

# MeritCare Health System

www.novell.com

## SUCCESS STORY

MeritCare migrates from Microsoft\* Exchange to Novell® GroupWise® to eliminate downtime and reduce back-end administration time by 50 percent.

### OVERVIEW

MeritCare Health System is the largest medical group practice in North Dakota with two main hospital facilities in Fargo that serve more than 2 million patients a year. With more than 44 locations, MeritCare is the largest private employer in the state with more than 6,200 employees.

### CHALLENGE

For any healthcare organization, a reliable e-mail system that is available 24/7 is critical to maintaining user productivity and providing quality patient care. MeritCare had outgrown its Microsoft Exchange e-mail system. Too many users on aging hardware also resulted in problems with performance and occasional virus attacks that would shut down the system. Restoring lost e-mail files was a cumbersome process, sometimes requiring several weeks.

MeritCare needed an e-mail system with high availability, security and the scalability to accommodate a growing healthcare system.

### SOLUTION

Rather than upgrade right away to a new version of Exchange, MeritCare evaluated collaboration solutions from Novell, IBM, Oracle and Microsoft. The organization selected Novell GroupWise for its security, reliability and ease of administration.

"We like the flexibility we get with GroupWise and the potential for future development to enhance our workflow," said Heather Rix, IS customer support manager at MeritCare. "We are now looking at other solutions from Novell because of our successful track record with them."

Working with Novell Consulting®, MeritCare implemented GroupWise in six months, culminating in the migration of 6,500 e-mail accounts in less than a day. MeritCare used Novell consulting for the entire project—from requirements assessment and pre-migration testing, to the final migration. Users arrived at work after a weekend upgrade to find their e-mail intact.

"What we accomplished with our GroupWise project was huge," said Jim Erickson, lead systems engineer at MeritCare. "The knowledge and expertise

# N

*"I don't think the project would have been near as successful with any other vendor. Every customer is different and Novell really took the time to understand our unique business. The project went exceptionally well because of the experience they brought to the table."*

—Jim Erickson,  
Lead Systems Engineer,  
MeritCare Health System

**Novell.**



of Novell consulting really laid the groundwork for our success. When we hit issues, everyone rallied around to fix them, no matter what the hour.

Novell really went the extra mile for us.”

In the past, the IT staff had to monitor potential e-mail viruses on a weekly basis. With GroupWise, the staff may do a scan every few months, but no longer has to worry about regular anti-virus updates and patches. GroupWise protects against users opening an e-mail with a virus and spreading it to other users. MeritCare also uses third-party products GWAVA and Barracuda to help manage spam and viruses.

“As we comply with new healthcare regulations, security is critical,” said Erickson. “Because GroupWise is so secure and reliable, it prevents a lot of headaches.”

The collaboration tools in GroupWise give MeritCare the option to replace other applications, such as a room and vehicle scheduling tool. Shared folders in GroupWise give the IT staff more efficient document management. The address book in GroupWise contains updated employee information and will eventually replace a separate MeritCare staff directory.

Running GroupWise on Novell Cluster Services™ gives MeritCare the business continuity to support its critical services. With a seven-node cluster, a post office could fail over to another server at any time without any user disruption. Users no longer lose e-mail on a regular basis and use the archive feature in GroupWise to store important e-mail.

“From a technical standpoint, we just don’t have to worry about our e-mail system every

day,” said Chip Bartunek, project consultant at MeritCare Health System. “It’s always up and we don’t have to spend time applying patches.

It just works.”

GroupWise WebAccess gives MeritCare’s remote users Internet access to e-mail from any computer, using a standard Web browser. GroupWise Messenger provides secure instant messaging that can be monitored to safeguard corporate security.

“The Web version of GroupWise is much richer than what we saw in other solutions,” said Rix. “Managers and physicians who travel frequently can stay up-to-date on e-mail without carrying an IS-issued laptop. It’s also a great way for users to catch up on e-mail from home.”

## RESULTS

By migrating 6,500 users to Novell GroupWise, MeritCare has reduced back-end administration time by 50 percent, as its IT staff no longer needs to distribute regular security patches, combat virus attacks or restore e-mail files. The organization has dramatically improved e-mail reliability and the necessary security to comply with healthcare privacy requirements. MeritCare has also had no unexpected downtime since its installation of GroupWise, which has increased both user productivity and confidence.

“I don’t think the project would have been near as successful with any other vendor,” said Erickson. “Every customer is different and Novell really took the time to understand our unique business. The project went exceptionally well because of the experience they brought to the table.”

© 2005 Novell, Inc. All rights reserved. Novell, the Novell logo, the N logo and GroupWise are registered trademarks; Novell Consulting is a registered service mark; and Novell Cluster Services is a trademark of Novell, Inc. in the United States and other countries.

\*Microsoft is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. All other third-party trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

### Novell Product Training and Support Services

For more information about Novell’s worldwide product training, certification programs, consulting and technical support services, please visit:  
[www.novell.com/ngage](http://www.novell.com/ngage)

### For More Information

Contact your local Novell Solutions Provider, or visit the Novell Web site at:  
[www.novell.com](http://www.novell.com)

You may also call Novell at:

1 888 321 4272 US/Canada  
1 801 861 4272 Worldwide  
1 801 861 8473 Facsimile

**Novell, Inc.**  
404 Wyman Street  
Waltham, MA 02451 USA

[www.novell.com](http://www.novell.com)