

MARKET BRIEF

AHA Endorses AT&T's Voice and Data Services for Hospitals

An 18-month American Hospital Association (AHA) evaluation shows AT&T has the geographic reach, financial stability and health care expertise needed to provide high-value voice and data infrastructures for hospitals.

Communication: The Vital Imperative for Hospitals

The mission that drives every hospital is to meet the highest standards for quality and safety when caring for patients. At the same time, hospitals face competitive pressures to attract patients, reduce costs and make the best use of increasingly hard-to-find and expensive skilled professionals. Hospitals must also find ways to treat an aging population outside of expensive in-patient settings, to make skilled expertise available even in remote emergency rooms and increasingly, to share data in regional and national health information organizations.

"Consumers are taking a more active role in their own care" as they communicate with doctors online and through teleconferencing, says Anthony Burke, the CEO of American Hospital Association (AHA) Solutions, the subsidiary of the AHA that endorsed AT&T for its voice and data networking products after reviewing bids from a range of networking and communications providers. Smaller hospitals and physicians' groups are also using voice and data links to take advantage of the services and expertise at larger hospitals, he says.

The amount of data produced by modern medical imaging systems can also strain hospital networks. A single computed radiography (CR) mammography screening can produce as much as 200Mbytes of data, while high resolution neuro imaging can produce as much as 200Gbytes for each subject. Hospitals require high-bandwidth data networks to help ensure "a radiologist, for example, does not have to wait for an image to download," says Brad Hunter, director of technology solutions for AHA Solutions. They must also comply with government regulations requiring the availability and confidentiality of sensitive patient information wherever and whenever it's needed.

All of these trends underscore the need for more reliable, high-performance and secure voice and data communications. "The key drivers are reduction of medical errors, improved patient care, and an extension of the continuity of patient care beyond the four walls of the hospital," says Pat Pothier, AT&T's director of medical marketing.

The Value of the AHA Endorsement

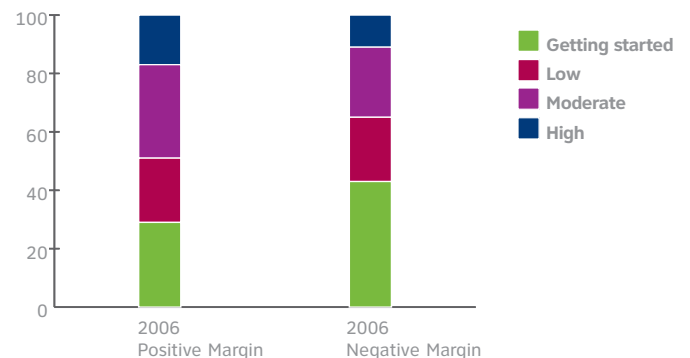
Choosing the right service provider requires a long, resource-intensive process of understanding and evaluating the qualifications of multiple suppliers. For many hospitals, the requirements are the same: wide geographic coverage; reliable, secure service and a deep understanding of the specific communications needs of hospitals.

Recognizing it is not cost-effective for each hospital to go through this same process, AHA Solutions conducted an extensive, 18-month evaluation to choose a preferred provider for infrastructure voice and data services for its members. This helps assure hospitals that the endorsed vendor will deliver the greatest value, reliability, security features as well as services that meet current and future strategic needs.

AHA Solutions has been conducting such product assessments for nearly 30 years and is committed to helping hospitals achieve operational excellence. "We know that hospitals must balance the ability to perform at the highest level of patient care while operating as efficiently as possible," says Burke. AHA Solutions' purpose is to find products and services that help hospitals run better.

IT Helps the Bottom Line

Hospitals with Positive Margins Reported More Use of Health IT



February 2007 AHA report, "Continued Progress: Hospital Use of Information Technology."



Hospitals Must Find Ways to:

- Cost-effectively manage, store and share increasing amounts of digital data
- Enable skilled practitioners to treat more patients remotely as well as in-person
- Enable patient monitoring and patient care in lower-cost settings (such as at-home) rather than in hospitals
- Comply with strict regulations guaranteeing the security and availability of patient information

Why AT&T?

AHA Solutions endorsed AT&T as its preferred provider for services ranging from local and long-distance voice to DS1, DS3, SONET, Frame Relay and ATM as well as IP and VPN solutions and voice over IP services that utilizes customers' current data networks.

One reason was AT&T's understanding of the specialized needs of hospitals for security, speed and connectivity, says Burke. AT&T has a deeply rooted commitment to the health care market. In fact, AT&T has demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the broad issues of health care and has crafted a health care vision that looks at the deeper implications of IT. As such, it has invested in significant staff resources to support the long-term needs of health care.

Another reason AHA aligned with AT&T was the reputation for customer service and technical support as well as the company's financial stability. Hospitals rely on voice and data networks to communicate information that is critical to the health of their patients and their communities, and need a vendor with the financial resources and commitment to meet their needs now and in the future.

Yet a third, and very important reason, was the geographic breadth of AT&T's coverage. "We have a constituency base that ranges across the country," says Burke. "We needed a [company] with the national capacity and reach to be able to satisfy and serve all the requirements for those organizations."

AT&T has also demonstrated an understanding of, and a commitment to, health care through its strategic alliances with other technology providers in areas such as telemedicine and video conferencing, says Burke.

Additionally, AT&T is already preparing, transitioning and supporting health care facilities through the "convergence" of their voice and data network into the VoIP world, says Hunter. With the extensive coverage of AT&T's services, they can help prepare hospitals with these capabilities to effectively improve patient satisfaction and quality of care.

Among other services, AT&T offers complimentary Healthcare Advantage Assessments of hospitals' technology strategies benchmarked against the best practices of peer organizations. These assessments help hospitals identify any gaps between their clinical or administrative

plans and their communications and IT capabilities, and to develop a strategic plan to help them realize short-term benefits as well as reach their long-term goals.

The delivery of care "is much different than it was a few years ago in terms of instant access to information" to assure that care givers have the right information at the right time to make critical decisions, says Tim Steffl, vice president of corporate development for AHA Solutions. "AT&T articulated an understanding of the direction of where health care is going," he says. "AT&T is a telecom company that understands health care issues and along with their robust service offerings, is developing the right partnerships to meet our members' needs."

How AT&T Services Can Help:

- Local and long distance voice service enables information sharing with other practitioners as well as patients
- Voice and data networks enable telemedicine services for patients at home, at a rural health center or even in a retail store
- High-speed data networks facilitate sharing of ever-larger digital images
- AT&T's national scope helps assure information delivery to any size hospital, anywhere in the U.S.
- AT&T's health care expertise and technology helps assure IT solutions geared to the needs of health care providers

AT&T has focused on serving the health care industry for decades and has more than 800 sales professionals nationwide dedicated to understanding the needs of customers ranging from the smallest physician's office to the largest hospitals, says Pothier. "We try to look at this industry from their perspective," he says, understand their business challenges and design products and services to help them meet those challenges.

AT&T: The Trusted Source

To meet the new requirements of telemedicine, regional health information networks and ever-stricter regulatory requirements, hospitals need a voice and data provider with a national scope, a commitment to service and an understanding of the issues facing today's health care providers. The detailed evaluation process conducted by the AHA helps assure its member hospitals that AT&T can help them navigate and thrive in this new health care environment.

AT&T understands the challenges hospitals face and the way IT solutions can positively impact patient care and a hospital's fiscal well-being. With these insights, AT&T's AHA-endorsed voice and data networking products should be seen as a trusted resource, now and into the future.

For more information contact your AT&T Representative or visit us at www.att.com/healthcare.



AT&T voice and data networking products have the exclusive endorsement of the American Hospital Association (AHA).

