Industry: Healthcare
Installation: 6 locations, 9 ShoreGear voice switches, 180 ShorePhone IP phones
Date of Install: October 2005

Challenge:

Penobscot Community Health Care was growing rapidly and its old Comdial telephone system was not able to keep up with the organization's increasing demands.

Solution:

ShoreTel provided a comprehensive VoIP solution, from ShoreGear voice switches to ShorePhone telephones and ShoreTel's ShoreWare Director management package.

Benefits:

- Six locations are now on a unified phone system, enabling users to call one another using 4-digit dialing.
- Powerful features enhance workgroups, user productivity and customer service.
- PCHC estimates significant savings due to better line utilization and the ability to meet staffing needs more effectively and efficiently.

PENOBSCOT COMMUNITY HEALTH TRADES PBX FOR VOIP TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

ShoreTel Simplifies Management, Provides System Unification, and Enhances Employee Productivity

Penobscot Community Health Care (PCHC) in Bangor, Maine is a non-profit organization governed by a board of volunteers. Since its incorporation in 1997, the organization's mission has been to provide access for everybody—regardless of their ability to pay—to comprehensive, integrated, quality, outpatient medical and dental care, mental health and prevention services.

From 2002 to 2005, PCHC grew over 600%, going from a 40-employee organization to well over 250 employees. While PCHC was happy with its Comdial PBX based telephone system, it was not easy to scale to support the rapid growth. Faced with having to do piecemeal additions to grow the system, the organization determined it was time to look at new alternatives. In addition, PCHC wanted to begin integrating its telephony system with the network, including tying the phone system to a wireless network that allows doctors mobile access to patient information via handheld devices, and ShoreTel was capable of this type of integration.
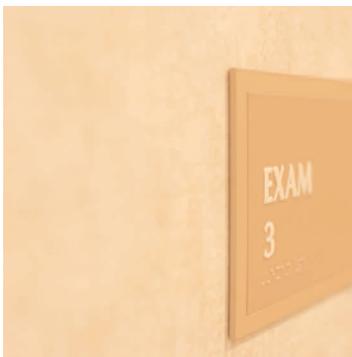
TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

PCHC determined that Voice over IP (VoIP) was the way to go and established a short list of vendors to consider, including Comdial for its VoIP offering, NEC, and ShoreTel. Placing priority on ease of installation, the ability to integrate with many different technologies, scalability, flexibility and modularity, PCHC chose ShoreTel. "We really liked the fact that ShoreTel was going to be easy to integrate into our existing system and we wouldn't have to rip out all of our equipment to accommodate the change," said Doug Kingsbury, CIO for PCHC.

With the help of its integration partner, Massachusetts-based Datamart, ShoreTel provided PCHC with a comprehensive VoIP telephone system, including nine ShoreGear-12/60 voice switches for the organization's six locations throughout Maine and more than 180 ShorePhone 530 IP telephones. The implementation in October 2005 took just three days.

ENHANCED WORKGROUPS

PCHC utilizes many different workgroups, organizing various providers into teams acting as small medical practices. ShoreTel Workgroups make the creation and management of these teams easy. The ShoreTel system also enables workgroup supervisors to train new employees faster, to ensure agents

ShoreTel™

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> *Penobscot Community*
> *Health Care*

are delivering consistent service, and to obtain a comprehensive view of how calls are being handled by each agent. Performance and statistical information provided by the ShoreTel system gives PCHC an overview of how each workgroup is performing and what needs to be done for further improvement.

"We like the flexibility of managing our workgroups as separate entities and changing them on the fly as necessary," said Kingsbury. "This is a big benefit and goes back to ShoreTel's ease of use and the ability to administer the entire system locally."

In addition to the Workgroup functionality, ShoreTel's ShoreWare Auto-Attendant provides PCHC with 24-hour automated call answering and routing to improve service for inbound callers, which is crucial for a healthcare organization. Outgoing prompts can be customized and linked to the time of day and/or day of week and even tailored to workgroups. Each healthcare team can have its own menus with unique greetings and options. Callers are greeted by an auto-attendant that directs their calls to the right person with the press of a button. This self-help solution means employees can spend their time on critical healthcare tasks rather than answering calls intended for another individual.

"We probably have more than 15 workgroups now and callers reach each one by choosing an option through the auto-attendant," said Kingsbury. "We also give callers the option of talking to an operator, which is what some people prefer. Our community now perceives us as having a good auto-attendant that's user-friendly and effective and we meet the needs of every type of caller. The flexibility of the ShoreTel system allows us to manage and meet the specific needs of each healthcare practice effectively and efficiently."

BETTER PRODUCTIVITY AND CUSTOMER CARE

ShoreTel phone systems are easy to use, flexible, and reliable. With the ShoreTel system in place, all PCHC employees are now on the same phone and voice mail system, using 4-digit dialing to reach employees at either location and even dialing co-workers by name.

"With the ShoreTel system in place, our practice has drawn closer together and it appears unified, as though it's in one location," said Kingsbury. "The new system also encourages more communications between all of our offices.

The system gives each PCHC employee a graphical interface on their computer, ShoreTel's Personal Call Manager, which provides Microsoft Outlook integration for directory dialing, contact screen pops, and calendar integration. ShoreWare Personal Call Manager gives users the equivalent of a desktop PBX—a powerful, all-purpose tool for managing voice communications. With it, employees can quickly type in a name, bring up a number, and make their calls from local online directories—all with the click of a mouse, right from the desktop.

With ShoreTel's e-mail integration, employees efficiently manage their e-mail and voice mail activity. Voice mail messages are stored in the industry-standard WAV Audio for Windows format, allowing users to play them on multimedia PCs, attach them to e-mail messages or embed them in other

documents. The ability of the ShoreTel system to track customer phone calls, export and distribute voice mails files, and keep a running history of calls into each number is helpful in continually monitoring and improving customer service.

"The management reporting capabilities of the ShoreTel system allow us to make instant changes to our system and alter how we do business on the fly," said Kingsbury. "We're able to look at call volumes and utilization and determine if problems are due to how we have the system configured or due to human error. It's nice to have the actual data from the phone system to make immediate changes to improve things."

EASED MANAGEMENT

PCHC uses ShoreTel's ShoreWare Director, a browser-based management interface that provides easy access to the system from anywhere on the network. Through ShoreWare Director, an administrator can manage every site, including voice mail, automated attendant and desktop applications. Adding a new user is as simple as clicking on "add new" and entering the user's name, which automatically updates the centralized database and the rest of the ShoreTel switches. When the new user is added, a mailbox is automatically created, the automated attendant dial-by-name and number feature is updated, and online directories are revised. The entire process takes just seconds.

"It's so easy to manage moves, adds and changes, and we can manage the ShoreTel system from anywhere on our network," said Kingsbury. "While the ShoreTel system is flexible, it's also fool-proof. If a wrong change is made to a workgroup or a user's configuration, it can be quickly undone. It's imperative that the system is running correctly in the healthcare industry."

EXCELLENT PROGNOSIS

PCHC is happy with its decision to go with ShoreTel and appreciates the responsiveness and support of integrator Datamart. "While we haven't done any type of return on investment calculations, I know that over time, savings will be reflected in our staffing model," said Kingsbury. "We are also utilizing our trunks to their fullest potential, managing them as pooled resources. We're able to do that because of all the data ShoreTel provides."

In the near future, PCHC will utilize ShoreTel's SoftPhone, a desktop utility that delivers telephony capabilities to user's desktop computers. When no telephone is available, with SoftPhone, a PCHC employee's computer can deliver all the capabilities of their desktop extension, raising the bar on mobile productivity. In addition, there are plans to integrate the organization's in-house patient databases in order to allow in-depth information to pop up as soon as a patient calls. "We specifically wanted a system that would allow us to do this level of integration and ShoreTel is it," said Kingsbury. "ShoreTel provides everything we need – modular design, scalability, ease of management. It is the perfect fit."

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