

Access Community Health Network Reduces Costs with 11-month Azure Migration



The Patient

Access Community Health Network (ACCESS) is a nonprofit healthcare provider operating 35 health centers in the Chicago, Illinois area. The sixth-largest network of federally qualified health centers in the United States, its services range from behavioral healthcare to addressing common barriers for underserved communities, including transportation and access to healthy food.

As a nonprofit, ACCESS needs to make every dollar of its budget count. Unfortunately, maintaining its current infrastructure had become too painful to ignore. The organization was facing end-of-life for already expensive (but critical) on-premises hardware. At the same time, some software licensing costs had nearly tripled.

ACCESS needed to pivot to more cost-effective IT infrastructure that could help it advance its core mission of providing reliable patient care.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

By partnering with AHEAD, the client was able to:

- ✓ Save over \$300,000 in hardware and software licensing costs
- ✓ Migrate more than 300 servers into a new cloud environment
- ✓ Anticipate \$150,000 in expected savings with a new disaster recovery plan
- ✓ Achieve 15% improvement in system performance



The Diagnosis

Any cloud-based solution that ACCESS chose would be up against significant budget and logistical complications.

COST TO OPERATE

In its current set-up, ACCESS was spending about \$400,000 to update on-premises servers every three to five years. Expanding its capacity to support organizational growth and services would demand additional, costly hardware purchases and installation.

DATA MIGRATION

At the heart of ACCESS's digital transformation efforts was transferring its electronic medical record (EMR) system of over 300 servers to a new cloud environment — a feat only a few healthcare organizations had completed.

SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

New infrastructure would require a new recovery plan. In a field like healthcare, it's vital for providers like ACCESS to protect sensitive patient information and make sure it can recover quickly from disruptions.

TOOL ALIGNMENT

Whatever solution ACCESS chose had to align with its existing ecosystem and the tools that staff were already using.

All of this needed to happen without disrupting ongoing operations or patient care delivery.



The Treatment

Microsoft and AHEAD worked together to help ACCESS achieve its digital transformation goals. Through their combined efforts, ACCESS was able to complete migration of its on-premises infrastructure to Azure in just 11 months.

KEY INITIATIVES INCLUDED:

- **Azure Migrate and Azure Accelerate**, which provided ACCESS with expert guidance, funding support, and hands-on assistance throughout the migration process. These solutions were also key to the successful migration of the EMR system and servers to Azure.



- **Azure Virtual Machines** made it possible for ACCESS to add new servers or storage in minutes instead of months. This increased organizational agility and enabled teams to quickly develop and support new business services.

This also meant ACCESS no longer needed a third-party software license, which significantly reduced budget strain.

- **Extending Microsoft Security solutions into Azure** improved ACCESS's overall security posture with heightened visibility.

The result was an environment with fully capable disaster recovery that could also run ACCESS's entire health system at lower cost per year.

Just What the Doctor Ordered

Moving to a cloud-based infrastructure has completely transformed ACCESS's day-to-day operations.

- A 15% improvement in system performance has decreased upgrade times by one to two hours, improving overall responsiveness and availability.
- Biannual EMR upgrades can now be completed in three hours instead of five, giving employees more time to focus on patient care.
- A reconfigured disaster recovery plan, backed by Azure, has enhanced recovery operations, with an anticipated savings of \$150,000 annually.
- A savings of over \$300,000 in hardware and software licensing costs.





What's Next

By migrating to Azure, ACCESS has laid a strong foundation for continued growth. Its cloud-based infrastructure has made it less expensive to operate while providing the flexibility to adapt and evolve with changing business and community needs. Azure has been critical in accelerating ACCESS's modernization journey and expanding its ability to enrich the well-being of its patients.

Mike Baran, the Chief Information Officer at ACCESS shared this about the experience: "We felt like trailblazers because there wasn't a playbook to follow. With Azure Accelerate and Azure Migrate, along with the expertise of Microsoft partner AHEAD, we were able to get started in a matter of months instead of a year or more."



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AHEAD

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