

# West Tennessee Healthcare Implements Mission-critical Data Storage & Recovery Solution from Mainline

West Tennessee Healthcare (WTH) is a state-of-the-art medical network serving 500,000 people from 17 counties in rural West Tennessee, between Nashville and Memphis. The hub of the network is the 635-bed Jackson-Madison County General Hospital. Patients are served by the network's 300 doctors at WTH, as well as five other hospitals, multiple clinics and specialized treatment centers, some of which include the West Tennessee Cancer Center, the West Tennessee Rehabilitation Center, the Women and Children's Center, the Emergency Services Center and the Tennessee Heart Center. The healthcare network also includes laboratories, pharmacies, medical products infusion services, early child development intervention services, a home healthcare agency and both community support and education.

The information technology needs of healthcare providers are extensive. Today, healthcare includes the administration of numerous tests and storage of the tests results, as well as record keeping on each patient interaction, medicines prescribed and administered, lab results, billing records and insurance claims. For example, 80,000 people are served each year in the Jackson-Madison County General Hospital emergency room, and many of those are admitted. Once admitted, all testing, billing and patient records are entered into the hospital's software system. When discharged, follow-up care is scheduled and the outlying clinics and doctors' offices serving these patients have access to their data – a critical process for providing the best follow-up care.

## The Challenge

Storing and retrieving this huge amount of data is mission-critical, but adds to the total healthcare cost. Lorene Robinson, Senior Systems Analyst responsible for data storage at the Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, wanted to reduce the cost of data storage in order to positively impact the bottom-line. In addition, each of the existing storage solutions was doing its own backup, and there were problems. "One of the Windows server drives was failing and we needed a way to replace the drive without downtime. Restoring 6 terabytes of data would have taken a whole month," Robinson explained. "These were cardiac images from heart catheterizations that the hospital needed to have on-hand immediately and keep indefinitely."

Robinson also wanted to centralize storage management by combining storage capacity from WTH's diverse servers, as well as from multiple vendors.

She called Mainline Information Systems, an IBM Premier Business Partner. Over a period of 19 years, the Mainline team had become the hospital's trusted partner for solutions that included IBM products integral to the configuration of their entire IT solution. These included ten IBM System p processors and two IBM System i model 520 processors – one for production and one for backup – replicated to one another using MIMIX high-availability software. On the storage side, they were using IBM TSM, an enterprise backup system, two IBM DS4800s and the IBM Enterprise Storage System (Shark).

Mainline Client Executive, Dan Wilson, responded to Robinson's call. He and the Mainline team were quite familiar with the current configuration and suggested a solution that would address West Tennessee Healthcare's needs.



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## Challenges...

- Lower storage cost
- Ability to migrate data among storage systems without interruption to applications
- No centralized management

## Solution...

- IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller (SVC)

## Results...

- Lowered storage costs
- Advanced migration capabilities
- Centralized storage and administration with management of pooled storage via a single interface
- Increased storage utilization
- Improved application availability
- More flexible access to storage assets

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## The Solution

The Mainline team recommended IBM System SAN Volume Controller (SVC) to address Robinson's three areas of concern. It enables a tiered storage environment to match the cost of storage to the value of the data. It also supports advanced copy services from higher- to lower-cost devices and across storage systems from multiple vendors. In addition, the SVC solution centralizes management by combining storage capacity from multiple vendors and enabling pooled storage. The entire solution can be managed from a single interface.

"I liked what I heard," Robinson stated. "SVC would allow us to move data from one storage server to another without bringing the application or the server down, and the cost was lower," she said. "But, we felt that we were taking a risk if it wasn't the right solution for us."

## Implementation

Wilson suggested that the hospital do a "proof-of-concept" by initially purchasing a small amount of capacity to tackle a smaller piece of the problem. For example, WTH could use SVC to send data to another place while fixing the failing drives, without any down time.

Robinson told Wilson, "If this works, we'll keep it, if not, we'll want our money back." She added, "When Mainline agreed to these terms, we decided that it would be stupid not to try it."

"They started with 4 terabytes and went to 45 in four months, and they are adding another 6 this year. I guess they liked it," Wilson observed.

## Results

"We got what we wanted with this solution, and more: low-cost storage, advanced migration capabilities, centralized storage and administration, increased storage utilization and improved application availability," Robinson observed. "Mainline is a great company, and the Mainline team has been very available to us, even responding in the middle of the night," Robinson recounted. "They know their stuff and have the technical expertise to back up whatever they sell. They are truly trusted IT partners to West Tennessee Healthcare."



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