

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE

IMPROVING REMOTE ACCESS SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY FOR HEALTHCARE



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BRIAN BARD, BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY ANALYST

Student Health Services at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is comprised of a Student Health Center, Counseling Center, and a Wellness Center that serve the healthcare needs of the approximately 29,000 students at the University. An urban research university located in the Charlotte, North Carolina metropolitan area, UNC Charlotte is the fastest growing higher education institution in the UNC system.

The Health Services Office of Information Technology attends to the information technology needs of the staff and clinicians working in Student Health Services. They also manage routine maintenance on the various technologies used in Student Health Services, including medical diagnostic devices. With buildings at complete opposite sides of the campus, and more devices being added to the mix, the need for more efficient support became apparent.

From Walking to Running with Remote Support

“When I came to Student Health Services six years ago, there was an ad hoc collection of remote support tools for different devices, but no comprehensive remote support solution,” said Brian Bard, Business and Technology Analyst for UNCC Student Health Services. “At that point, I was the only person in the department and the Counseling Center was on the opposite side of the campus from the Student Health Center. I wanted to improve our responsiveness and felt remote support was the way to do that. I had used BeyondTrust at the previous university where I worked and knew it was an easy-to-use solution that would meet our remote support needs.”

Bard developed a proposal for his director and the University’s central IT department, comparing the benefits of BeyondTrust to other tools, such as LogMeIn and TeamViewer. BeyondTrust was clearly the best choice due to its perpetual software updates, license structure, disaster recovery capabilities, ease of set-up and management, and most importantly, security. “It wasn’t hard to make the business case for selecting BeyondTrust initially, and the solution has just gotten more robust over time.”

With BeyondTrust, the typical response time from incident reporting to resolution has been reduced from approximately 6 hours to 15 minutes. “Just not having to spend 30 minutes walking across campus saves us a ton of time,” said Bard. “But other helpful features like File Transfer and Canned Scripts streamline the work that we need to do.”

Meeting Security and HIPAA Standards

Selecting the most secure remote support solution was of critical importance because Student Health Services handles confidential patient data and must comply with HIPAA regulations. BeyondTrust works through Student Health Services’ firewall without VPN tunneling, which enables the perimeter security to remain intact.

BeyondTrust also enhances the security of vendor access to the medical records system at UNC Charlotte. “Previously, the only way we could let vendors remote in was to set up a VPN,” said Bard. “I didn’t like that because I couldn’t see or control what they were doing on our network. With BeyondTrust, we can give them limited access to our environment and record their sessions so I have an audit log of exactly what has been done. That makes our environment much more secure.”

Day to day, the Health Services Office of Information Technology (HSOIT) uses BeyondTrust to troubleshoot a wide variety of user issues. One key benefit is that they can use a single solution for multiple use cases. The team uses BeyondTrust for everything from password resets to troubleshooting printers to performing maintenance on servers, and reps can log in to BeyondTrust from anywhere.

Increasing Customer Satisfaction

The staff and clinicians that the support team serves appreciate BeyondTrust as well. “Everyone in Student Health Services is very busy, so when they need help, they like that we can troubleshoot their device while they get on with their work. And we aren’t intruding in a medical setting where patients are being seen. I can connect to a laptop that has an EKG machine hooked to it and troubleshoot it without having to go into a patient’s room,” said Bard.

Working in college health, peer review is a highly valued practice for ensuring continual institutional improvement. The Health Services Office of Information Technology uses BeyondTrust’s survey feature to obtain feedback from users to evaluate the department’s effectiveness. Customized surveys are offered to users following each session to gather valuable data on customer satisfaction. Survey results offer immediate feedback on individual sessions as well as a way to track performance over time.

Migrating to The Cloud

Recently, the Health Services Office of Information Technology decided to replace their on-premises BeyondTrust appliance with BeyondTrust Secure Cloud for Remote Support. “We’ve been moving more and more services to the cloud, which makes them easier to support for a small department like ours,” said Bard. “Getting BeyondTrust in the cloud was a great idea for disaster recovery and continuity planning. It also put BeyondTrust fully in my department’s control without having the appliance under the purview of our central IT department.”

Looking to The Future

UNC Charlotte is planning to improve productivity even more by deploying BeyondTrust’s password management solution to improve password security. Since the institution has several servers that are regularly accessed by several team members, they need a more secure and efficient way to manage and store credentials. Using BeyondTrust Vault integrated with BeyondTrust Remote Support, a rep can simply inject the credentials needed to access a specific server or system, without ever knowing or seeing them. “Credential injection will be a tremendous convenience for us,” said Bard.

Bard has had other campuses ask about BeyondTrust when he has used it in joint meetings to make a presentation. “I tell them they couldn’t go wrong by choosing BeyondTrust. It’s such a great tool for secure remote access. And if they aren’t familiar with it, I just open up a remote session and show it off. I’m a big advocate for using BeyondTrust.”

BeyondTrust is the worldwide leader in Privileged Access Management, offering the most seamless approach to preventing privilege-related breaches. Our extensible platform empowers organizations to easily scale privilege security as threats evolve across endpoint, server, cloud, DevOps, and network device environments. We are trusted by 20,000 customers.

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