



How Brook Lane enhanced their network and voice systems to enrich lives

Delivering quality patient care matters above all else for Brook Lane Health Services. With their hospital and campuses located rurally throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, this nonprofit mental health facility has diligently operated for 68 years, helping individuals of all ages achieve emotional and behavioral well-being through education and treatment. Such important work leaves no time to waste dealing with network outages and insufficient bandwidth. It was time for Brook Lane to adopt a high performing, redundant network that would guarantee constant connectivity and zero downtime.

At a glance

BROOK LANE

Industry

Healthcare

Customer

1 hospital

3 outpatient facilities

2 schools

Serving Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia

550+ employees

Challenges

Insufficient bandwidth

Inadequate resiliency

Network outages

Expensive legacy MPLS and voice

Solutions

SD-WAN Concierge™

Dynamic IP

High Bandwidth Ethernet

Results

Increased bandwidth

High performance and resiliency

Zero network outages

Improved client experience

When compassion drives the need for connectivity

For Brook Lane Health Services, patient care and outcomes are the number one priority. Their core mission is deeply rooted in developing a healthier community strengthened by comprehensive behavioral health services. This leaves no time for anything to get in the way of providing programs for children, adolescents and adults to heal and thrive.

Brook Lane's hospital and campuses are located in rural Maryland areas, serving Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia clients. This geographical remoteness left them limited when researching how to build out their networks for stronger connectivity and higher bandwidth—essential for delivering a superior client and employee experience.

When Brook Lane made the switch to a new Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system, challenges involving network reliability became heightened. Because these locations were single threaded by an MPLS solution for voice and broadband for data, they lacked the redundancy required to avoid network outages. When an outage occurred, patient records would become

unavailable, resulting in a poor end-user experience. Those incidences of downtime were enough to bring clinicians to their knees.

In addition, Brook Lane was searching for a lower cost solution that would provide high performance and robust delivery mechanisms for clinicians. Their current MPLS network was already too high-priced and adding more bandwidth was cost prohibitive. Additionally, broadband options were limited. Voice services also traversed legacy TDM access that was becoming too expensive to operate and maintain for their small, but mighty, IT team.

“We’ve developed a great relationship with Windstream Enterprise. They are highly responsive and available when needed and have earned our trust.”

Ben Webber
IT Manager

Intensive network care

Windstream Enterprise worked closely with Brook Lane's IT team to start replacing their existing MPLS network with SD-WAN Concierge at all primary locations that supported the associated campus clinics. This migration increased resiliency with redundant, diverse connections at each site for seamless failover and business continuity.

Windstream Enterprise deployed Ethernet as the primary connection, offering Brook Lane the flexibility to leverage existing cable broadband as a secondary connection. Combining Ethernet and cable connections into an active/active configuration delivered the enhanced uptime to support Brook Lane's EMR application. The automated failover of active/active would prevent any debilitating network outages.

Windstream Enterprise also helped fund an Ethernet build to Brook Lane's most rural campus, amortizing the cost over a five-year period—an investment no other service provider was willing to make.

Windstream Enterprise coupled the network solution with Dynamic IP, a VoIP solution, to carry voice traffic over the SD-WAN network. This provided a single connection for phone services and high-speed data rather than separate networks for each. Dynamic IP adjusts bandwidth allocations automatically based on call volume—prioritizing voice services for a reliable, scalable and flexible solution with reduced bandwidth waste.

The road to recovery

Since implementing their SD-WAN solution through Windstream Enterprise, Brook Lane has experienced no network outages. If, for any reason, a circuit goes down at one of the campuses, the second circuit immediately kicks in to keep the location running, resulting in zero downtime.

Brook Lane routinely utilizes WE Connect to manage their SD-WAN to set application priorities, such as diverting low priority traffic over secondary broadband connections. They take advantage of monitoring and troubleshooting features, which automatically alerts them when a circuit has failed or is underperforming.

The primary desire to reduce costs was also achieved by switching from legacy MPLS solutions, delivering more bandwidth and less downtime. Dynamic IP was less expensive than their TDM solution as well; now voice traffic benefits from the same high-performance as other applications running over SD-WAN.

Most notable was that the high bandwidth SD-WAN enabled Brook Lane to continue serving patients when social distancing was enforced in March of 2020. With help from Windstream Enterprise, Brook Lane was able to implement a remote access telehealth system over SD-WAN, something that would not have been possible with their previous MPLS network.

The foundation of any good relationship is trust. Brook Lane accredits their long-standing relationship with Windstream Enterprise to their proactive responsiveness and heartfelt dedication. "Windstream Enterprise demonstrated their commitment as our partner," said Bob Fritz, CIO, Brook Lane Health Services. "They were creative with a solution and had our success in mind."

"Patient and provider access is a top priority. So, when the pandemic required social distancing, our solution enabled us to rapidly implement a new telehealth system, as well as deploy a remote workforce. All was accomplished in a very short time, ensuring continued service to our patients."

Bob Fitz
CIO

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