

NetMotion Mobility Helps Puget Sound Blood Center Collect Precious Blood Components for Patients in Need

Workers Gain Uninterrupted Access to Mission-Critical Database

Following an extensive evaluation, the Puget Sound Blood Center selected NetMotion Wireless Mobility® to provide its mobile blood drive workers with a reliable, uninterrupted connection to the organization’s mission-critical Blood Establishment Computer System (BECS).

For several years PSBC has used Mobility – the leading platform for improving productivity, security and control of a mobile workforce – on many of its 350 corporate laptops while others were equipped with another product from Citrix. After evaluating the two solutions side-by-side in both mobile and office settings, the PSBC team found that Citrix users reported regular connectivity problems while Mobility users did not. As a result, the Washington state-based not-for-profit decided to adopt the more dependable Mobility across their enterprise. The full-scale rollout planned for 2014 includes laptops, tablets and handheld scanners.

Seeking Strong Connections

PSBC’s 14 mobile blood drive units are constantly canvassing the Seattle metropolitan area for life-saving blood donors. However, not all donations can be accepted. For instance, if potential donors have given blood recently, they may not be eligible to donate again so soon. Before they can accept a donation, mobile blood drive workers must access the organization’s BECS, and perform a database query to determine if a donor is an approved candidate.

Having dependable, uninterrupted connectivity is a must in order to perform this process as efficiently as possible. A lost connection means having to log back in and start the process all over again - a tedious waste of work-hours that often translates into time not spent collecting precious pints of life-saving blood.

“If we don’t have the connection, we can’t access that donor record information, causing delays or wasting critical time for our donors and staff,” said Tony Sheehan, Network Services Manager at PSBC.

Testing two of the market’s most popular connectivity solutions, the organization gained the confidence and motivation to standardize on the more successful solution.

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Puget Sound Blood Center

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ORGANIZATION

Puget Sound Blood Center

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure uninterrupted mobile connectivity
- Improve efficiency of mobile blood drive units
- Standardize connectivity solution across enterprise

SOLUTION

- NetMotion Mobility®

RESULTS

- Quicker blood donor approval process
- Ease of use
- Instant connectivity requiring minimal user interaction
- Ability to securely limit access to sensitive health data
- Significant reduction in help desk calls

Standardizing on the Top Performer

Mobility provides PSBC with a secure and reliable mobile VPN tunnel that ensures workers always stay linked to the BECS. Even in cellular or Wi-Fi dead zones, the solution will temporarily pause any active mobile applications rather than disconnect them. And when laptops are closed and reopened, the connection is immediately reestablished without the user having to do anything.

The reliability and persistence of the connection provided by Mobility stood in stark contrast to that experienced by those PSBC workers who relied on the Citrix product.

“There was really no contest between the two solutions,” added Sheehan.

“Mobility showed it was far and away the better solution for workers that need to get and stay connected from wherever it is they are working.” As a result, the team decided to roll out Mobility to the entire PSBC workforce. And not just mobile workers, but the growing number of office staff who often bring their laptops on the road or home with them.

Sheehan noted that an increasing number of complaints from employees who found it difficult to connect from home using the Citrix solution solidified their selection of Mobility. In particular, he would hear that laptops would routinely disconnect from one of the organization’s central, shared Map drives.

“There’s a certain amount of bandwidth that is required to maintain a Map drive over Citrix,” said Sheehan. “That was causing a huge problem because while workers have the bandwidth at the main office, they might not have that level of bandwidth at home to allow it to work. No one’s ever lost a Map drive working at home using NetMotion, no matter how fast or slow the connection was.”

In addition to laptops, blood drive workers also use tablets to create donor-specific labels that are affixed to a patient’s sample and paperwork. Handheld scanners are then used to verify that these items correlate to the correct donor. Both these devices require a constant connection to the BECS and thus will be part of this new full-scale implementation.

Mobility has made a huge difference in the usability of the organization’s handhelds and reduced the workload of the IT staff. Previously, when a connection was disrupted, an oversized “error” message would appear on the device’s tiny screen, obscuring the instructions for how to reconnect. “Mobility has flat out stopped this type of help desk call, which could take as long as 30 minutes to resolve,” said Sheehan.

Achieving a Healthier Mobile Network

The move to standardize on Mobility promises several significant benefits for PSBC. First and foremost, having a single, enterprise-wide solution will simplify the task of managing and administering the company’s mobile workforce and provide users with consistency. Sheehan noted that standardization is a key component of PSBC’s “5S Methodology” of IT management.

Ease of use is another big plus. “Workers that previously used Citrix have found their Mobility devices are much easier to connect to the network when they’re off-site,” added Sheehan. “I use it at home all the time and find it to be so effortless. I can open up my laptop and it automatically connects to the network and I didn’t do anything.”

Mobility also comes with built-in security features that allow IT or central management to selectively control which employees have access to sensitive health data. Such protections are necessary in order to ensure that the PSBC is in full compliance with the privacy policies of both HIPAA and the FDA.

Mobility allows PSBC to focus on its mission of collecting life-saving blood donations and stop worrying about how to keep its workforce connected.

Learn More

For more information, or to read more NetMotion Wireless case studies please visit www.netmotionwireless.com

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