FORTINET

CASE STUDY

Medical Benefits Provider Safeguards Member Data While Maintaining Network Integrity and Availability

UNITE HERE Health provides medical benefits to unionized hotel, casino, and restaurant workers throughout the country, covering over 200,000 members and their families. The organization also is a direct healthcare provider with a state-of-the-art health center—including radiology, dentistry, optometry, and pediatrics—and three health clinics located in Las Vegas, where it has a concentration of members.

Gearing Up for Growth

To facilitate the delivery of its services and benefits, UNITE HERE Health operates two data centers and relies on a number of mission-critical cloud-based applications. To support the company's 500 employees, the IT department has deployed over 2,000 endpoints, including laptops, desktops, thin clients, and Voice-over-IP (VoIP) phones.

Following a period of rapid expansion—involving the addition of personnel, offices, and clinics—UNITE HERE Health embarked on a project to create an infrastructure capable of sustaining the growth. The initiative also encompassed a redesign of the company's security architecture to enhance protection and enable full compliance with both healthcare and finance-related regulations, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), protection of members' personally identifiable information (PII), and the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS).

Latecomer Takes the Prize

The UNITE HERE Health team focused on identifying core components of the new infrastructure. Odoric "OD" Wilson, senior security architect for UNITE HERE Health, expounds, "For me, selecting the optimal firewall is absolutely critical: If you make the wrong choice, you can easily leave yourself exposed and potentially compromise the integrity or availability of the entire network. The impact can be significant."

Having determined the necessary security features for evaluating firewall candidates, the team ran into an unexpected snag. "We did a bake-off between firewalls from a variety of vendors. Despite having the right functionality, we discovered that when the full set of threat protection features were turned on, all the devices being tested struggled to maintain the advertised throughput. The impact on our network would have been totally unacceptable," recounts Wilson.

UNITE HERE HEALTH

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Details

Customer: UNITE HERE Health

Industry: Healthcare

Location: Aurora, Illinois

Business Impact

- Enterprise-grade protection across entire infrastructure

- Compelling price performance for industry-leading solutions

- Widespread positive impact on internal efficiencies

- Enhanced security posture and expedited remediation

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The evaluation process was almost complete when Wilson was approached by Fortinet. "The Fortinet sales rep provided a FortiGate and told us to 'turn everything on,' so we activated every possible feature—including data loss prevention, web filtering, application control, antivirus, and intrusion prevention—and there was absolutely no impact on performance," enthuses Wilson. "I was not previously familiar with the FortiGate, but I quickly became a big fan. The decision to move forward with Fortinet was an easy one."

Breadth of Range, Depth of Features

The breadth of the FortiGate range was another attractive factor for UNITE HERE Health, enabling an appropriately sized firewall model to be deployed at various locations. After implementation, the organization began leveraging the FortiGate traffic-shaping functionality to manage network throughput. "We have an overall cap on web browsing, for example, and we use the FortiGate to prioritize VoIP calls and other critical traffic flows," Wilson observes.

The ability of the FortiGate to create individual network segments has been leveraged to prevent the spread of threats and to isolate sensitive data and applications, such as those involved in handling or storing credit card information. "We've been able to dramatically reduce the scope and complexity of the PCI data security audits just by restricting access," notes Wilson.

Success Follows Success

The resounding success of the FortiGate implementation inspired the team to test and deploy additional Fortinet solutions: FortiWAN for improved network load balancing, FortiWeb for high-performance cloud application security, FortiClient to ensure the security of the companywide bring-your-own-device (BYOD) project, and FortiAuthenticator for single-sign-on policies and corporate Wi-Fi.

Wilson also added the Fortinet FortiSandbox: "We wanted to remain in front of zero-day attacks. Being in healthcare, we know that we're the target of a lot of ransomware and other attacks, and the FortiSandbox enables the blocking and safe investigation of suspicious items," Wilson explains. "It does this at a significantly lower price point than any of its competition."

UNITE HERE Health uses FortiSIEM for security information and event management. Integrated with all of the other Fortinet solutions, it also communicates with non-Fortinet devices to provide a single-pane-of-glass view across the entire infrastructure.

UNITE HERE Health also leverages FortiManager to simultaneously push upgrades to all of its FortiGates, and FortiAnalyzer was deployed to provide added visibility into network traffic patterns. "The two solutions have been great for troubleshooting and maintenance: We can easily drill down into a problem and quickly address anything that needs attention," Wilson comments.

The Power of the Fortinet Security Fabric

UNITE HERE Health recently experienced a 19-hour-long email attack, followed by a second wave launched by the same perpetrators. It was an automated, distributed attack originating from over 30 countries and 500 different IP addresses, targeting 100 employee mailboxes. "This was a significant incident, and our Fortinet defenses stopped everything very effectively," Wilson emphasizes. "It was an impressive demonstration of the layered protection we have in place."

He continues, "Under the Fortinet Security Fabric, all of our security solutions talk and play very nicely together. I can have six different solutions, but if they don't integrate effectively, it just doesn't work. The Fortinet Security Fabric acts like a single organism!"

Solutions

- FortiGate
- FortiWAN
- FortiWeb
- FortiClient
- FortiAuthenticator
- FortiSandbox
- FortiSIEM
- FortiAnalyzer
- FortiManager

"The Fortinet Security Fabric acts like a single organism!"

– Odoric Wilson, Senior Security Architect, UNITE HERE Health

"Fortinet gives us enterprise-grade protection. The solutions are always scalable and well-integrated. As we've seen throughout our testing and deployment, Fortinet is formidable."

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The comprehensive functionality and protection across the Security Fabric has yielded additional benefits, including the ability for developers to utilize the features instead of having them hard-coded into an application. "We can frequently use the capabilities of our Fortinet solutions to add features or to fulfill new compliance requirements rather than having to wait for the programmers to revise their code. This makes us much quicker to respond and a lot more efficient," reports Wilson.

Fortinet Proves Its Value

Wilson and his colleagues take pride in the discipline and rigor that they bring to the selection of each component in the widespread UNITE HERE Health environment, sometimes conducting onsite analyses that span multiple months. The purchase of a large number of Fortinet solutions is the result of in-depth evaluations involving detailed comparisons of products from other prominent vendors.

"Every single Fortinet product we own has absolutely earned the right to be here. Fortinet gives us enterprise-grade protection," concludes Wilson. "The solutions are always scalable and well-integrated. The support we've received has been great and the pricing typically very compelling. As we've seen throughout our testing and deployment, Fortinet is formidable."

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