Pediatric Associates of Richmond and Infranet - A 15-Year Partnership Enabled by Cisco Meraki

Background and Initial Challenges

Pediatric Associates of Richmond (PAR), a longstanding community pediatric practice since 1952, has been a cornerstone of pediatric care in Richmond, Virginia. With three locations and an expanding range of services, including a new behavioral health service line, PAR faced increasing IT demands. Their aging infrastructure struggled to support their growing needs, particularly for cloud-hosted electronic health records (EHR), seamless wireless coverage, and enhanced cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive patient data. This challenge was further compounded by the need to move their primary office to a new location during the COVID-19 pandemic.
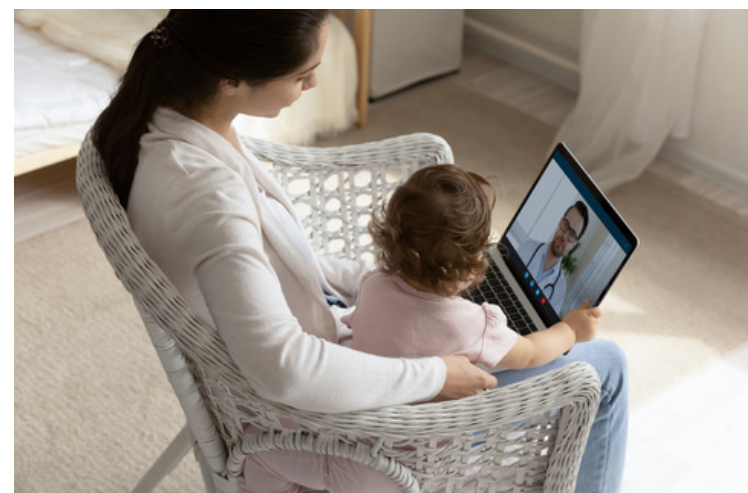
Building a High-Performing Network with Cisco Meraki

The cornerstone of Infranet's solution is the implementation of Cisco Meraki, a high-performing network infrastructure that provides stable data center operations and secure wireless access across all PAR locations. Cisco Meraki's reliable and seamless performance ensures that PAR's EHR systems operate without interruption, enabling efficient patient care. The powerful network infrastructure includes Meraki access points, switches, and firewalls, providing comprehensive wireless coverage and redundant internet connections to guarantee uninterrupted access to critical applications.

Finding the Right Partner

PAR needed a robust and reliable IT partner to address these challenges. They found Infranet Technologies Group, an IT service provider with extensive experience in Cisco solutions. Initially, Infranet provided consulting and procurement services. However, the relationship quickly evolved into a comprehensive managed service provider (MSP) arrangement, including the placement of a dedicated IT professional on-site. Infranet's customized approach and deep understanding of PAR's needs made them the perfect partner for tackling the complex IT challenges faced by the pediatric practice.

"Infranet has been integral to our IT success. Their team feels like an extension of our own, and their expertise ensures that our operations run smoothly and securely."
Jennifer McDonald, Practice Administrator at PAR

Enabling Seamless Operations and Growth

With the Cisco Meraki infrastructure in place, PAR experienced immediate improvements in their day-to-day operations. Seamless wireless coverage allowed providers to move between consultation rooms without connectivity issues, enabling them to focus on patient care. The dedicated IT professionals from Infranet, embedded within the PAR team, manages everything from help desk support to complex IT challenges, ensuring smooth operations and quick issue resolution.

Operational Efficiency: Continuous improvements in IT infrastructure, ensuring seamless EHR operations and enhanced patient care.

Supporting Critical Projects

The robust infrastructure provided by Cisco Meraki enabled several critical projects:

- **Move to a New Building:** Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, PAR decided to move from an outdated facility to a newly renovated building designed specifically to function as a medical office. This move significantly improved their office operations and functionality. Infranet played a crucial role in the IT transition, performing a complete overhaul of the server room, installing new Wi-Fi systems, and ensuring the new facility was fully operational by Monday morning. Remarkably, the entire move was completed over one weekend, allowing PAR to resume patient care without any interruption.

Seamless Relocation: Successfully moved to a new building during the COVID-19 pandemic with zero downtime.

- **Lab Equipment Upgrades:** As part of PAR's commitment to providing comprehensive healthcare services, they upgraded their lab equipment to offer more advanced testing capabilities. This upgrade required significant changes to their IT infrastructure. Infranet's dedicated IT professional played a crucial role in this project.

- **Planning and Implementation:** Infranet collaborated closely with PAR's nurse manager to understand the requirements of the new lab equipment. This included integrating sophisticated testing machines and ensuring they were properly connected to the network.

- **Network Integration:** The new lab equipment, considered IoT devices, needed seamless integration into the existing Cisco Meraki network. Infranet ensured these devices had reliable and secure network access, crucial for the accurate and timely processing of lab results.

- **Software Installation:** In addition to the hardware setup, new software was required to manage the lab tests. Infranet facilitated the installation and configuration of this software, ensuring compatibility with PAR's existing systems.

- **Training and Support:** Post-installation, Infranet provided training and ongoing support to the lab staff, ensuring they were comfortable with the new technology and could operate it efficiently.

- **Outcome:** The lab upgrade project was a success, resulting in increased revenue and improved efficiency in lab operations. The advanced testing capabilities allowed PAR to offer more comprehensive services to their patients, enhancing the overall quality of care.

Enhanced Lab Operations: Implemented new lab testing technology, significantly increasing revenue.

- **Physical Security:** Infranet implemented uninterruptible power supply (UPS) batteries connected to the network infrastructure, ensuring that critical equipment like vaccine refrigerators remains operational during power outages.

- **Cybersecurity Enhancements:** Enhanced cybersecurity measures, including Cisco Umbrella for DNS filtering, ensures PAR's network remains secure and compliant with industry standards, preventing significant incidents and maintaining stable cybersecurity insurance premiums.

Cybersecurity Excellence: Maintained an excellent security record with no significant incidents in 15 years.

Human Element and Cultural Fit

The success of the partnership between PAR and Infranet was not only due to the technical solutions but also the human elements of their relationship. Infranet's team became an integral part of PAR's operations, with an onsite dedicated IT professional fitting seamlessly into the practice's culture. This close collaboration allowed Infranet to tailor their services to meet PAR's specific needs, creating a customized approach that aligned with the practice's goals and values.

"We've built a strong relationship with PAR over the years. Our shared commitment to excellence and patient care has made this partnership incredibly rewarding."
Garth Wermter, Chief Technology Officer at Infranet

A Future-Proof Partnership for Exceptional Patient Care

The enduring partnership between Pediatric Associates of Richmond (PAR) and Infranet Technologies Group, built on a foundation of robust Cisco Meraki infrastructure, has profoundly transformed PAR's IT operations. This collaboration supports PAR's mission to provide exceptional patient care by ensuring reliable, secure, and efficient IT systems.

The high-performing Cisco Meraki network delivers stable data center operations and secure wireless access, facilitating critical projects such as office relocations, lab equipment upgrades, and enhanced cybersecurity measures. These initiatives have significantly improved PAR's operational efficiency and ability to offer comprehensive healthcare services.

Trust and collaboration are at the heart of this partnership. Infranet's customized approach and deep integration with PAR's operations have resulted in a seamless alignment of IT services with the practice's specific needs and goals. This synergy not only addresses immediate IT challenges but also fosters long-term growth and resilience for PAR.

Infranet's dedication to providing tailored IT solutions and continuous support has created a successful and enduring partnership that drives PAR's ongoing success. With a shared commitment to excellence and patient care, PAR and Infranet continue to innovate and enhance the quality of healthcare services delivered to the Richmond community.