

# Virginia Hospital Center

## E-MAIL SECURITY

## Virginia Hospital Center Case Study

### The Organization

Virginia Hospital Center

### The Challenge

Deploy an e-mail security solution that allows the open communications between patients and care givers via e-mail and blocks harmful e-mail inbound threats.

### The SonicWALL Solution

SonicWALL Email Security providing protection against inbound and outbound e-mail threats.

### The Results

- Effectiveness reported at 98 percent, with close to 100 percent filtering accuracy
- Positive user experience, with thank you notes sent to the IT team
- Hundreds of viruses caught each month—viruses that slipped past primary AV protections
- E-mail security management time is minimal, and help desk calls have ceased

### Diagnosing and Immunizing Against Unwanted E-mail

In addition to providing exceptional care, Virginia Hospital Center strives to be among the top medical facilities in the U.S. for patient satisfaction. The hospital strongly believes improvement comes from listening to what patients have to say. The administration encourages an ongoing dialogue between patients and its 2,000 employees, including using e-mail.

The emphasis on e-mail communication led to many improvements, but it also resulted in an overwhelming amount of dangerous and costly e-mail threats—with thousands of unwanted e-mails coming in each day. “Our staff’s e-mail addresses are public, so we are frequently bombarded with unwanted e-mail, like spam, directory harvest attacks and viruses. These days, phishing e-mails are also a nightmare,” according to Deirdre Mullaly, director of IT customer service for Virginia Hospital Center.

Virginia Hospital Center faces unique challenges in blocking unwanted e-mail. Given the nature of hospital communications, using straight keyword filtering doesn’t work. For example, it isn’t feasible to block keywords like “teen sex”, “Cialis” and “Viagra” for spam protection, since this could prevent important patient-related e-mails from getting through to the medical staff.

Perhaps a greater concern for Mullaly and her team are phishing e-mail and viruses. “It is all about corporate liability and protecting our patients. We’ve developed intrusion barriers to protect vital systems and patient records, but e-mail is a challenge for security,” says Mullaly. The hospital has a sophisticated border protection architecture, but needed integrated e-mail protection to block unwanted e-mail, as well as to reinforce their anti-virus system.

“We had to stop the onslaught of dangerous e-mail. We also wanted to give our users more control and responsibility for their inboxes in order to free up IT for critical patient-care technology projects,” notes Mullaly.

### Quarantine with User-friendly Controls

The hospital’s IT team searched for a software system providing end-user controls, as well as effective, integrated e-mail protection. According to Mullaly, “New e-mail threats are constantly emerging and senders are doing everything possible to pass through e-mail protections, so we need to block both existing and emerging e-mail security threats.”



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*"From installation to operation SonicWALL Email Security has been exceptional—it has pleased even our most difficult users,"*

*—Deirdre Mullaly,  
director of IT customer service  
for Virginia Hospital Center*

Virginia Hospital Center evaluated a number of products, but often found the user experience and interface unsatisfactory, as well as feeling that some products compromised in areas of protection. After an evaluation of competitive products, the hospital selected SonicWALL Email Security for its effective protection against spam, phishing, directory harvest attacks and viruses. "During the evaluation of SonicWALL, the hospital gathered its vice presidents for a focus group, and the resounding opinion was SonicWALL's interface was intuitive and easiest to use. SonicWALL Email Security also stood out for its integrated e-mail security approach," Mullaly recalls.

SonicWALL Email Security easily integrated with the hospital's e-mail infrastructure through Active Directory. "While ease-of-use for employees was important, we also wanted something that was also easy to administer. The SonicWALL implementation was smooth—it is the simplest product in the world to install. We also hardly spend any time managing it," explains Mullaly.

### Clear Bill of Health for IT and Staff

Virginia Hospital Center did not require employees to use SonicWALL Email Security, but offered it as an option—part of their user control objective. Very quickly word spread about SonicWALL's effectiveness and ease-of-use, and within no time all 2,000 employees signed up.

Virginia Hospital Center's help desk used to receive three to five calls a day on spam-related problems. With close to 50% of incoming e-mail as spam, employees are very pleased with the effectiveness and usability of SonicWALL Email Security. "Our help desk doesn't receive calls about spam anymore," adds Mullaly.

Instead of help desk calls, busy medical staff started sending thank you notes to the IT team praising the effectiveness of SonicWALL. "A lot of employees have positive things to say about SonicWALL. We've been getting notes every day from users thanking us for finding this product. Our IT team never gets unsolicited praise from the staff—these thank you letters are a first," notes Mullaly.

According to Donna Knisely, a registered nurse with Virginia Hospital Center, in her note to the IT team, "I am a happy camper now! I kept forwarding stuff to IT asking to have various spammers blocked. I know this is a thankless task as the spam senders are so sneaky, and it is hard to set up blocks that don't catch the legitimate stuff. SonicWALL Email Security is catching the spam. Thanks!"

Above all, Mullaly is most pleased with SonicWALL's effectiveness. "SonicWALL Email Security provided us with the most complete solution for blocking existing e-mail threats, and protecting us against new ones. SonicWALL has been exceptional from implementation through our day-to-day use."

### SonicWALL Benefits

High performance and easy-to-use e-mail security solution

End-user spam management allows easy delegation of spam management to end users, decreasing the number of false positives and reducing the load on IT

Highest level of spam protection enabled via an award-winning anti-spam engine and end-to-end attack monitoring

Protection from identity theft with the only solution that uniquely identifies phishing e-mails and lets administrators handle them separately

Rapid installation and centralized management drastically reduce the burden on IT departments

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