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## Technology Driven Healthcare

# Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center Goes Hi-Tech

The only major medical center serving a population of about 200,000 in seven predominantly rural Mississippi counties and two parishes in across-the-river Louisiana strives diligently to provide the same level of modern, technology-driven healthcare that people would receive in cities like Jackson, New Orleans and Memphis. That means the underlying information technology systems for some 1,200 employees, doctors and other healthcare professionals with access to the network must also be state of the art a constant challenge for Chief Information Officer Mike Moak and his relatively small staff of 14 people.

"The bigger hospitals may be ahead of us on some of these things," said Moak, "but we're not far behind. We have to have the capabilities to bring in options for the solutions we need to do the kind of job the hospital wants to do for this community."

A new tool Moak and his team added to their network is DiagWin Professional, a utility from Norcross, Ga.-based BOSS (see <http://www.boss-solutions.com/info.aspx>), which enables IT professionals to more efficiently track and manage network resources, software and patches and easily upgrade PC Client software and operating system patches from a single Windows-based console.

The medical center's network integrates a rich mix of PCs running a variety of Microsoft Windows operating systems, dedicated application and network servers and a wide variety of integrated applications for both clinical and administrative business processes. Feeding into its core Unix-based client/server systems like the McKesson STAR software platform for patient care, clinical and financial operations, the Mississippi hospital has embraced wireless bedside clinical documentation applications for collecting patient information, nurse staffing technologies and a Web portal for doctors who serve the hospital. The portal will provide physicians with anytime/anywhere



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access to patient information. Although building the network is a big enough chore for a relatively small IT organization, maintaining it with constant upgrades from software vendors is an even bigger personnel-intensive operation.

In addition to having to watch cost for IT support, Moak and his team also have to take into account new laws coming into place to protect patient privacy and a plethora of network security issues and responsibilities. That means there's lots of stuff on the network that Moak and his team have to account for to help the hospital remain in compliance with regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

One of Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center's primary partners is BOSS, a Norcross, Ga.-based network asset management software and services firm. SMRMC employs BOSS's DiagWin Professional network management and software deployment application. BOSS is approved as a vendor by both the U.S. General Services Administration and Direct Medical, Inc., which many local government-funded hospitals like SMRMC rely on in purchasing decisions. SMRMC uses DiagWin to collect reliable, real-time inventory information about every PC on its network and to deploy applications and patches, including non-Microsoft applications like STAR Navigator and Care Manager.

"That's the main thing the DiagWin solution does for us," said Moak. "It helps us with security and risk management."

"If a PC 'walks out' of here," Moak said, referring to the fact that sometimes computers get stolen or lost in an organization, "we have to know what walked out with it what information was on it."

One added advantage of the DiagWin inventory, Moak added, is that it enables him to provide better security for the network by easily identifying unauthorized software installations on end user computers things like tool bars, browser add-ons and other downloadable applications that sometimes invite viruses and other malicious code.

"DiagWin is a great solution for the healthcare environment," said Suri Anantharama, the BOSS consultant who works directly with Moak and his team. "Although enterprises like Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center try as best they can to standardize on software and hardware platforms, the reality is that the typical hospital today purely defines the heterogeneous multi-vendor network environment. New things come along every day. The network changes every day. With DiagWin, the hospital IT manager can determine exactly what is on the network no matter who makes it or who put it there."

But the biggest return on investment Moak says that he has seen from the DiagWin installation is the amount of time staff saves on software deployment and patch management all of which can be handled remotely for the organization's specified PCs from the DiagWin console PC in the IT department.

In a client/server environment like his, Moak says, anytime there's a change

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made to a server-based application, there are usually changes needed on each client machine that accesses the application. Also, many of the computers in the SMRMC environment run Windows XP an operating system that's frequently updated for security and other enhancements.

One application, an accounts receivable package that has about 60 users, is updated on a monthly basis by the software vendor. Previously, an IT staffer, armed with a CD containing the monthly fix, had to physically walk around and install the upgrade on each client machine a process that took two or three hours every month and interrupted users from their work. Now, with DiagWin, it's a 15-minute process, Moak says, with no user disruption.

"We can run DiagWin off a PC that's also used for other purposes," said Moak. "That means we're running the inventory and software distribution from a \$500 machine instead of having to buy a \$3,000 server."

DiagWin Professional helps the hospital fulfill its mission to serve its patients with "big city technology" without big-city-technology costs.

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#### About Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center

Southwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center (SMRMC) in McComb, Miss., is the only major medical center in a 60-mile radius that has developed into an integrated health system that provides comprehensive, state-of-the-art healthcare. Established in 1969, the center serves a seven-county area of Mississippi and also draws from two parishes in neighboring eastern Louisiana. SMRMC is a 160-bed medical center with over 1200 employees, and 70 physicians on staff. Other Southwest Health System facilities include the Mississippi Cancer Institute; The Cardiovascular Institute of Mississippi; Lawrence County Hospital; a 20-bed geriatric/psychiatric nursing unit; and a home health service serving 17 counties. In addition, Southwest Health System owns and operates nine physician clinics, including rural health clinics, an internal medicine clinic, an outpatient rehabilitation center, GI clinic, Family Practice Clinic, and Orthopedics Clinic.

#### About BOSS

Founded in 1991 and located in Norcross, Ga., BOSS provides information technology asset management software and services for enterprises in the government, healthcare, manufacturing, financial, and business and professional services sectors. The Microsoft Gold Certified Software Development Partner's flagship Windows-based products, DiagWin and U-Win, handle hardware and software inventory, deployment and maintenance, and unattended Windows migration in any size heterogeneous enterprise network environment. For more information visit at <http://www.boss-solutions.com/info.aspx> or call 800.317.6639.

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