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*Dr. John Daily
Executive Director
Encompass Medical Group*



CUSTOMER NAME

Encompass Medical Group

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

CHECK POINT PRODUCTS

- VPN-1® SmallOffice™
- Safe@Office™
- Security Management Portal

CUSTOMER NEEDS MET

- HIPAA compliant Internet security solution
- Turnkey security solution from a managed service provider

Encompass Writes New Prescription for Security with Check Point

ABOUT ENCOMPASS MEDICAL GROUP

The Encompass Medical Group in San Diego, CA is a thriving medical enterprise and getting stronger with the aid of information technology. Today, the group has 22 primary care physicians, a full-time support staff of 55 in 12 office locations, including its own clinical reference laboratory. Information Technology is one of the essential tools that has helped Encompass share needed management and clinical data to successfully meet the economic challenges of today's managed care health plans while maintaining quality for its patients.

THE ENCOMPASS CHALLENGE

The Group's foremost concern is security. Federal law must protect patient medical records transmitted electronically from unauthorized access. Though the privacy rules laid down by the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) do not take effect until Spring 2004 for small businesses, Encompass wants to ensure that any new technology it adopts is HIPAA-compliant from the outset.

Encompass has ambitious expansion plans that largely depend on linking a growing number of locations and connecting to partners, such as insurers, suppliers and billers. As Encompass expands, it wants to leverage the Internet as much as possible—as a cost-efficient way to exchange information, streamlining operations and unifying internal and Internet-based applications, such as accounting, billing and insurance claim management.

Another major challenge for Encompass is managing the complexity that comes with growth. As is the case with all medical groups like Encompass, their expertise is in medicine, not information technology. That means they need a partner who can recommend the best solutions to achieve their business objectives, but one who is acutely aware of and can help them handle the headaches of daily administration and management.

Encompass found the cure with firewall and VPN solutions for small and medium-sized businesses from Check Point and Telcom Network Team (TNT), a managed services provider with special expertise in network security solutions for the United States government and various healthcare organizations.

THE CHECK POINT SOLUTION

Encompass Medical Group replaced its painfully slow, point-to-point 56K dialup connections between offices with “always-on” broadband Internet connections. All Encompass locations are connected and protected by Check Point.

At each site, a security appliance from VPN Dynamics, a Check Point certified OPSEC™ partner, plugs in between the DSL modem and the office PC network to intercept and block attacks. The appliance at the main office runs Check Point VPN-1® SmallOffice™ software, while the ones at the six remote offices run Safe@Office™ software.

Both VPN-1 SmallOffice and Safe@Solutions incorporate Check Point's Stateful Inspection firewall technology to give Encompass the same high level of network integrity and data protection that much larger enterprises demand. Check Point Internet security solutions enable every Encompass location to safely and cost effectively share applications and exchange information with each other, with insurers and with other outside partners, as well as receive much higher performance than dedicated dial-up connections.

TNT manages the security for all Encompass locations remotely via the Internet, using the Secure Management Portal (SMP), which can scale to thousands of locations.

“We recommended Check Point to Encompass with confidence as the best Internet security solution for flexibility and scalability to meet their growth needs. In addition, both Check Point and VPN Dynamics are extremely responsive to our needs, as a managed service provider, to deliver the most reliable service possible to our customers at all times,” said Tony Williams, Telcom Network Team.

THE BENEFITS OF CHECK POINT SECURITY

A healthy foundation for HIPAA compliance

Encompass is making the transition from paper records and manual processes to online information sharing, using the Internet. Orders for blood tests and the results will be exchanged between offices and the lab online, and doctors will be able to view and update medical records online in examination rooms.

Encompass has already significantly reduced the billing and payment cycle by sending insurance claims via a web-based application to a clearinghouse for large insurers, such as

Medicare, Medi-Cal, Champus, Aetna and Cigna. “As we evolve toward electronic records management and online practice management, the Check Point solution implemented by TNT provides the secure foundation we need for compliance with the HIPAA rules for transmitting confidential patient information,” said Dr. John Daily, executive director of Encompass Medical Group.

Painless protection

“Our Internet security system is completely transparent to The Group's doctors and staff,” said Daily. “We want the doctors to serve their patients and the staff to manage the office. The Check Point Internet security system that TNT manages for us is exactly what we wanted.”

Using the Security Management Portal, TNT can define and manage all elements of the Encompass security policy, add or remove VPN connections and manage bandwidth for every Encompass site from any location with an Internet link. “The remote management capabilities of the Check Point security solution is a major factor in our ability to provide cost-effective, reliable services to Encompass,” says Telecom Network Team's Network Engineer Charles Antrim. TNT relies on how easy the Check Point solution is to configure and manage.

A full-spectrum security solution

With an always-open connection to the Internet, Encompass security needs include virus protection and content access control. Check Point's open flexible security infrastructure and extensive array of OPSEC partners allows TNT to choose the applications best suited to Encompass' needs for a total security solution. For real-time virus scanning of all inbound and outbound Encompass network traffic, TNT uses VirusWall from OPSEC partner InterScan. TNT also maximizes network bandwidth for Encompass' business-critical applications using OPSEC-certified SuperScout software to control user access to Internet content.

THE ENCOMPASS FUTURE

Encompass plans to let billers work from home via remote access. TNT is studying two Check Point options for providing the necessary security and HIPAA compliance. VPN-1 SecureClient™ would encrypt communications and give at-home employees a personal firewall that is centrally managed. With Safe@Home™ appliances, the home offices can be secured and managed the same way Encompass' remote branches are with Safe@Office appliances.

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