

Family Health Network adopts cloud DRaaS for VMware environments



“With the solution that Druva provides, we can do a VM DR restore from Druva Phoenix to AWS, whenever we want.”

—Don Fletcher, Infrastructure Manager, Family Health Network

About Family Health Network

Family Health Network (FHN) is a group of medical providers offering health plans to more than 230,000 members. The organization counts about 8,400 physicians and more than 95 hospitals in Chicago and elsewhere in Cook County and Northern Illinois rendering medical services to Medicaid, Medicare and Obamacare recipients. As FHN is merged with another company and faces the opportunity to serve customers nationally, unique challenges have emerged regarding protecting company and customer data.

The VMware Cloud Backup Challenge

Recently, the healthcare network decided to move its data center systems from its legacy, on-premises operation to a cloud-based service through VMware's vCloud Air. The move gives the organization the flexibility to scale as needed. IT managers can now easily integrate new data networks, such as those of newly acquired health insurance companies, into a cloud-based, virtualized data center as needed, avoiding the costs of new hardware and software systems. “We had the choice of either spending money in upgrading our on-premises infrastructure, including the data center, or moving everything to a cloud-based solution, and we chose the cloud-based solution,” said Don Fletcher, Infrastructure Manager with FHN.

When moving to a cloud-based disaster recovery as a service (DRaaS) model, FHN envisioned a system

Challenges

- Lack of visibility and control over VMware environments, on-prem and in the cloud
- Administrative complexity and bottlenecks of legacy solutions for backup and DR
- Concerns with meeting data compliance demands in the cloud
- Spiraling storage costs due to data growth and replication for data protection
- Intense manual effort when integrating new companies' data after mergers

Solution

- Druva Phoenix enables FHN to centrally manage backup and disaster recovery for on-prem and cloud VMware environments

Results

- Immediate DR capabilities for VMware environments on-prem and in the cloud
- 30% percent reduction in time managing backup and DR, freeing IT resources
- Central visibility and management across multiple remote sites
- Cloud-native off-site scalability
- Built-in security and controls enabling immediate HIPAA cloud compliance

that could quickly scale up and down, moving data within a virtual environment in Amazon Web Services (AWS). However, when managers sought to add data backup and protection, they found that their IT provider's legacy system could not support a cloud-based backup solution since it lacked the equipment and the capability to provide the service. As Fletcher explains, "With Avamar we simply can't do what we are trying to do, which is cloud-based backup with vCloud Air." In addition, with FHN operating in the highly regulated healthcare market, there was a critical need for a solution that met strict requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

"For our disaster recovery system, we had a contract for specific hardware, at specific locations," Fletcher said. "Today, that's an archaic way of doing things because we would have to adjust the contract if we needed more hardware or more bandwidth. With a cloud-based solution, it's on-demand and a very quick, very cost effective way to bring up a data center without having all these different contracts in place. We needed a cloud-based backup solution that would allow that to happen. We can do that with Druva."

Druva Phoenix: Cloud-Based Resiliency for VMware Workloads

FHN found that Druva Phoenix could ensure disaster recovery and data protection for virtual environments in the cloud. "Previously, we would have only so much bandwidth, and deduplicating data would be time-consuming and not easily scalable," Fletcher said. "With Druva Phoenix we can change on the fly. If we want to put 10 servers in AWS, we can. If we want to update those servers, we can. So it's just a much quicker, scalable backup solution."

Currently, Druva is protecting their VMware on-premises environment as well as their new cloud resources. In addition, FHN leverages Druva to provide offsite backup and information management for all of their remote offices. The time that their team had spent managing and checking backups has already been reduced by over 30 percent, freeing IT resources to work on other projects, with more time savings on the horizon as the solution is expanded.

The organization's new solution with Druva and AWS combines high-performance and scalable backup, DR, archival, and analytics to simplify data protection, improve visibility, and dramatically reduce the risk, cost, and effort of managing its complex information environment, while at the same time ensuring full HIPAA compliance.

"We can do a disaster recovery restore from Druva Phoenix to AWS whenever we want," Fletcher said. "We're continuing down the path of reformulating our disaster recovery solution with Druva Phoenix."

—Don Fletcher, Infrastructure Manager,
Family Health Network



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