

# ShoreTel and RehabCare



ShoreTel gives  
RehabCare  
communications a  
clean bill of health



## CHALLENGE

- Replace end-of-life phone system with a reliable, scalable and easy-to-manage unified communications system that quickly integrates remote workers, mobile devices and other productivity-boosting applications.

## SOLUTION

- Managed data center with eight ShoreGear® 90 switches, five ShoreGear T1 gateways; and several analog voice switches with N+1 redundancy capabilities for reliability. More than 450 ShorePhone IP Telephones, and counting.

## BENEFITS

- Cost savings of almost \$3,000 each month at the corporate office alone. Huge time savings as the system's ease of management no longer requires senior IT staff resources.
- Highly reliable and scalable distributed architecture supports company's cloud computing goals.
- Flexible mobile and remote worker options provide easily configurable access to communications on the road or at home with mobile devices, softphones and VPNs.
- Efficiency-enhancing features in ShoreWare Professional Call Manager enables rehabilitation specialists who regularly go above the call of duty to stay in touch with patients, even after they have returned home.
- N+1 redundancy enables RehabCare to achieve affordable high availability and implement an important disaster recovery plan.

**When a loved one suffers a stroke, or a car accident results in weekly physiotherapy, only the best rehabilitation care program will do.**

For the highly skilled doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other healthcare specialists with RehabCare, a leading provider of physical rehabilitation program management services and facilities throughout the United States, this not only means using the latest treatment technologies, but going above and beyond to deliver personalized, reassuring care to help their patients regain their lives.

To help these healthcare providers deliver the valuable, innovative programs that meet the needs of their communities and maintain the best patient outcomes, RehabCare needs a communications infrastructure that helps them stay connected with patients, even after they have gone home, and puts the right data in the right hands at the right time. The company's mission is to provide a continuum of care throughout its 1,200 hospital programs, skilled nursing facilities and other long-term care facilities.

"Our goal is to use IT to help provide better care for patients, and a better working environment for our healthcare providers so we

can attract and retain the nation's top rehabilitation specialists," explained Jim O'Brien, director of technical services at RehabCare. "To do this with more than 13,500 employees across facilities in 42 states, we wanted to take advantage of a distributed model—our own cloud computing—and integrate data with communications to put patient information at clinicians' fingertips."

As RehabCare continues to grow and open more of its own hospitals, the previous NEC phone system could no longer scale, or incorporate any new call center activities and functions. Even more worrisome, was the increasing number of outages and the time being spent maintaining and managing the system.

## *Phone system must stay on its feet*

"The system downtime was threatening our ability to conduct business. Patients need the comfort and reassurance of being able to reach a live person right away. For patient safety and satisfaction, missed or dropped calls are not an option," Mr O'Brien said. "Plus, our support costs were soaring—we do an average of 24 moves, adds and changes each week and these were tying up some of my senior IT staff for more than 45 minutes at a time. It was time to take a look at



*“The ShoreTel distributed architecture enables us to easily and affordably achieve the high availability and disaster recovery plan we need.”*

### **Jim O’Brien**

*Director of Technical Services  
RehabCare*

how unified communications could help us run leaner and faster, and integrate remote workers, mobile devices and other important technologies on a platform for growth.”

After issuing a request for proposal, Mr O’Brien received responses from ShoreTel, Cisco and Nortel, but it was ShoreTel’s pure IP system, built from the ground up for voice over IP that delivered the level of management ease and reliability that RehabCare needed. This ease of management is essential in the healthcare industry, where lives can change in a minute and fast response times are critical.

“We chose ShoreTel for a number of reasons. It’s more reliable than the other vendor solutions because it has fewer components, it’s simpler, more robust and the intuitive interface makes it easier to manage,” Mr O’Brien said. “We have to support analog phones and other medical devices in our facilities, and ShoreTel was the only company to support analog with just one piece of equipment and no special gateways. I don’t have to add a server every time I want to add a new capability, and the built-in redundancy makes five-nines availability simple and cost-effective.”

The initial ShoreTel deployment of 450 ShorePhone® IP telephones began in the company’s corporate offices, with plans to retrofit about four hospitals each subsequent year, and a phased deployment to other sites as time and budget permit. Since the ShoreTel UC system easily integrates with legacy systems, RehabCare can continue to leverage existing systems to optimize return on investment, and plan effectively.

The IT team was able to locate most of the core components of the ShoreTel UC system, including eight ShoreGear® 90 switches, five ShoreGear T1 gateways; and several analog voice switches at a managed data center, and implement ShoreTel’s N+1 redundancy capabilities for reliability.

### **ShoreWare Contact Center supports busy care providers**

A ShoreWare Contact Center application server supports two instances of ShoreWare Contact Center, and enables the HR department and IT help desk to track queues, report activity,

monitor agents, conduct training, and answer all calls, even during peak traffic times.

“I’ve participated in many phone system conversions during my career and this was the smoothest by far,” Mr O’Brien said. “The ShoreTel partner, CMS Communications, sent out well-trained, knowledgeable engineers, and managed the entire training project. Everyone found the system easy to learn, and the user interface extremely intuitive.”

As a result of the ShoreTel deployment, Mr O’Brien estimates that RehabCare is saving almost \$3,000 each month at the corporate office alone. These savings are due to system management simplicity, which has saved more than 40 hours a month in moves, new lines and resets; least call routing on long distant calls; and remote office relocations that save expensive real estate space. Moves, adds and changes have dropped from 45 minutes to five minutes. Since there are no hidden costs with ShoreTel, I can forecast costs to expand the system and budget more effectively.”

“The upfront costs of the ShoreTel UC system were less than the other vendors, and we’re saving both time and money on support because the system is so easy to manage,” Mr O’Brien said. “To add an extension with the other systems took up to six screens, but with ShoreTel is just one screen. I’ve been able to move support of the phone system from a senior telecommunications analyst to the help desk, a much better use of everybody’s time. Now my senior staff has more time to focus on core business projects, and I’m better able to forecast future budgetary needs. We’re also looking at using SIP trunking for further cost savings and flexibility.”

### **Softphone provides communications on the fly**

RehabCare is using ShoreWare Professional Call Manager to take advantage of presence monitoring features, and ShoreTel SoftPhone capabilities. “With a SoftPhone and ShoreTel mobility features, I can easily provide phone service to remote workers, and set up a small office on the fly,” Mr O’Brien said. “ShoreTel gives us a number of flexible options. These options are particularly important to our recruiters who travel the country looking to hire top quality



*“Now my senior staff has more time to focus on core business projects, and I’m better able to forecast future budgetary needs.”*

**Jim O’Brien**

*Director of Technical Services  
RehabCare*

health care professionals. The entire recruiting department can work on the road or from home thanks to Softphones, easy-to-configure call handling modes, and remote VPNs.”

ShoreWare Professional Call Manager offers efficiency-enhancing features such as online directories, favorites, and a history log, that help users reach the right people quickly and avoid missing important calls. This is particularly important for the rehabilitation specialists who regularly go above the call of duty to stay in touch with patients, even after they have returned home.

To help direct callers to the right department, RehabCare is using automated call distribution menus, and workgroups help ensure that calls are answered by a live person. Administrative personnel are using ShoreWare Operator Call Manager for detailed telephony presence on extensions they monitor to handle calls as effectively as possible, and for call drag and drop functionality that enables them to transfer calls quickly and smoothly.

***Integration proves best medicine for compliance***

“By integrating ShoreWare Call Manager with Microsoft Outlook, we’re able to archive voicemail messages for future reference and easily pass them onto others within the organization,” Mr O’Brien said. “This is

extremely important for regulatory compliance and e-discovery. Also, users can easily access voicemail when they’re away from the office using their BlackBerry e-mail, so they can follow up and resolve important issues quickly. Being able to work from anywhere, and on any device helps us provide the best possible care to our patients.”

Reliable communications are critical for patient dialogue and business efficiency, and RehabCare has been able to implement an effective disaster recovery plan thanks to ShoreTel’s easy-to-deploy N+1 redundancy. “The ShoreTel distributed architecture enables us to easily and affordably achieve the high availability and disaster recovery plan we need,” Mr O’Brien said. “With the flexibility to put switches anywhere, and inherent backward compatibility, we can quickly deploy a backup site if necessary

As a result of the success of the ShoreTel deployment, Mr O’Brien and his IT staff have received accolades from across the RehabCare organization. “We have yet to receive a single problem call about ShoreTel—the deployment has been one of the most visible projects that IT has completed,” Mr O’Brien said. “It touched every desk, producing a huge win for the IT department and a positive impact on the business.”