

Case Study

Melissa Memorial Hospital



BACKGROUND

Melissa Memorial Hospital (MMH), located in Holyoke Colorado, is a critical access hospital with specialty clinics, family practices, and other health care services. As a rural hospital that is a cornerstone of the community, MMH is a key access point of care for nearly 3,000 people. Beyond MMH's direct impact on health and well-being, they are a large local employer and serve as a vital economic link for the region and its ability to attract businesses to the area.

As a rural hospital, MMH faces challenges unique to remote areas, such as workforce shortages, aging infrastructure, and ever-changing technology threats from denial of service to ransomware. Like other rural hospitals, MMH must address these struggles with limited financial resources and constantly balance short-term needs and long-term goals. As for information technology, its importance, both as an enabler of better health care and the associated loss from malicious intents, has increased and at times outpaced the organization's abilities.

CHALLENGE

For over a decade, MMH's IT operations were supported and managed within a shared services structure of a large national health care provider. This structure necessitated local MMH IT employees work within an environment designed, managed, and supported by their large provider partner who drove decision-making and associated investment. After evaluating priorities, MMH opted to move in a different direction. Coupling this change with other IT related dynamics moved MMH to create a new path forward for IT that would immediately improve their current performance and rapidly drive long-term value across the hospital in the following areas:





Strategic approach: After many years of being directed based upon their partner's agenda, MMH wanted to approach IT from a perspective that served their current and future needs. MMH needed a trusted partner to help create the model including people, processes, and technology to support the long-term vision of the hospital.



People: A crucial component MMH needed to address was the adoption a new co-managed IT structure that would best utilize the IT skills that they had on staff. The new structure had to not only provide services to support all the hospital's IT needs, but also enable a dynamic that would develop and grow the hospital's local resources and provide coverage should local resources change or become unavailable.



Network and Server infrastructure: MMH had invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in new hardware infrastructure at the direction of their previous provider that needed to be re-aligned to a new operating model. In addition, they now had the freedom to evaluate and move to a more modern cloud infrastructure but lacked the internal capabilities to assess and architect a cloud alternative.



Service Desk Support: MMH service desk support was limited by their large provider's structure and was performing well below desired expectations. There were no internal SLA's, trouble tickets were not being addressed on a consistent basis, and MMH personnel were limited in solutions they could provide to mitigate issues. All of this was having a negative impact on hospital staffs' ability to effectively serve patients.



The leadership at MMH realized they needed a strategic technology partner that could help them successfully make the shift both tactically and strategically from their current state and partner to a future state that supported the long-term mission and vision of the hospital.

SOLUTION

Elevate Services Group delivered a comprehensive technology platform, which included the people, processes, and technology, to shepherd MMH from their long-term provider to a focused, robust, and flexible IT operating environment that serves MMH as it confronts the challenges of being a rural critical access hospital.



✓ **STRATEGIC IT APPROACH**

Using Elevate's technology platform, MMH was able to develop a roadmap to serve as a template for long-term technology planning. Within this process,



Elevate was able to gain a full understanding of the people, processes, and technology issues at MMH. From this foundation, Elevate was able to prioritize organizational driven technology initiatives that would result in the greatest return on investment for the hospital.

Through this process and early stages of engaging Elevate's strategic services, it was discovered that there were some high impact solutions that could make MMH services more streamlined and help them achieve significant efficiencies in serving hospital staff. Prior to Elevate, MMH's IT project list became a dead-end for initiatives due to resource constraints, both human and technical.

With Elevate's platform, the co-managed MMH and Elevate teams can focus on future priorities and take care of day-to-day IT needs.

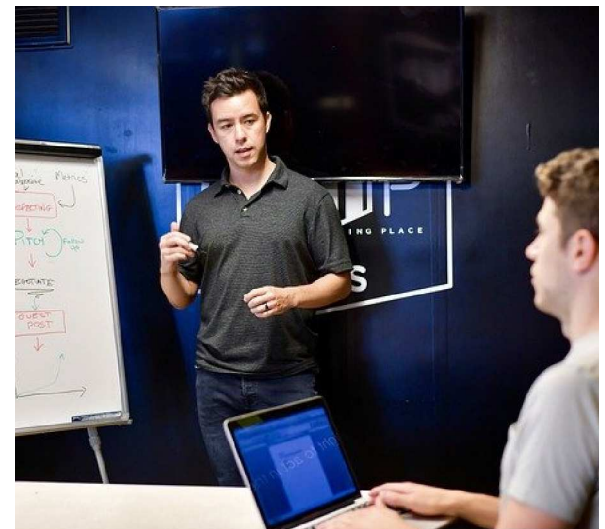
✓ **BUILD IT FUNCTION**

Like many organizations that have limited financial and IT resources, IT was delivered based upon availabilities and capabilities of people charged with IT. In scenarios such as these, IT accountability can become strained and limited. With Elevate's platform, MMH could focus on IT accountability and create an IT function that was not dependent on any one person. Issues such as security, compliance, and standards became connected components to MMH's technology roadmap and could be implemented and managed as needed versus when IT resources were available



✓ **LEVERAGE EXPERIENCE TO CREATE EXPERIENCE**

One of the greatest challenges for any organization, and even greater for remote and rural communities, is to find people with certain experiences that can be leveraged to not only mentor and teach but also create outcomes that are cost-effective and efficient. In some cases, the experience needed is a one-time event and not a long-term need to have in-house. In other cases, having an experienced resource creates the capability for others to succeed can be vital to future success. MMH used Elevate's platform



of technology people and tools to create a foundation for learning so that MMH had the capabilities it needed, both in-house and externally.





OUTCOME

After years of limited control and capability, MMH was now free to chart a course for IT that was both proactive and sensitive to a rural hospital's needs. With this freedom, combined with Elevate's platform, MMH could provide its internal IT resources the expertise and coverage necessary to accomplish many IT initiatives that had stalled or been postponed. As a result of their partnership with Elevate, MMH achieved the following outcomes



Significantly decreased IT operating costs: Elevate's services replaced and provided additional services in comparison to MMH's previous large provider for **28% less** than was budgeted with the incumbent large provider



Expanded and enhanced coverage: With Elevate's platform, MMH was supported more thoroughly on a **24/7/365** basis which relieved their internal resources. In addition, with Elevate's platform tools, MMH now has visibility and capability that was not previously provided. Finally, Elevate and MMH internal IT resources have created a unified program to address the long-standing IT projects that were not being completed as well as coverage for IT support needs during fluctuations within the hospital's internal IT team's availability



An IT roadmap that fits rural healthcare: After a substantial transition project, MMH is now focused on a jointly developed future roadmap that includes both technology goals but also funding plans. The funding plans incorporate hospital budgets as well as external funding from government programs and third-party grants.

By engaging Elevate Services Group as their technology partner, MMH has successfully addressed their needs for greater IT performance while dramatically shifting their focus to more strategic IT initiatives that positively impact overall hospital productivity. As Premier Partner with Colorado Hospital Association, Elevate's rural healthcare focus continues to bring new solutions and services to MMH and other providers looking to **"Take Command of their IT"**.



"Elevate helped us through a very difficult transition and set us up to succeed in the future"

- David Applewood, CFO
Melissa Memorial Hospital