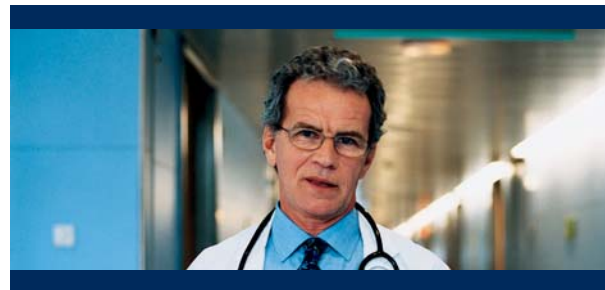


Health-benefits provider shields data and drives process efficiencies with HP StorageWorks platform

Atlantic Blue Cross Care / Medavie Inc.



"We leverage IT to grow the business, and we must be able to respond to business initiatives. HP helped us become a more Adaptive Enterprise so that our IT supply and storage capabilities meet business demand."

– Don McPhee, Director – Technical Services, Atlantic Blue Cross Care

Business need:

Atlantic Blue Cross Care provides personal health benefits coverage to individuals and families in Atlantic Canada. A merger and acquisition significantly increased the company's data load and added another data center. Atlantic Blue Cross Care wanted to consolidate its storage systems – while maintaining quality standards, regulatory compliance, service-level agreements, and cost controls. An overall business continuity strategy, with centralized storage, would satisfy these objectives and accommodate future growth.

Solution overview:

Atlantic Blue Cross Care consolidated its data and applications on HP StorageWorks 5000 Enterprise Virtual Array systems. The solution enables the company to unify storage into a common virtual pool and effortlessly generate virtual RAID volumes in response to application needs. The platform also includes HP servers, services, and storage-management applications.

HP storage secures expanding data

New Brunswick, Canada-based Atlantic Blue Cross Care offers health, dental, vision care, and prescription-drug programs. However, its business extends beyond insurance. This not-for-profit company is also a technology-driven, application service provider (ASP) to the Canadian government, regional Blue Cross organizations, and third-party insurance companies. Therefore, the company invests 20 percent of its operating budget into technology. Atlantic Blue Cross Care uses technology to attract more insurance services and claims-processing volumes, and this strategy ultimately pays for its information systems.

"Technology is a tool we use extensively to deliver exceptional service to customers and partners in the health care industry," says Don McPhee, Technical Services Director, Atlantic Blue Cross Care. "Our IT systems become more economical when we drive more claims processing into them and, as our costs drop, we stay ahead of our competitors."

Staying ahead can be tough in a competitive industry that is fluctuating due to mergers and acquisitions. Atlantic Blue Cross Care's recent unification brought new business, but it also increased the demand for services. "We are currently negotiating a strategic partnership that may also cause spikes in demand," says McPhee. "We face a balancing act: support growth cost effectively, while advancing our IT standardization and consolidation initiatives."



McPhee and his staff sought to support these priorities by implementing a storage strategy that delivers efficiency, scalability, performance, redundancy, and disaster recovery in case of a site failure. "We save money by implementing centralized solutions rather than costly, individual storage solutions for every application," says McPhee. "HP storage area networks, based on the StorageWorks 5000 Enterprise Virtual Array, give us all the features we need."

Atlantic Blue Cross Care previously deployed several HP Fibre Channel-based, mid-range storage systems, and knew the benefits HP provides in storage management. "The management advantages of HP EVA5000-based SANs save the cost of adding two more staff people just to administer storage," McPhee emphasizes.

The HP virtualized storage solution is a key component of Atlantic Blue Cross Care's information lifecycle management program. McPhee explains: "The virtualization and snapshot features of the EVA5000 give us the means for testing, archiving, backing up, and recovering data. Also, since we now pool storage, we use at least 50 percent more raw capacity versus 25-30 percent in our previous storage environment."

Powerful storage and servers deliver real-time information

With some assistance from HP Services, Atlantic Blue Cross Care's talented IT staff installed two separate production SANs several hundred miles apart. An EVA5000 centers each SAN, one in Halifax and one in Moncton, which together support 75 percent of the organization's data storage needs.

The SANs are a central repository for file services, databases, messaging systems, and insurance service applications for administration and claims processing. McPhee notes that data throughput using the EVA5000 is up to five times faster than the company's older storage systems. "The HP StorageWorks EVA5000 noticeably improved the performance of our databases and heavy I/O-intensive jobs like batch and queries," he maintains.

The two SANs connect to approximately 40 servers running multiple operating systems. HP ProLiant DL-series servers power file/print services, office, and Microsoft® SQL Server applications, while HP 9000-series servers run custom insurance applications and Oracle. "We've made HP ProLiant DL- and ML-series servers our Intel-based standard because they can handle robust IT applications, and we like their price-to-performance value," states McPhee.

Sun servers also link to the HP StorageWorks EVA5000. "During our storage evaluation, we looked for heterogeneous support," says McPhee. "HP uses standards-compliant technology in its storage systems, and that lets us connect an array of servers."

Data under the protective umbrella of HP adaptive management tools

Atlantic Blue Cross Care also had another goal: data recovery. That's because thousands of users depend on the storage platform, including external stakeholders and subscribers who access Atlantic Blue Cross Care systems through various networks. Therefore, thorough backups are paramount. Thanks to the EVA5000 systems working in concert with HP enterprise-level libraries, the IT staff

now backs up more data, more often, without downtime. "Our new HP StorageWorks tape libraries boost backup performance and scale as the databases grow," McPhee emphasizes.

"Before selecting HP StorageWorks 5000 Enterprise Virtual Array systems, we conducted some market comparisons with HP, EMC, and IBM. We stayed with HP because we've been successful with StorageWorks products, and HP gives us the best price-to-performance ratio."

– Don McPhee, Director – Technical Services,
Atlantic Blue Cross Care

Additionally, HP solutions enable the company to protect its own data and provide an excellent disaster-recovery service to its customers. For example, HP OpenView Storage Virtual Replicator lets the IT staff create space-efficient snapshots for multiple purposes. "Virtual Replicator is valuable because we can't always take downtime for backup and restore functions," McPhee explains.

The allocating and reporting modules of the award-winning HP OpenView Storage Area Manager software help the staff use storage and business trends for the good of the company. In September 2004, readers of *Windows & .NET Magazine* named HP OpenView SAM as "Best Storage Management Tool."

"HP OpenView Storage Area Manager generates regular reports, which I use to relate costs to business value," says McPhee. "The software helps us improve our service-level agreement performance, because we can plan storage allocations in specific areas. We also can better manage application-related capacity."

In summary, Atlantic Blue Cross Care understands the important role technology innovation plays in the future of its business, particularly for enabling enterprise agility and adaptability. McPhee concludes: "We leverage HP as our strategic IT partner to deliver added value to our organization today and to help us prepare for tomorrow."

About Atlantic Blue Cross Care

A division of parent company Medavie Inc., Atlantic Blue Cross Care (www.atl.bluecross.ca) maintains its headquarters in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. The company is one of the largest private-sector employers in Atlantic Canada with more than 1,200 employees. In October 2004, Mediaparc Canada Inc., publisher of *Canada Employment Weekly*, recognized Atlantic Blue Cross Care as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers. Setting the standard in health, travel, and life benefits, this insurer processes more than 34 million claim lines annually from government and private entities.



Challenges

- Economically accommodate storage needs and business growth
- Increase staff resources by implementing a centralized, manageable storage infrastructure
- Advance the company's consolidation and standardization initiatives
- Maintain quality standards
- Verify storage support for data retention and privacy regulations

Solution

Hardware

- 2 HP StorageWorks 5000 Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA5000) systems with 20 TB total capacity
- 40 HP ProLiant DL360, DL380, and DL580 servers of mixed generations
- 15 HP 9000 servers running HP-UX 11i and Oracle and linked to the EVA5000-based storage area network (SAN)
- 2 HP StorageWorks ESL9595 tape libraries – one configured in a SAN
- Approximately 1,300 HP desktop computers, including HP Compaq Evo models
- 3 Sun Microsystems servers (models Sun Fire 880, Sun 280, Netra 440) linked to the HP EVA5000

Software

- HP OpenView Storage Area Manager
- HP OpenView Storage Virtual Replicator
- HP-UX 11i operating system
- Microsoft Windows NT® and 2000 operating systems
- Sun Solaris operating system
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000 (50 GB)
- Oracle8i and 9i databases (ranging from 30 to 170 GB)
- VERITAS backup software

HP Services

- Mission-critical support
- Configuration and consulting
- 24x7 hardware gold support
- Software support

Results

- HP virtualization technology provides flexibility and scalability to respond quickly to changing application and business needs.
- HP's enterprise-class storage environment gives the company single-point management and saves the cost of deploying separate storage systems.
- The integration of HP storage, servers, and software enables the existing staff to meet customer expectations and monitor systems usage and performance.
- HP EVA5000-based SANs:
 - Improve storage utilization by 50 percent and higher
 - Save the cost of adding two full-time staff people to manage storage
 - Deliver data throughput five times faster
 - Enable an excellent disaster recovery service to customers
 - Provide an ILM framework for supporting data retention and privacy regulations

For more information on how working with HP can benefit you, contact your local HP representative, or visit us at www.hp.com.

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