Internet access routers via encrypted tunnels to two SonicWALL PRO 4060 network security appliances. Healthlink also uses SonicWALL's Global Management System (GMS) software to manage all SonicWALL appliances.

The Results

- High-performance, low-cost VPN connectivity for secure, reliable and fast access to scheduling, billing and treatment information.
- Reliable connectivity, optimal up-time ensured via redundant data centre environments that provide fail-proof backup at all times.
- System management costs have been significantly reduced by deploying SonicWALL GMS to centrally and remotely manage hundreds of medical sites.

SonicWALL Solution Enables the Secure, Rapid and Cost Effective Exchange of Highly Sensitive Data for the Health Sector in Australasia.

Established in 1996, HealthLink Ltd is a specialist provider of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) services for the health sector in Australasia which is quickly becoming one of the largest and fastest growing health sector networks in the world.

This software messaging service is used for reporting pathology and radiology results, administering payments to physicians, managing health insurance claims, offering sophisticated disease management programmes and surveillance as well as screening programmes and notifiable disease reporting.

Currently HealthLink's system handles more than 50,000,000 healthcare messages annually and it is used daily by 4,000 health sector organisations in Australia and 3,500 medical practices in New Zealand.

Healthlink is also a key provider of secure VPN connections to government resources via a private network known as the New Zealand Health Network. This network is governed by New Zealand's health regulator - the Ministry of Health and HealthLink is one of only two approved network providers who are authorized to connect medical organisations to this secure network. Given the highly sensitive nature of the data traveling within these networks, around-the-clock security is critically important. Healthlink has worked with SonicWALL® to develop and implement a network security solution that is wholly secure, scalable and able to optimize the network's uptime.

Linking Health Providers through a Secure Network

A SonicWALL VPN links all of the health providers in a secure and redundant environment to a central point where customers access the resources they require. SonicWALL network security appliances, mostly SonicWALL TZ 170s, and Internet access routers have been installed in each medical site and all of these security devices connect via encrypted VPN tunnels to two SonicWALL PRO 4060 network security appliances. This remote backup safeguards the network and guarantees optimal uptime, providing load balancing and hardware failover functionality.

Layered into this offering is the option of SonicWALL specialist services for complete gateway anti-virus, anti-spyware and intrusion prevention which collectively provide the highest level of protection possible from threats and intrusions. Regular updates are automatically downloaded and installed throughout the managed network. Security policies are enforced on an individual and group basis over encrypted VPN tunnels to ensure high levels of security for the customer.

HealthLink Ltd Customer Case Study

"It is far less costly and far more efficient for these health providers to have a specialist provider like HealthLink manage their network security as we have built our business around providing this type of specialist service to the health industry",

— Tom Bowden, CEO
HealthLink Ltd.

Increasing Productivity and Profitability

Standard to this solution is HealthLink's ability to act as a managed security service provider, managing all of the SonicWALL network security appliances and related security services on behalf of its health providers.

Using the unique SonicWALL Global Management System (GMS) software HealthLink manages all of the firewall/VPN appliances in this extensive network. Using the Web-based reporting tools the healthcare providers can easily meet mandatory Government reporting requirements regarding firewall attacks, bandwidth usage and user activity. At the same time HealthLink ensures the integrity and security of the network as it can easily deploy regular security service updates throughout the VPN.

Transferring Highly Sensitive Data Rapidly and Securely

Not only do health providers have the peace of mind that highly sensitive patient data is exchanged securely and rapidly throughout the network, but they can enjoy considerable cost savings as they no longer need to employ the administrative support they historically relied on to manage data exchange in a paper based environment. Importantly, as the data service is so easy-to-use it has made non-technology savvy practitioners' working lives simpler rather than adding complexity.

"Health providers can now exchange data with government organisations over a secure connection, from work or home, transferring data that previously used slower, less secure communication methods in the matter of seconds - it's that fast and efficient," says Bowden.

As he explains, in the past a Special Authority request would typically take one to two weeks to process. Now with the SonicWALL solution in place it takes less than 30 seconds. This enables doctors to be able to provide information to patients at the time of consultation, rather than somewhat further down the track, which naturally creates enormous efficiencies within the health industry.

Finally, the health providers using this service are reassured that as more and more data is made available electronically they need not worry about its security for they know they are using a highly reliable, secure system that will help them grow their businesses.

The SonicWALL Partnership

Thanks to the popularity of this service HealthLink Ltd is expanding rapidly throughout New Zealand and Australia and plans to expand further to become a global player in the field of health sector information management.

SonicWALL Benefits

- SonicWALL's VPN-enabled network security appliances enable fast, secure, highly available remote access to the network, ensuring secure exchange of confidential patient information and medical records.
- Scalability provides a secure, highly scalable infrastructure that enables the health provider to grow rapidly and cost effectively.
- Broadband connectivity enables seamless access to the network, improves network performance and critical data exchange, ensuring maximum uptime and dramatically improves patient service levels.
- SonicWALL's GMS provides central management and monitoring and includes ViewPoint graphical reporting to turn log files into meaningful reports.

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