

Interbit Data's NetSafe Solution Keeps One Health System's Blood Bank Flowing.

Our client is a midwestern community-based healthcare system that offers care in 33 medical specialties and serves 20 communities across two states. The health system is comprised of five hospitals, eight specialty and surgical centers and more than 40 medical clinics and healthcare service centers.



An EMR switch—retaining access to critical data during downtimes.

This health system first began using Interbit Data's NetSafe downtime solution, which stores crucial patient data on separate servers where it is protected in the event of planned or unplanned system downtimes, in 2012. At the time, the health system was using MEDITECH as its electronic medical record (EMR), and they knew that NetSafe works seamlessly with this software, pushing out reports to designated workstations across the network during downtimes to allow for HIPAA-compliant distribution and printing of the right data, when and where it is needed.

When the health system decided to make the switch from MEDITECH to Epic in 2016, they wanted the assurance that the consistent, seamless access to patient data they'd come to expect from NetSafe would carry over to their new EMR.

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—Lead Applications Analyst

Sticking with NetSafe for blood bank and other vital services.

The Lead Applications Analyst for the health system carefully researched the features and capabilities of Epic's own, built-in downtime solution and compared them against what was available with NetSafe. At first, he says, he thought that Epic's solution would be self-sufficient, but the more he looked into the health system's specific needs, the more he realized that wasn't the case.

“ Hospitals should consider—what do you need during a downtime? If your system is going to be down for hours or days, what information do you have to have in nurses' and providers' hands so they can take care of patients?”

“Our blood bank module isn't run through Epic; it's a third-party application,” he says. “We quickly realized that Epic's downtime solutions aren't compatible with non-Epic applications across our health system, leaving us no way to access information or distribute reports for those applications.”

Vital data in the blood bank system includes which pints of blood have been tested and certified, blood type, and inventory information for each location. “During a system downtime, if a surgeon needs several pints of blood in the middle of an emergency surgery, we need to be able to respond, to know what we have on hand and that we can get the blood where it needs to go right away.” The absence of such information during a downtime can be a matter of life or death.

The Lead Applications Analyst says that initially, after the switch to Epic, the health system implemented a temporary, home-grown process for distributing reports and sharing downtime information with the blood bank application. “We put something together so we can encrypt a PDF and push it out manually to each of the workstations that need the blood bank report, but it's not nearly as elegant or efficient as what we can do with NetSafe.”



Some features of NetSafe that he says helped cement the decision to stick with Interbit's solution when the health system switched EMRs include:

- Report generation and distribution is completely automated
- Reports are customized, consisting of only the specific data that any given location or department needs
- Information is standardized and encrypted, making it both compliant and convenient for the end-user to access
- NetSafe pushes out notifications both when the system is unable to deliver reports and when the receiving department is unable to receive reports, alerting the right hospital staff to potential problems as they arise

Peace of mind regardless of EMR.

Now that the EMR switch is complete and Epic is fully implemented, he says there are several non-Epic applications across the health system for which they plan to use NetSafe as the primary downtime solution.

In addition to the blood bank, another area that directly touches patient care where NetSafe could be implemented is the health system's two offsite nursing home locations. "Patient care is our primary motivation," says the Lead Applications Analyst. "It's crucial to know what medication every resident is currently on, how often they take those medications, and so on. Without a report on hand, or some way to administer medications when the system is down, it becomes a patient safety issue."

He says the nursing homes are working on gathering certain patient data into a digital directory, and they plan to work with NetSafe to ensure that when new information or a new report is entered, NetSafe can monitor the directory, recognize new information, and distribute up-to-date reports automatically.

"We have dozens of non-Epic applications, as I think every hospital does, and many of them are vital to patient care," he says. "Hospitals should consider — what do you need during a downtime? If your system is going to be down for hours or days, what information do you have to have in nurses' and providers' hands so they can take care of patients?"

In the next several months, the Lead Applications Analyst says he plans to have conversations with several departments across the health system to determine where NetSafe can be implemented next. "I anticipate when we have those conversations, we'll have needs for NetSafe that we don't even know about yet," he says.

Interbit Data provides software automation solutions that ensure your patient care teams have secure, uninterrupted and reliable access to clinical and administrative data when and where they need it.

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