DELL Technologies

Fast, uncomplicated cloud data protection

Customer profile

SENTARA®

Healthcare | United States

https://www.sentara.com/

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Operations Manager,
Sentara Healthcare

Business needs

With critical data from 12 hospitals to protect, Sentara Healthcare needed fast and reliable off-site backups for data from its remote locations. They wanted a virtualized solution that would free them from the costs and effort of maintaining on-premises infrastructure.

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Business results

- Implemented a remote backup solution for a subsidiary company in a day and a half
- Protects patient healthcare and financial information off-site
- Deploys cloud data protection easily via Azure Marketplace
- Enables instant restores of remote sites

Solutions at a glance

- PowerProtect appliances
- Data Protection Suite
- Microsoft Azure

Headquartered in Norfolk, VA, Sentara Healthcare serves Virginia and northeastern North Carolina with 12 hospitals and offers services ranging from ambulatory care to insurance. To protect their critical data off-site, they've chosen Dell EMC PowerProtect DD Virtual Edition (DDVE) and Avamar Virtual Edition.

Says Rob Jaecques, Operations Manager for Sentara, "In the Dell Technologies portfolio, everything's so integrated. We have PowerEdge servers, and vSAN Ready Nodes in our vSAN infrastructure. We have PowerMax and PowerStore storage, and a PowerProtect DD series appliance that we use on-prem. We deploy our backup infrastructure on the edge, and we back up quite a bit of data across our wide area network to PowerProtect DD Virtual Edition in the Azure cloud."

Consistency of Care

Because Sentara has grown through acquisitions, several of their hospitals had existing data infrastructures which they needed to migrate and protect. "As a part of this effort, we wanted a reliable and effective solution to back up the things that were out there," says Jaecques. "Avamar Virtual Edition worked out great. We were deploying Dell vSAN Ready Nodes at these remote sites. The existing servers that needed to stay, we added to our vSAN infrastructure and complemented the backup solution with DDVE and Avamar Virtual Edition. It's a great solution. DDVE allows us to efficiently back up our infrastructure at remote sites across our wide-area network links to the Azure cloud. We don't have to worry about something bad happening at the remote site and not being able to recover our backups."

Rapid Response

Sentara's initial DDVE and Avamar Virtual Edition installation came with the infrastructure and data migration of an insurance company they had acquired. "We had to set things up in a hurry," says Jaecques. "And with DDVE we were able to do this within a day and a half. And then we were ready to back up the servers we were bringing over from that company. Deployment of DDVE is very quick, and it's not overly

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complicated. We can deploy agents and start backing up rather quickly.” For their second and third DDVE setups, they deployed through the Azure Marketplace.

“We’ve had traditional backup solutions, the target could be a virtual tape library, it could be tape drives, it could be spinning disk. We’ve done all those,” notes Jaecques. “It works. But it’s not as efficient. Using PowerProtect DD Virtual Edition lets us send the data off-site. It’s compressed, it’s very low bandwidth, and it allows us to get our data backed up off-site in the Azure cloud.”

Says Jaecques, “The value in partnering with Azure and Dell is cost savings and performance, and the ease of installation and operations. We don’t have a bunch of infrastructure sitting on-prem, it’s all virtualized and in Azure. And restoration – if we had issues and a site was incapacitated, we could restore to one of our colocation sites instantly, bring up the application in a different location.

“It benefits the business, because we’re more agile, we’re able to get the backups off-site, we’re able to restore faster.”

Safeguarding Patient Data

“Most of the workloads involved are basic app servers,” says Jaecques, “and we have several file servers on our vSAN infrastructure at the remotes. They’re all being backed up to DDVE. Typically, it’s just run through our vCenter. The systems are snapshotted and then they’re backed up through Avamar.”

Says Jaecques, “For us, the most transformative value was the backup encryption capabilities of DDVE and Azure. Before we were doing this, we had backups that were rolling around on tape. Or worse, they were encrypted, and the keys were not necessarily safe. If you lose your encryption keys, you’re out of luck. We’re protecting patient healthcare information, as well as PCI – people’s credit card information. Backing up to DDVE in Azure allows us to safeguard our PHI and PCI data and get it off-site.”

Better Outcomes

Asked what was best about Sentara’s choice of DDVE in Azure, he summed it up, “The top benefits of DDVE in Azure are not having to maintain a physical infrastructure, and the cost savings associated with that, the ease and quickness of deployment, and the responsiveness and performance in backups and restores. And working with Dell Technologies is great. It’s a source of good folks I can get on the phone, who can really explain and tell us what needs to be done. This was the easiest and the best way to transform our data protection.”