

Case Study

Effingham Hospital

A Regional Hospital Stays HIPAA Compliant through On-Demand Vulnerability Assessments.

Effingham Hospital, a critical access hospital and nursing home in Springfield, GA, may not be located in a congested, bustling city but the private health information contained within their network is just as valuable to a potential hacker. Not only did they have to remain compliant with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, they knew it was their responsibility to patients, residents, employees, vendors and many other stakeholders to ensure that their network was properly secured and continuously tested. They turned to BAE Systems, subscribing to their Network Vulnerability Scanning services to test their network both internally and externally, as well as providing a host assessment for critical servers. Their decision freed up their IT manager to focus on other critical business, as well as saving them money by avoiding the need to hire more full-time staff members.

The IT Security and Compliance Problem

Effingham Hospital, a 25-bed critical access hospital and 105-bed nursing home facility located in Springfield, Georgia, needed to demonstrate compliance with federal security regulations. As a covered entity under HIPAA, the small, hospital had to prove that it assessed the threats and vulnerabilities of its computer network that could jeopardize the safety of patient data.

Network vulnerabilities in a health care organization can create holes that could lead to the exposure of electronic protected health information (ePHI), defined as any information about health status, provision of or payment for health care that is linked to an individual. Under HIPAA regulations, covered entities such as hospitals are required to implement procedures to identify if they are vulnerable to malicious activity and to develop measures to secure their networks before damage is done. Like any corporate entity, Effingham Hospital's vulnerabilities existed at both the operating system and application level of their network. A vulnerability assessment to expose weaknesses and a solution to protect ePHI was needed. The rural hospital sought a solution that was comprehensive, reliable and affordable.

Hiring a full-time, highly skilled IT security specialist at an affordable rate to monitor the network constantly for vulnerabilities is extremely challenging for any organization, and even more challenging for a small rural hospital. Effingham Hospital has one full-time IT manager who is very busy maintaining the existing IT infrastructure and working on other mission-critical IT projects.

"I'm able to focus my time on managing our overall IT infrastructure and we were able to avoid hiring additional staff to cover these types of vulnerabilities for us."

Bart Hunter, IT Manager
Effingham Hospital LLC

Overview

Business: Effingham Hospital is a 130-bed critical access hospital and nursing home located in Springfield, Georgia needing to stay HIPAA compliant and protect patient data despite limited IT resources.

BAE Systems Solutions:

- Vulnerability Scanning

Benefits of BAE Systems:

- Comprehensive reports to identify relevant and accurate network vulnerabilities
- A secure, online portal providing 24/7 access to reports
- Vulnerability assessment services that are continuously updated to combat the latest threats in the marketplace and an infrastructure that has been validated by multiple independent third parties

The BAE Systems **solution**

Effingham Hospital decided to subscribe to BAE Systems' Network Scanning Services on the recommendation of the CFO. The IT manager simply installed a server, which plugged easily into the hospital's rack of hardware devices. Now, BAE Systems performs a Monthly Remote Network Assessment to test the effectiveness of the network security controls at the hospital and to identify any associated weaknesses before malicious activity can take place. The service analyzes the external network along with the internal network (key servers within the organization). In addition, a Host Assessment is conducted on critical servers comparing the server configuration with industry best practices.

In addition to the monitoring, analysis and remediation services, Effingham Hospital knows that BAE Systems' vulnerability assessment services are continuously updated to combat the latest threats in the marketplace. Further, the hospital is assured that BAE Systems' assessment services have been validated by multiple independent third parties.

Each month a certified BAE Systems information security expert reviews the vulnerability scan results, applies a risk level to each vulnerability and recommends corrective action. This risk level and the corresponding corrective action provide Effingham Hospital with the steps to proactively correct network weaknesses. The Host Assessment provides a server compliance score and lists the details of any policy that is out of compliance.

Each quarter the BAE Systems security expert and the hospital's IT manager hold a conference call to review the results of the assessments. When necessary, the consultant provides guidance on network architecture changes. Comprehensive vulnerability assessment reports are made available 24/7 to Effingham Hospital's IT staff on BAE Systems online portal. This combination of quality reports and detailed consultation provides a comprehensive, ongoing methodology for addressing network vulnerabilities.

The monthly network vulnerability **assessment** includes the following:

External Network Vulnerability Assessment:

Utilizes BAE Systems cloud-based scanners to perform scans on your externally facing devices. Performing scans from this perspective helps you understand what an individual trying to break into your network sees. Web-based portal is included for easy service management and reporting.

Internal Network Vulnerability Assessment:

Performs scan from inside your network, revealing vulnerabilities that an individual would see once they are past the edge devices. Web-based portal is included for easy service management and reporting. Scanner software is provided to you with this service that can be installed on a dedicated device or virtual machine, or can be loaded as needed on a shared device.

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