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BEAUREGARD
HEALTH SYSTEM

Beauregard Health System weathers two hurricanes and a pandemic to complete their EHR implementation with Tegria

The challenge

Beauregard Health System (BHS) located in DeRidder, Louisiana, has served Beauregard Parish and the surrounding communities since 1946. With a mission to improve the health and well-being of people in southwest Louisiana, BHS continues to evolve as a premier provider of health and wellness services.

After deciding to change their Electronic Health Record (EHR) provider, BHS began looking for a full solution partner. In late 2019, BHS contracted with Engage, a Tegria Company, to provide EHR cloud hosting and implementation consulting services for the hospital.

The solution

In early 2020, BHS leadership began in-person training on their new EHR platform. Leaders at BHS recognized the magnitude of changes that would occur in their system, and knew this on-site training was pivotal for their team to develop the required experience with the new EHR. While this was occurring, Engage worked to complete the build-out of their new EHR servers and infrastructure in their nearby data center in Dallas, Texas.

Back in Louisiana, BHS received their EHR software delivery on the same day that COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. At this point, most of the BHS IT staff transitioned to a fully remote work setting, making their training sessions fraught with difficulty. On top of the inherent problems of working in a hospital setting during a pandemic, the care staff had to rely on video conferencing for virtual training on their new EHR system.

BHS quickly learned a key benefit of having their new EHR hosted in the cloud with Engage. Cloud hosting ensured availability of the system from anywhere so that the implementation build could continue while staff worked remotely. As long as staff could find an internet connection, the system could be accessed securely. They would soon realize other benefits as further calamities struck.

As BHS became more comfortable with their remote work and training arrangement, the hospital experienced a surge of COVID-19 cases in the summer of 2020. As a result, staff focus was directed away from the new EHR to clinical needs. Just as the COVID-19 surge began to slow in August, the community had to deal with another catastrophic blow. Hurricane Laura, a dangerous Category 4 storm, devastated the region with 150 mph winds and storm surges of almost 10 feet. Many hospital staff members were displaced, without electricity and power, and unable to work from home. Administrators at BHS worked tirelessly to provide access to safe workspace for their staff, but progress on the new EHR slowed during the subsequent weeks.

The Engage team came on site to support BHS four weeks after Hurricane Laura hit, helping the hospital get back on track for their go-live date of January 1, 2021. Despite playing catch-up, Engage was able to help reset the team and accelerate some of the last mission-critical steps. However, just two weeks after the Engage team left, DeRidder was affected by Hurricane Delta, a Category 2 storm. As the community began to rebuild for a second time, BHS' EHR implementation again took a backseat to helping their neighbors through another devastating natural disaster. The area isn't a stranger to hurricane impacts, but during a pandemic, the disruption was exacerbated.

Throughout these natural disasters, the benefits of a cloud-hosted EHR were made evident. As the hospital went significant periods of time without reliable electricity and water, they had confidence knowing the availability of their EHR would never be a problem. Having their EHR in the cloud ensured business continuity without disruption to patient care in critical times of need.

“The Engage team was so great and very accommodating,” said Meg Jackson, Director of Information Technology at BHS. “When everything was blown out of the water with regards to dates, Engage made it work by adjusting their schedules and getting down here to be side-by-side with us and help with our training.” With the surge in COVID-19 cases, nursing administrators were unable to focus their efforts on training the nursing staff as originally planned, so Engage stepped in to ensure EHR training for all providers could continue. Jackson recalls, “Even though that wasn’t a part of our initial contract, Engage really stepped up to help us keep things moving during the hardest days.”

The results

BHS initially chose Engage as their partner for EHR hosting and implementation services. Beyond that, they discovered a dedicated team of individuals who stood alongside BHS staff during three separate catastrophic events. As the go-live date of January 1, 2021 approached, Engage returned to DeRidder to ensure everything went smoothly. BHS was finally able to go live as planned without any additional interruptions.

Since going live, BHS has not experienced any insurmountable obstacles or natural disasters. Reflecting on the decision to move forward with Engage as their EHR partner, Jackson said “Thinking back to this time last year, we had no idea what would come our way. The pandemic, the storms, there was no way to be prepared for any of it. With Engage it was much easier to pick up the pieces after every blow and say, ‘OK, here’s what we need to do to get back on track.’ Engage was there with us to help carve a new path and their cloud hosting ensured we could always access the system. Without them I don’t know if we would have been nearly as successful.”

