

HOSPITAL ZONE

Advanced Medicine

Staying ahead of the curve in South Florida

No matter your line of business, most people agree that when it comes to curves, being ahead of them is better than being behind. And when your business is health-care, you simply cannot succeed any other way. “As a not-for-profit, we aren’t required to comply with Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX),” says Allen Montgomery, corporate director for systems and development with Baptist Health South Florida in Miami.

By Levi Crowe

“But we apply those standards to ourselves regardless. Our board of trustees and executive management team believe that some similar form of regulation is coming to the not-for-profit sector sooner or later. This way, we’ll be that much further ahead of the curve.”

Being ahead of the curve seems to be paying off for Baptist Health and, more importantly, for its patients. Baptist Health has been named one of the top 100 ‘most wired’ hospitals by *Hospital and Health Network* magazine for the past seven years. The organization’s adherence to non-mandated regulations has produced clear results: Mortality rates at Baptist Health—which operates six acute care hospitals—are among the lowest in

the region, according to statistics published by the state of Florida.

To meet its goals and the self-imposed compliance mandates, Baptist Health deployed a number of Symantec products for backup, recovery, and compliance management. “Our portfolio has been validated by most of the Symantec and Veritas acquisitions over the past few years,” Montgomery says. “In fact, password self-service is something we helped BindView [now part of Symantec Compliance Control Suite] bring to market back in the day.”

Montgomery leads a team of about 60 of Baptist Health’s approximately 350 IT employees. His group is responsible for identifying and maximizing opportunities in new and existing technologies that might improve business processes at Baptist Health facilities, which include Baptist, Baptist Children’s, Doctors, Homestead and South Miami Hospitals, Baptist Outpatient Services, Baptist Cardiac & Vascular Institute in Miami-Dade County, and Mariners Hospital in the Florida Keys.

“We’re measured on patient satisfaction, physician satisfaction, and employee satisfaction—organization-wide,” Montgomery says. “Internally, we’re measured by system availability, including up to 99.999 uptime for certain business-critical applications, and making sure that even if a system does go down, we can bring back everything we need as quickly and as inexpensively as possible, minimizing patient care and financial impacts on the organization.”

> Vital Signs on Baptist Health

Operating Technology Environment

Baptist Health uses the following Symantec technologies and services:

- Symantec Altiris Wise Package Studio
- Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery
- Symantec Control Compliance Suite
- Symantec Security Information Manager
- Symantec Consulting Services
- Veritas NetBackup with Vault and Bare Metal Restore options
- Veritas Cluster Server

A server a day keeps disaster at bay

A business culture that encourages saving everything is, in part, driving the growth at Baptist Health, says Montgomery. “Management has the notion that disk space is cheap, so

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Backup Exec System Recovery, we just roll back to the system prior to the patch until we can resolve the issue. That’s been a saving grace for us,” Montgomery claims. “You can even restore the machine onto a different box if you like.”

The results of the disaster recovery solution are impressive: Baptist Health is saving US\$815,000 in annual costs due to avoided system crashes and is producing US\$6.79 million annually in cost avoidance through faster disaster recovery. With these results in mind, Montgomery and his team are now replicating the Microsoft Windows disaster recovery solution for their UNIX- and Linux-based environment using the Bare Metal Restore option in Veritas NetBackup.

Complying with privacy

Compared to SOX, HIPAA requirements are more about protecting the sensitivity and privacy of data. “It’s about who has access to what data and being able to report on who has that access,” Montgomery explains. “Something as simple as locking down our print queue to a receptionist’s printer can be painful to address. Symantec Control Compliance Suite helps us manage that.”

The solution is generating significant results for Baptist Health, including a reduction in preparation time for monthly security audits from an average of 12 hours to 15 minutes.

“We’re working with Symantec Consulting Services to add Symantec Security Information Manager. That will help us identify and respond to incidents and threats in our environment more effectively.”

Touting telemedicine

Seeking to improve care delivery in its ICUs, Baptist Health implemented an eICU LifeGuard system, which uses Veritas Cluster Server for active-passive high-availability clustering, for remote ICU monitoring. The solution enables critical care doctors and nurses in a centralized monitoring location to track real-time changes in patient conditions such as whether or not their pupils are dilated. If an alarming trend is noted, the on-site doctors and nurses are alerted so they can take appropriate steps.

“The system sits on our own fiber ring with redundant paths between our major facilities,” Montgomery notes. “The combination of Veritas Cluster Server and NetBackup ensures 24/7 availability.”

The results of this solution are impressive. Research published in the *Society of Critical Care Journal* documented a 27 percent reduction in deaths and a 14 percent reduction in the length of stay in critical care with the use of electronic monitoring.

Application puzzle masters
The near-constant growth

means that Montgomery and his team must be adept at repackaging applications to map to changes in the environment.

“We leverage many of the tools available in Symantec Altiris Wise Package Studio for application lifecycle management,” Montgomery says. “In 2005, we changed our model from standalone development workstations to a client/server model using Altiris Wise Package Studio. This, coupled with our 300-plus page internally developed Application Repackaging Guide, allowed the Baptist Health team to develop a quality assurance initiative and a repeatable workflow.”

Overall, the use of Altiris Wise Package Studio is helping the IT team to significantly reduce the number of support hours required for application testing and deployment. “We have a more stable environment that requires fewer manual installations and re-imaging of unstable workstations,” explains Erik McLaughlin, corporate manager of client/server infrastructure at Baptist Health.

On one occasion last year, the solution paid for itself. “There was one instance that involved more than 1,600 workstations,” McLaughlin reports. “The use of Altiris Wise Package Studio slashed US\$1.2 million in support costs for our refresh of this environment.”

“The Altiris Wise Package Studio solution is just another way we stay ahead of the curve,” Montgomery says. “And when your—or your loved one’s—life depends on it, that’s just where you want Baptist Health to be.” ■

Levi Crowe writes about business and technology for the Fortune 500 and many leading publications.



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