

CASE STUDY

Fortinet Infrastructure Helps Recovery Centers of America Achieve Its Goal of Saving 1 Million Lives

With a mission to save a million lives, Recovery Centers of America (RCA) takes a comprehensive approach to substance use disorder treatment. The organization provides inpatient and outpatient care across seven states, integrating medications, 12-step programs, and training in dialectical behavior therapy with family involvement and support from alumni.

"We have 12 inpatient and outpatient facilities," says Lancer Seaman, CIO and CISO of RCA. "We provide drug and alcohol rehabilitation—everything from inpatient care to telemedicine for patients who cannot get into an office. And we leverage technology to optimize those services. Within our hospitals, staff check on all patients every 30–60 minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We have devices that allow us to track wellness checks throughout the patient stay. Ensuring a stable network environment is critical as network downtime can put patient lives at risk."

In addition to maintaining "constant uptime" for the network, Seaman's team ensures rigorous data security across RCA's nearly 3,000 endpoints. "We adhere to strict regulations and frameworks, including HIPAA [the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act], to protect patient information," Seaman explains. "Because we serve substance use disorder patients, safeguarding data is critical. Unlike other healthcare information, the repercussions of disclosing addiction details, like substance abuse, can be severe. While disclosure of a knee replacement might be benign, addiction carries a different, often unfair stigma."

Seaman also faces the challenge of restricting patient internet access during treatment. "Patients can be very resourceful," he says. "We've encountered cases where individuals hacked into televisions to install software for external access. Their creativity in bypassing restrictions is remarkable."

Fortinet Solutions "Very Attractive" for Integration, Centralized Management, and Ease of Use

Two years ago, Seaman's team of three network engineers protected the RCA network using aging firewalls and security devices. "One challenge we had was that the solutions were complex and our staff was not familiar enough with all the bells and whistles to manage our network internally," Seaman says. "So, it was very expensive to maintain in terms of both vendor maintenance fees and paying external people to manage it."



**Recovery Centers
of America**

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Details

Customer: Recovery Centers of America

Industry: Healthcare

Headquarters: King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

“Every patient who comes through our doors has a much higher chance of survival compared to if they had stayed in their previous circumstances,” he explains. “And in our business, the more cost-efficiently we can operate, the more we can extend our resources to reach more patients. We actively seek every opportunity to reduce costs so we can maximize our impact.”

Seaman and his colleagues began searching for a new networking and security provider. They needed to replace firewalls that were approaching end of life, and they wanted to implement SD-WAN in the process. At the same time, they intended to eventually implement network access control (NAC), user authentication, and other new capabilities, so they looked for a partner with a broad portfolio.

The team wanted a solution set that would be easy to use so that they could manage it internally. They also wanted to reduce the complexity of the network and remove expensive hardware and multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) connections. “We looked for a vendor with a good track record of security across a full slate of next-generation products, both security and networking hardware that would integrate so that everything tied together.”

This thorough search led the team to Fortinet. “Anytime you can have a single pane of glass, it is always more attractive because the learning curve drops considerably,” Seaman says. “And the FortiOS [operating system] user interface is very easy to navigate and to use.” In addition, FortiGate Next-Generation Firewalls (NGFWs) support multicasting, which enables RCA’s phone and hospital paging systems to work properly. “That was important, and the fact that Fortinet offered next-generation firewalls and SD-WAN in the same box made the Fortinet solutions very attractive.”

Fortinet Network Offers Fast Performance, Clear Visibility

RCA selected Fortinet as its new networking and security provider and began rolling out FortiGate NGFWs enabled with Fortinet Secure SD-WAN across its 12 locations. The FortiGates leverage the FortiGuard AI-Powered Security Services UTP Bundle to secure each site’s network edge. They also segment the network internally to prevent traffic from moving laterally between locations, and to block movement through the network should a patient break through the protections Seaman’s team has established. “We are implementing multiple VLANs [virtual LANs], web filtering, multi-factor authentication, and all the other features that make the FortiGate a very good product for us,” Seaman says.

When the organization transitions its final site to FortiGate NGFWs in a few weeks, RCA will have Fortinet Secure SD-WAN fully functional across all its locations. Seaman says the organization has achieved significant cost savings by moving from MPLS circuits to broadband. The enhanced visibility the SD-WAN solution offers into traffic flows has brought further savings.

“Fortinet Secure SD-WAN makes it easier for us to understand our actual bandwidth needs,” he says. “In some cases, we thought we needed one size of circuit, then learned we needed a different size. In other cases, we were surprised to see what types of traffic were flowing through. And because Fortinet Secure SD-WAN enables us to do bandwidth shaping, if somebody is streaming music or videos, we can ratchet those down so that the bandwidth we have is being used for appropriate purposes.”

Business Impact

- Improved speed and confidence in threat detection and response across the enterprise
- Approximately \$2 million cost savings expected over three years
- Extended care to more patients because of cost reductions
- Significant time savings on network and infrastructure management
- Ease of configuration and use enables internal network management, eliminating reliance on managed service provider
- “Excellent” network performance through granular control of user behavior and streamlined device management
- Enhanced blocking of patient access to information about, and communications with, the outside world during hospitalization

Solutions

- FortiGate Next-Generation Firewall
- Fortinet Secure SD-WAN
- FortiClient Enterprise Management Server (EMS)
- FortiNAC
- FortiAnalyzer



"The performance of Fortinet Secure SD-WAN has been outstanding," he says. "We've had no issues at all. In our previous environment, the network was complex and didn't always function as it should. We often had to troubleshoot problems, especially with firewall integration and compatibility with other devices."

Extending the Fortinet Presence to Enhance Efficiency and Security

FortiClient EMS provides VPN access for the organization's domestic remote workers, plus billing and other divisions located abroad. "We really like the fact that the VPN headend is built right into the FortiGates," Seaman says. "We are utilizing both the web-based VPN and the client-based VPN, and we have been very happy with them. Everything has been functioning very well."

Seaman expects to deploy the FortiNAC network access control solution before the end of the year to further control traffic flow and shut down ports when malicious traffic attempts to enter certain segments of the network. His team is also evaluating FortiMonitor, Fortinet's comprehensive, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)-based digital experience monitoring platform. "FortiMonitor would give us more visibility into all the devices on the network, traffic flow, and challenges," Seaman says.

Currently, RCA is using switches from one third-party provider and access points from another. However, Seaman's team has started piloting FortiSwitch secure Ethernet switches and FortiAP access points. "Everything is working great at our pilot location," Seaman says. "The wireless access points are much stronger than we thought they would be, so we are using fewer than expected. We are hoping to standardize and roll out FortiAPs and FortiSwitches in the next couple of years, as our budget allows."

Seaman anticipates that the organization could achieve significant benefits by adding Fortinet switches and access points to its infrastructure. "It goes back to the single pane of glass," he says. "We want to implement tools that enable us to monitor and orchestrate across devices. If our firewalls, access points, and switches were fully integrated, we would achieve significant time savings and improve our security posture."

RCA also intends to roll out the FortiAnalyzer log management, analytics, and reporting platform. FortiAnalyzer would further enhance visibility into security events for Seaman and his team by providing real-time monitoring and analysis across the Fortinet Security Fabric, then presenting data about events, vulnerabilities, and critical security settings in an easy-to-digest format.

\$2 Million Cost Savings Mean More Lives Can Be Saved

Although the deployment is not complete, the FortiGate NGFWs are already saving a substantial amount of time for RCA staff. "The FortiGates are very easy to configure," Seaman says. "On other platforms, sometimes you have to hunt around to find what you need, whereas within the FortiGate user interface, everything is where you would expect it to be. And it is consistent across devices. Management of the network and security infrastructure is much more user-friendly and less time-consuming with Fortinet." Better yet, when the FortiGate implementation wraps up, Seaman's team will fully manage all the equipment, so they will no longer rely on a third-party managed service provider.

"Our Fortinet solutions are saving us money on several fronts," Seaman says. "Because the FortiGates are so easy for our staff to learn and to manage, we have reduced staff time required for maintenance and troubleshooting. We are eliminating the need to have a third-party firm managing our firewalls. And because we have implemented Fortinet Secure SD-WAN, we have gotten rid of all our MPLS circuits. Ultimately, over a three-year period, we project that the move to Fortinet will save us close to \$2 million."

Having a NGFW in place has also enhanced Seaman's confidence in his security infrastructure. "I still worry every day, as most CISOs do," he says. "But the vast improvement to our visibility into security events, and our improved ability to make changes as needed, makes me more comfortable that we are detecting and responding to any threat much more quickly than we could in the past."

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Looking ahead, Seaman anticipates that the FortiSwitches, FortiAPs, and FortiNAC will further enhance security for RCA. "Having all those Fortinet solutions in place will give us tighter integration between devices, and we will be able to orchestrate security response," he says. "For example, when FortiNAC finds traffic that is somewhere it is not supposed to be, it will be able to shut down ports automatically based on the set access policies, if appropriate."

Seaman looks forward to continuing to build his organization's partnership with Fortinet into the future. "Anytime we have needed assistance, Fortinet has been very quick to accommodate us," he says. "I have nothing but good things to say about the relationship between Fortinet and RCA."

"Our mission is to save a million lives, and the way we do that is by getting patients in the door," he concludes. "By improving the efficiency of our network infrastructure, we enable all RCA teams to provide quality care to more patients. And by keeping our network running 24×7×365, we optimize patient safety. Those areas are our focus, and Fortinet is a reliable partner supporting RCA in our mission."

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