Kindred Healthcare, Inc.

HP thin clients support efficient, high quality care

Industry
Healthcare

Objective
Support multiple lines of business providing quality patient care in a challenging reimbursement and regulatory environment

Approach
Deploy HP thin clients in patient rooms, home health division desktops, and patient notebooks

IT matters
• Standardize models across multiple scenarios

• Heighten data security through centralization

• Deliver scalable, highly secure solutions across lines of business

Business matters
• Maintain high quality care amid shrinking reimbursements

• Minimize costs through streamlined IT management

• Comply with government regulations

"The flexibility of HP thin clients lets us standardize across usage scenarios. A single model front-ends our clinical records system in patient rooms and also equips home health division desktops."

– Todd Colliver, manager of client systems, Kindred Healthcare

Kindred Healthcare, Inc. is the largest diversified provider of post-acute care services in the United States. The company currently provides healthcare services in 2,169 locations, including 116 transitional care hospitals; six inpatient rehabilitation hospitals; 204 nursing centers; 24 sub-acute units; 101 Kindred at Home hospice, home health and non-medical home care locations; 103 inpatient rehabilitation units (hospital-based); and a contract rehabilitation services business, RehabCare, which served 1,615 non-affiliated facilities. Based in Louisville, Ky., Kindred employs some 76,000 workers in 46 states, and earns annual revenues of approximately $6 billion. Kindred ranked as one of *Fortune* magazine's Most Admired Healthcare Companies for five years in a row.

As a diversified healthcare organization with thousands of facilities across the United States, Kindred Healthcare meets multiple business and technical challenges to provide patient care. Its greatest business challenge today is cost. Reduced Medicare and other reimbursement cut $100 million from Kindred's budget in 2013, and the prospect of ongoing government decreases makes budgetary pressure a permanent fact of life.

"Our quality standards are extremely high. How do we maintain the high levels of quality under the budgetary pressures created by constant reimbursement cuts? It's always about doing more with less," says Todd Colliver, Kindred's manager of client systems.

Specific technology challenges involve cost-efficiently supporting multiple regulated business lines over a wide geographic span. Kindred's technology systems must be scalable and secure, while enabling the company to deploy lifesaving advances in medical services. "IT is a shared service across organizations," Colliver says. "We have to be able to scale solutions across our diversified enterprise and simultaneously meet security requirements such as HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996)."

HP t610 Flexible Thin Client standard

Kindred long has been an HP customer for everything from desktop and mobile PCs to printers. Recently, the company turned again to HP for several critical use cases involving HP thin clients.

The standard patient room equipment in Kindred's 122 hospitals is an HP thin client that gives clinicians access to Kindred's proprietary clinical records application, called ProTouch. The system provides patient information including medications, progress notes, lab and radiology results, and real-time respiration data.

One advantage of HP thin clients is their long lifecycle. Kindred has devices with very long lifecycles still in use, replaced only when they finally break down or when clinical records system upgrades call for added capability such as video display. The most current is the HP t610 Flexible Thin Client. Kindred favors the device for its durability, multimedia performance and versatility, which enables the company to standardize on a single model for multiple use cases. Kindred also uses the HP t610 Flexible Thin Client in its home health division, to provide office workers with on-demand access to applications—including the Homecare Homebase clinical system as well as standard office, email and printing capabilities—through Citrix XenDesktop. In hospital exam rooms, Kindred takes advantage of the model's flexible mounting options to use wall mounts or swing arms, depending on the room configuration. In home health division offices, it runs two HP monitors off each device.

"Our biggest challenge today is cost. HP thin clients enable us to cost-efficiently maintain high levels of service quality."

– Todd Colliver, manager of client systems, Kindred Healthcare

"The HP t610 Flexible Thin Client is versatile and allows us to standardize on one platform across many usage scenarios," Colliver says. "I can mount it in a patient room and run a terminal session on it that reaches back to the clinical records system. Or I can take the same device and put it on the desk of a home health office worker and provide a virtualized desktop that goes back to our data center. We like that flexibility and the robustness of the design. It lets us commoditize the hardware." Kindred has deployed more than 4,000 HP thin clients to date.

One advantage is cost efficiency—the thin clients are less expensive to purchase and simpler to manage. "We do very little configuration of the device, so we can just

HP recommends Windows.

HP thin clients deliver scalable, secure solutions

take one out, plug in another and the user instantly gets the same level of service they had previously," Colliver says. Another advantage is security. With no data resident on the device, even if one is stolen no patient or company data is compromised. Kindred uses HP Device Manager software to inventory its thin clients remotely, push out multi-screen configurations and upgrade agent access to the clinical records system or Citrix.

HP mt40 Mobile Client connects families

Kindred's 204 nursing and rehabilitation centers are where patients receive intensive transitional care, specialized dementia and Alzheimer's care, or hospice and palliative care. Kindred wanted to give these patients and their families a way to stay connected, to communicate via Skype, Facebook, email or other online resources. So the company created collections of thin client notebooks available for checkout in each of its nursing and rehabilitation centers. Kindred started with five thin clients per center, but users soon asked for more. As in the clinical records system and home health office scenarios, the solution is easy to scale. The devices when powered down return to their original state, retaining no user data.

The thin client model Kindred chose for its nursing and rehabilitation center patient notebooks is the HP mt40 Mobile Client. Featuring Intel® Celeron technology, along with robust Flash and RAM, the devices deliver the performance needed for viewing digital graphics and media. Kindred liked that

it offers an optional webcam, making it simple for patients to teleconference with friends and family. Windows® Embedded Standard (WES) gives users a familiar interface.

"We have a great relationship with both Microsoft and HP," Colliver says. "We have confidence in the technology, and users can interact in the Windows® environment just like the normal interface they're used to. The patient notebooks have proved to be a highly successful value-add for patients. Now it's easy for them to communicate face-to-face with friends and family members even at remote distances."

HP PCs and printers support efficiency

In addition to the HP thin clients, Kindred relies on HP solutions ranging from desktop and mobile PCs to printers and servers. The HP Compaq 6300 Pro Business PC is the organization's workhorse standard. "They go out on everybody's desk who gets a PC—in our corporate support center, all business offices, hospitals, nursing homes, and there's one in every home health office for tasks that must be done locally, not virtually," Colliver says. Workers who need mobile solutions receive HP EliteBook 8470p Notebook PCs, chosen for their high performance and business rugged design. On its Computer on Wheels mobile carts, Kindred uses HP EliteBook 8770w Mobile Workstations. The company chose these for their durability, large 17.3-inch diagonal screens, and extended battery option that enables nurses to use the devices up to 11.5 hours[1] without recharging. "When putting

HP recommends Windows.

mobile workstations on carts, we have to think about how long they will stay running, because it's not practical for the nurse to have to plug it in every time they wheel from one room to the next," Colliver says. "The HP EliteBook 8770w Mobile Workstation runs across multiple shifts before it is recharged. But nurses can also plug them in if needed, so it's the best of both worlds."

Kindred also has currently deployed 10,398 HP LaserJet printers throughout the enterprise. "HP has been great about working with us to ensure we put the right device in the right location," Colliver says. "We have small-office devices, workgroup devices, color mono—all matched to need."

With its breadth and depth of solutions and consultative approach, HP supports Kindred's commitment to patient care, Colliver adds. "The HP folks come in, spend time to learn about us, and keep us abreast of technology developments. Our challenge every day in healthcare is to innovate. Our reimbursements may drop but our quality will not. HP is more than a vendor; it's a key ally in enabling us to innovate for quality."

Customer at a glance

Application
Exam room clinic record system; home health division virtual desktops; patient notebooks

Hardware
• HP t610 Flexible Thin Client
• HP mt40 Mobile Client
• HP Compaq 6300 Pro Business PC
• HP EliteBook 8470p Notebook PC
• HP EliteBook 8770w Mobile Workstation
• HP servers
• HP LaserJet printers

Software
• HP Device Manager

HP services
• HP Care Packs

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