



“Technology plays a critical role in a health business, but it needs to be utterly reliable from behind the scenes. The Fortinet and Acurus solution now gives us a service that is reliable, and faster for staff so that we can provide the quality service our patients need.”

– Dr Khaled El-Sheikh, CEO, Tristar Medical Group



Acurus and Fortinet safeguard the health of Tristar Medical Group

Infrastructure and security project keeps 35 health practices in Victoria and New South Wales running smoothly and securely

Background

From humble beginnings, and with headquarters in Mildura, Victoria, Tristar Medical Group was established to ensure that high quality, accessible and affordable medical services would always be available to regional and rural communities. The organisation has grown to provide modern facilities and professional service at 35 medical centres and over 200 doctors across Victoria and New South Wales servicing thousands of patients.

Understanding that health matters are often urgent and unplanned, the company prides itself on the ability for patients to make an appointment at short notice.

Challenge

Some 18 months ago, performance issues with the company’s infrastructure allowing each practice to schedule appointments and assign doctors efficiently meant that Tristar was struggling to run its operations smoothly – which impacted each of its 35 locations, and its patients.

Tristar Medical Group

Industry: Health Care

Challenges

- Stable and reliable network infrastructure for smooth operation
- Have a safeguard against the application-level threats to protect data such as patients’ records

Objectives

- Extend wireless scanning capabilities across facility
- Ensure trouble-free, low overhead operations
- Provide a platform for further growth

Benefits

- Ensures that Tristar can provide quality service to patients in a timely manner
- 99.9% improvement in network uptime across all 35 medical clinics
- 40% cost savings per annum over and above legacy system
- 50% reduction in unwanted traffic across the network

Deployment

- FortiGate-200B
- FortiGate-60CX
- Consulting and monitoring services provided by Acurus

Staff members would be unable to view appointments, or see where doctors were at any given time, and would have to resort to a labour-intensive and error-prone paper system. When this occurred, clinics would be unable to function effectively and this would be frustrating for both staff and patients.

“Patient health is the very reason we exist, however, without support behind the scenes from technology that allows our practice managers, receptionists, doctors and nurses to do their job effectively, people suffer,” said Dr Khaled El-Sheikh, CEO at Tristar Medical Group. “We sought to rectify this by working with a new technology partner.”

Solution

The company went to tender for both a hosted infrastructure service and a national managed wide area network (WAN). It chose IT consultancy, Acurus, on account of its expertise, its technology partnerships and specialism in the health sector.

For the health sector, security is always a primary consideration – patient records must remain secure. Acurus recommended Fortinet solutions to protect Tristar’s network content and safeguard against application-level threats via its antivirus, antispyware and firewall features. The Fortinet technology also provides integrated multi-threat protection across all sites in the network without sacrificing on performance, which is important with Tristar’s geographically disparate set-up.

After winning the tender, Acurus moved Tristar’s infrastructure onto its own cloud service platform and installed Fortinet’s security appliance FortiGate-60CX and a Cluster FortiGate-200B across all clinics.

New levels of performance and operational insight

In addition, thanks to Fortinet’s support for sFlow, the industry standard for monitoring high-speed switched networks, Acurus was able to install a web and mobile phone monitoring system to give Tristar’s internal IT department visibility into the performance of each clinic. This allows Tristar to detect any under-performing sites and identify the cause of the problem.

Tristar now has a superior range of security technologies. The FortiGate-60CX integrates firewall, IPSec and SSL VPN, antivirus, antispyware, intrusion prevention and web filtering into a single device. It also includes features such as data loss prevention and vulnerability management, essential for patient information. The WAN runs on DSL with auto-fail over to 4G wireless.

Success

Since deploying the Fortinet and Acurus solution, Tristar has experienced a dramatic improvement of 99.9% uptime per cent across all its clinics, and thanks to the WAN optimisation technology available on the FortiGate-60CX, network traffic has been reduced by up to 50 per cent.

This has resulted in a much faster and more reliable experience for staff members, doctors and patients. The custom FortiASIC processors have maximised throughput while blocking unauthorised access and eliminating unwanted traffic from the network.

Thanks to the Acurus monitoring service, Tristar now has excellent visibility of performance across all its clinics ensuring issues can be addressed in a timely manner. In addition, ongoing support means Tristar can work closely with Acurus to continually make improvements to its service. Overall, the new system provides a 40% cost saving per annum from its previous solution.

However, most critically, Tristar can run its head office and 35 practices efficiently, ensuring patients get help as and when they need to, with all records maintained securely.

El-Sheikh continued, “Technology plays a critical role in a health business, but it needs to be utterly reliable from behind the scenes. The Fortinet and Acurus solution now gives us a service that is reliable, and faster for staff so that we can provide the quality service our patients need. It means we can focus our energy on how we can further improve on our patient service across regional and rural Australia.”



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