

# Cherry Street Health Services Gets a Helping Hand From Remex Systems Group



*Above: CSHS provides health-care to many in the greater Grand Rapids area.*

*Left: A happy CSHS patient.*

## **Challenges Faced by one West Michigan Care Center Confirms It: Managing a Large Healthcare System Requires a Strong Technology Partner.**

When Cherry Street Health Services (CSHS) makes a decision to use a strategic partner, it is about more than just outsourcing. The partner organization must understand, embrace and enhance the organization's mission and objectives. CSHS found such a partner in the Remex Systems Group.

Cherry Street Health Services (CSHS) is a non-profit organization committed to providing accessible primary health services to individuals and families. The organization helps meet physical, psychological and social needs of its clients by promoting health maintenance and prevention, and offering diagnostic treatment and referrals in the greater Grand Rapids area. Services span the spectrum of routine physicals and dental appointments to psychological counseling.

CSHS has ten community locations from which its large staff and volunteers operate. It is quite a daunting task from an information system management standpoint, and one of the biggest – and most vital – challenges for CSHS is to keep track of charts, medical records and correspondence.

## **Striving for Centralized Operations**

Historically, CSHS used four mainstream Windows NT™ network servers and one Citrix™ remote application server to host its technology. Users operated on several locally-run versions of core applications. Virtually all of the information technology management was accomplished through hands-on processes, which were both time consuming and difficult to facilitate.

“My task of managing many different locations and user stations became increasingly difficult,” said Yehia Nile, information systems manager for CSHS. “We needed a solution that would be easy to update, homogeneous and centralized.”

In order to meet the increasing demands of the organization's internal systems and processes, CSHS had to increase its number of servers and mainstream its network. Central access to uniform applications had to be provided to every user on the network. CSHS also wanted a more efficient and secure system for back-up and disaster recovery.

To accomplish these objectives, CSHS turned to the Remex Systems Group.

## **A Streamlined Solution**

CSHS needed Remex Systems Group to develop a solution that would not only accomplish the

objectives, but also provide room for future growth. After a thorough analysis of the CSHS infrastructure and IT operations, Remex Systems Group proposed a comprehensive upgrade that would accomplish this.

First, ten additional servers were installed to replace the current IT server network. Second, dedicated servers for file and print, backup, exchange (E-mail) functions, and four Citrix Metaframe XP™ remote application servers were added.

Third, Remex Systems Group centralized help desk and desktop management operations through the use of Altiris's Helpdesk™ and Client Management Solutions™. The help desk application allows users to write up a service request ticket for network and software issues. The new help desk and client management system lend support to CSHS's staff, which is responsible for IT management, troubleshooting and user training. Citrix's remote application server provides a uniform base for all CSHS's core applications and centralizes many of its user services such as printing, application, and desktop configurations.

Fourth, to ensure data integrity and provide disaster recovery, Remex Systems Group installed a dedicated, automated tape back-up system. Prior to the upgrade, CSHS performed these back-ups manually.

Finally, Remex Systems Group enhanced network security by adding a server for spam, internet filtering and email virus detection.

#### **Getting By With a Little Help from My Friends**

Remex Systems Group Engineer Jeff Ball and his colleagues worked closely with CSHS's Yehia Nile on the three-month project.

"Because it has a small technology staff, CSHS needed a team that could support them both externally and internally," said Ball. "We supported them internally when we analyzed their network, updated and centralized their operations, and brought in newer, more capable versions to replace older versions of Exchange, Citrix, Windows, file servers, Altiris and the safer, more efficient tape back-up system."

Remex Systems Group supported CSHS externally by providing support to its technical staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And this was perhaps the most important part of the project for Nile.

"Remex has honestly made my job a lot easier," Nile said. "I have someone I can trust, who knows all about Cherry Street, to handle my network administration if I can't be reached. Our employees know to call Remex if they run into a problem when I am not there. My relationship began with Remex Systems Group as a customer. I now consider it to be much more than that – they are my friends."

With CSHS's upgraded and centralized technology, the organization is running very smooth from an IT standpoint. And in today's day and age, it is very important to CSHS to have a strong partner that will lend support at *any* time.

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