

Archive Project Success Built on Integrity, Trust, and Impeccable Timing

The Organization

Sky Lakes Medical Center is a nonprofit hospital that serves 80,000 people in south-central Oregon and northern California. It is the only hospital in a 10,000 square-mile area, one of few ISO 9001 certified hospitals in Oregon, and the winner of the Rural Hospital Leadership Award in 2021 from the American Hospital Association (AHA).

The Situation

Like many rural community hospitals, tight budgets, limited resources and long to-do lists are the norm at Sky Lakes Medical Center in Klamath Falls, Oregon. With the promise of a new go-forward Epic EHR, the decision of what to do with nearly two decades of legacy MEDITECH and other health data with various retention needs added another necessary task. Plus, there were many unique legacy data instances – an obscure obstetrics EHR, some of the first MEDITECH nursing charts, and other challenging applications to consider for decommissioning. The organization needed a nimble and efficient plan and partner they could trust to maintain access to the legacy records while moving forward with Epic.

While reducing costs and maintaining access to vital clinical, financial, and business records were key drivers when considering an active archive, another top priority was finding the right vendor with integrity and trust, as the Sky Lakes Medical Center team knew they would encounter numerous data management scenarios that would require a roll-up-the-sleeves and problem-solve-together approach.

“Archiving is a ‘no-brainer’ value proposition. Look at your resources and your budget and map out the cost benefits of archiving. Next, find a smart and experienced vendor partner who aligns with your organization’s priorities and values. This step is critical for long-term success.”

John Gaede, CPHIMS,
Director of Information Systems, Sky Lakes Medical Center

“We looked for an archiving partner with a mission and a mindset that we could trust,” explains John Gaede, Director of Information Systems at Sky Lakes Medical Center. “We also relied on industry rankings and reference calls with other healthcare IT leaders to support our archive vendor selection.”

Gaede explains that although archiving was not planned in the budget originally, they quickly realized that the opportunity for cost savings within a few months would provide the return on investment to justify implementing the archive.

CASE STUDY



Organizational Profile

- 176-bed nonprofit hospital
- Oregon
- Go-forward EHR: Epic
- Archiving 18 years of MEDITECH data

Product

HEALTHDATA
ARCHIVER

The Solution

Sky Lakes Medical Center's vendor selection process was thorough as they looked for a vendor partner who could check all the boxes – experience, expertise, integrity, and commitment to collaborate to solve problems. Gaede explains: "Trust is key. We looked for a partner we could trust to help us be successful. We found that and more in the Harmony Healthcare IT team."

Harmony Healthcare IT's broad experience with more than 550 software brands has come in handy many times throughout the archiving program. Gaede explains: "We are thankful to have a partner who helps us solve problems. Their project team delivers, repeatedly. When we ask if they have worked on a specific system, the answer is usually yes."

With HealthData Archiver™ fully deployed, the Sky Lakes Medical Center and Harmony Healthcare IT team continue to work through a priority list aimed at decommissioning legacy systems and archiving the data to meet retention requirements.

The overall peace of mind in having the right team in place is bolstered by the ongoing savings in legacy vendor maintenance and in having consolidated the organization's IT portfolio so there are fewer one-off applications to maintain and keep secure.

"The question we ask ourselves is: Why didn't we do this sooner?" shares Gaede.

Benefits & Results

Cost savings. Return on investment achieved in about five months and continued maintenance savings of more than \$300K is realized annually. The overall cost savings is even higher and includes removing hard costs for system maintenance, upgrades, vendor contracts, etc., as well as costs for internal IT labor resources.

Workflow efficiency. Clinicians utilize in-context Single Sign-On to HealthData Archiver™ to access legacy records from within Epic.

Partner trust. Sky Lakes Medical Center and Harmony Healthcare IT are in a smooth cadence of continued success that was built over time with numerous instances that highlighted the importance of integrity and trust for a successful team effort.

Preparation for the future. As interoperability and 21st Century Cures Act requirements continue to evolve, Sky Lakes Medical Center is in an excellent position to deliver ePHI wherever it is needed.

Cybersecurity Alert: When archiving literally saved the day and the data

A side story that could have sidelined Sky Lakes Medical Center operations happened in October 2020 when a cybersecurity attack encrypted several legacy systems with ransomware and shut down the entire network. Fortunately, a backup copy of the data was already in process with the HealthData Archiver™ team from Harmony Healthcare IT and the effects of the incident were minimized. It is widely known that archiving supports increased security by having less vulnerable legacy systems spread out over a network that can be like open doors and windows for bad actors. However, in this case, the process of preparing to archive provided a data management safety net.



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