



Modernizing retirement lives

Bethesda Health Group digitalizes, secures, and mobilizes retirement services to deliver personalized senior care.

Providing exceptional retirement lifestyles across 16 continuum of care communities and in-home services across the Greater St. Louis region, Bethesda empowers seniors to live with purpose, passion, and dignity using digital, mobile, and IoT technologies supported by secure, Zero Trust infrastructure from HPE Aruba Networking.

BETHESDA
*Exceptional Senior Living,
Care and Services*

Customer: Bethesda Health Group

Industry: Healthcare

Country: United States

Locally respected and nationally recognized for over a century

By offering vibrant and diverse retirement communities that uniquely reflect the neighborhoods of Greater St. Louis, as well as highly personalized in-home care, Bethesda Health Group has built a national reputation as a trusted resource for senior citizens and their families for 135 years.

Committed to compassionate care that empowers thousands of seniors to live their best retirement lives, whether in one of its 16 continuum of care residences or their own homes, Bethesda's innovation culture and its 1000+ employees rapidly adapt to the changing community needs and expectations.

"Regardless of their stage of vibrancy or health, we're known for providing our residents and clients with dignified, fulfilling, and active lives," explains Michael Keller, senior director of information technology for Bethesda Health Group. "To focus resources on innovating our lifestyle options and in-home services, we value modern technologies that enable everyone at our organization to concentrate on providing personalized services and care."

Safeguarding personal data across hybrid cloud

In support of its increasingly mobile and tech-savvy workforce and resident population, Bethesda has transformed its operations to adopt a cloud-first strategy. It leverages high-performance connectivity to deliver services, provide access to a host of applications, and enable residents to stay in touch with their care teams, family, and friends.

With this transformation came the need for improved cybersecurity as well, and the need to adopt zero trust. "Many individuals we serve have relied upon computing technologies at work and in their personal lives prior to engaging with us," says Keller. "They expect us to safeguard their personal data—regardless of where it resides—while ensuring that caregivers can rapidly and securely access the resources they need."

When Bethesda's legacy data security infrastructure struggled to meet new demands for protecting cloud-delivered applications, its IT team began considering alternatives. As the company's legacy VPN was unable to restrict access based on a user's job requirements, after a user authenticated on Bethesda's network, they had over-privileged access to the environment. "This introduced considerable risk to our residents, our employees, and our business," Keller says.

"We've gained comprehensive and secure networking infrastructure that enables us to manage a large wired, Wi-Fi, and SD-WAN footprint with a lean IT staff—without breaking the bank."

– Michael Keller, Director of Information Technology, Bethesda Health Group

Vision

Leverage a cloud-first transformation to drive the next generation of modern retirement lifestyles and services

Strategy

Deploy a comprehensive networking and cybersecurity infrastructure solution that is flexible, easily managed, and cost-effective to enable focusing resources on resident care

Outcomes

- Boosts security while streamlining cloud-first application access
- Achieves six-figure cost savings versus MPLS
- Reduces management and troubleshooting overhead at least 50%



Fully cloud-delivered SASE solution

Already partnered with HPE Aruba Networking for wired, wireless, and software-defined WAN (SD-WAN) networking, Bethesda decided to enhance its infrastructure by adopting the fully cloud-delivered secure access service Edge (SASE) platform and HPE Aruba Networking security service edge (SSE). It consolidates multiple secure access capabilities into a single, easy-to-use, cloud service that automatically adapts policies based on changes in user, device, and application context.

“Our evaluations determined that it complemented our existing deployment by providing us with the added cybersecurity protections we needed to create a powerful, unified SASE platform that enabled advancing our cloud-first goals,” Keller says.

Combining HPE Aruba Networking SSE with Bethesda’s existing HPE Aruba Networking edge-to-core security-first networking infrastructure creates a complete, unified networking and security solution. The deployment includes HPE Aruba Networking Wi-Fi 6 Access Points (APs), for indoor and outdoor connectivity, along with HPE Aruba Networking CX switches, for wired infrastructure, and HPE Aruba Networking EdgeConnect SD-WAN.

Six-figure savings with SD-WAN

Originally, Bethesda began its networking modernization journey by collaborating with trusted partner InterVision to start migrating away from its existing Cisco infrastructure.

At that time, the priority was SD-WAN, which led to the adopting of HPE Aruba Networking EdgeConnect SD-WAN. This provided the company with a secure, centrally managed, high performance wide area network that also reduced costs and dependencies on legacy MPLS telecommunications connections.

“In addition to obtaining technological advances from EdgeConnect, such as speedy encrypted connections between our locations and to our applications, eliminating MPLS saved us six figures over the life of the contract,” Keller says.

“HPE Aruba Networking SSE provides us with the cybersecurity protections for creating a powerful, unified SASE platform that helps advance our cloud-first goals.”

– Michael Keller, Director of Information Technology, Bethesda Health Group

Granular, proactive management seals the deal

Subsequently, Bethesda decided to evaluate HPE Aruba Networking wired and wireless solutions to replace the balance of its legacy Cisco gear.

“After deploying SD-WAN, we looked for a network access control solution that would improve our access security and satisfy audit requirements,” Keller recalls. “We hadn’t adopted the Cisco solution as it was cost prohibitive as well as complex to implement and maintain.”

In HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass Policy Manager, Bethesda found the streamlined, simplified solution it sought. “ClearPass enabled us to modernize our access control with a granular, policy-based solution for our wired and wireless networks,” Keller says. “Plus, it was intuitive and easy to use for our lean IT staff.”

Bethesda also appreciated HPE Aruba Networking Central for supplying AI-powered cloud-based management for further unifying its wired and wireless infrastructure.

“Given the innovative management tools like Central and ClearPass, along with the advances built into HPE Aruba Networking’s wireless APs and wired networking switches, we decided to standardize on the security-first networking platform end to end.”

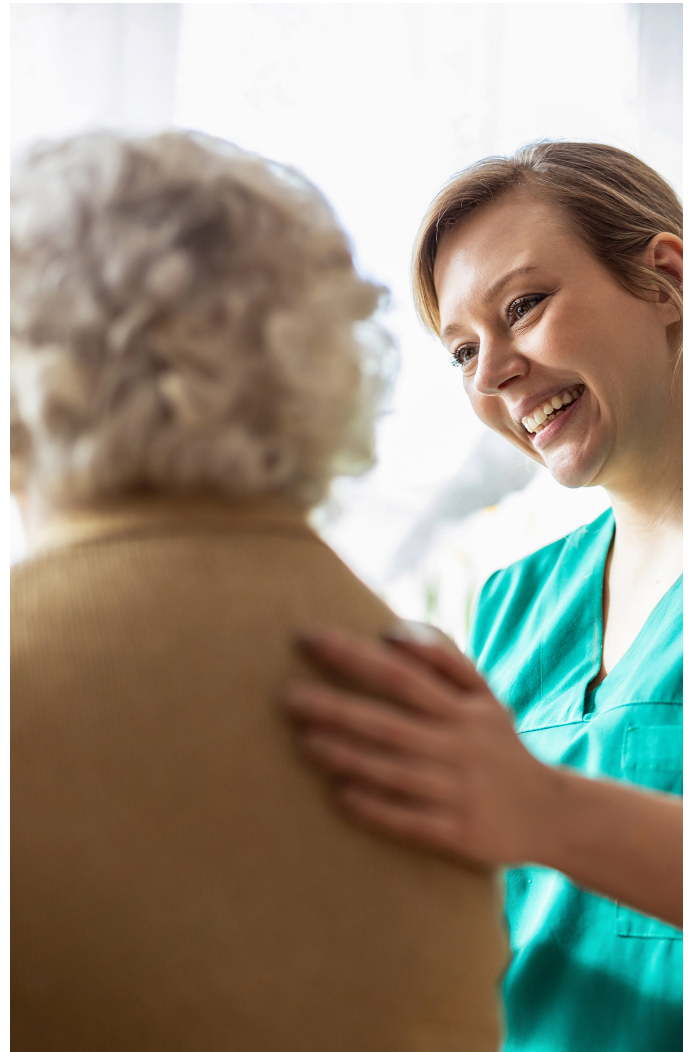
Complete and easy to use

Today, Bethesda is realizing multiple benefits from its new network. It starts with providing employees fast, secure access to private and externally managed applications—as well as improving IT staff visibility into user access events—with cloud-delivered HPE Aruba Networking SSE. Added SSE capabilities include zero trust network access (ZTNA), secure web gateway (SWG), and cloud access security broker (CASB).

“No matter whether it’s EHR, HRIS, procurement, collaboration tools, or billing, our HPE Aruba Networking SSE solution enables us to grant access only to the exact applications a staff member needs,” says Keller.

“Further, because SSE is an open platform, we can use our existing identity access management (IAM) system,” he adds. “This makes everything seamless for our staff because they don’t need to learn something new or take multiple steps—the security is just there.”

From a performance perspective, eliminating backhauls to firewall appliances in favor of the smart routing



capabilities in SSE also improves application access and delivers a faster end-user experience. “Instead of routing all traffic through our data center firewalls, streams are dispersed across SSE’s footprint, just like any other cloud-based platform,” Keller says. “As this reduces bottlenecks and speeds application performance, it’s an additional reason the solution is so exciting.”

Exponential IT resource savings

Bethesda is also realizing network scalability, productivity, and resiliency improvements with the intelligence and automation engineered into its new networking infrastructure. This directly enhances the company’s bottom line.

“By leveraging Central and EdgeConnect, we can rapidly configure and deploy APs and switches at new locations, including facilities that we manage on behalf of other healthcare providers,” says Keller. “In the past, it required a couple of months to deploy a new facility. Now, it’s a couple of days.”



In addition, HPE Aruba Networking Central accelerates a variety of management and troubleshooting tasks. “For example, we’ve cut the time it takes to update firmware at each site from four hours to 30 minutes,” Keller says. “This frees up a significant amount of IT time that we can allocate to higher-value initiatives.”

The AI-enabled tools in HPE Aruba Networking Central also help troubleshoot issues even before they affect users. “Not only has Central assisted us with proactively identifying and resolving issues, but we estimate it will save us at least 50% on overall management and troubleshooting time versus our legacy system,” says Keller.

Adding it all up

Naturally, Bethesda’s comprehensive infrastructure modernization adds up to better resident experiences, services, and care. “With our new networking infrastructure enabling us to be completely mobile and digital, residents and their family members can reach our caregivers wherever they are,” Keller says. “This speeds service delivery and improves peace of mind.”

The organization’s new infrastructure also enables expanding its telehealth capabilities. “We can now provide immediate access to specialists, such as

podiatrists or dermatologists, who might otherwise visit a facility once a month,” says Keller.

Additionally, Bethesda’s caregivers can now document services closer to the point of care, creating more accurate and reliable records. With this enhanced recordkeeping, Bethesda is able to improve the care plans for each resident.

Other advances include adopting various IoT and other connected technologies, such as pressure sensors for wound management in skilled nursing units, along with the ability to securely integrate Bethesda’s applications with affiliates, such as pharmacies, laboratories, and rehabilitation providers. In addition, each facility includes a team meeting room that is supported by the network.

For comfort and safety, Bethesda is leveraging its new network to connect HVAC, door access, and security cameras.

“Everything is seamless for our staff because they don’t need to learn something new or take multiple steps—the security is just there.”

– **Michael Keller**, Director of Information Technology, Bethesda Health Group



More innovations on the horizon

Moving forward, Bethesda plans to improve operations and resident care with further networking innovations. This includes evaluating HPE Aruba Networking User Experience Insight (UXI), for AI-enabled real-time network health and performance monitoring from the perspective of users and devices, which will improve Wi-Fi experiences.

Adopting HPE Aruba Networking Location Services will also get a look. “With location services, we can address real-time needs, such as replacing our legacy emergency call system with a wearable, IoT-enabled solution that can leverage location services to pinpoint a resident,” Keller says. “Another concern we could mitigate is elopement, which can affect any resident and not just those already in a memory care.”

In addition, Bethesda will consider extending the SASE controls provided by the SSE solution to residents for helping them safeguard their personal devices. This strategy would not only add resident protection but also become a revenue stream for the organization.

“With our future-ready Aruba solution, we’ve cut new location deployments from a couple of months to a couple of days.”

– **Michael Keller**, Director of Information Technology, Bethesda Health Group

Future-ready without breaking the bank

No matter what the future holds, Bethesda is excited about the overall benefits of HPE Aruba Networking for a complete, unified networking and security solution.

“We’ve gained comprehensive and secure networking infrastructure that is cost-effective to own, easy to maintain, and scalable for addressing future needs,” said Keller. “In short, it enables us to manage and secure a large wired, Wi-Fi, and SD-WAN footprint, that is distributed across state lines, with a lean IT staff—all without breaking the bank.”



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Solution

Hardware

- HPE Aruba Networking CX Core and Access Switches
- PE Aruba Networking Wi-Fi 6 Access Points

Software

- HPE Aruba Networking Central On-Premises
- HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass Policy Manager
- HPE Aruba Networking EdgeConnect SD-WAN
- HPE Aruba Networking SSE

Key partners

- InterVision

