

CareFirst BlueCross/BlueShield manages and shares real-time information across multiple call centers with Inova solution

Business Profile

CareFirst

- Independent Blue Cross/Blue Shield licensee
- Provides health care and services to over 3.2 million members
- Network operations center overseeing five call centers and 32 ACD splits

Industry

- Healthcare

Deployment Summary

- Middleware for multi-source and multi-site data integration and delivery
- Five high-visibility LED wallboards
- Virtual wallboards on desktops
- Web views for management and off-site information access

Benefits

- A sea change in the way critical information is compiled and communicated
- Automated reports eliminate time-consuming manual processes
- Web-based availability of current data allows personnel to focus on business management and decision-making

“We’ve seen some remarkable changes in efficiency and the ease with which we can communicate real-time performance. Inova’s contribution to these improvements has been fundamental.”

— Paul Funk, Workforce Manager, CareFirst

CareFirst, Inc., an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit healthcare company with affiliates and subsidiaries providing health insurance products, direct health care and related services to more than 3.2 million members in the mid-Atlantic region.

The Challenge

The call center at CareFirst headquarters, in Owings Mills, MD, was running a basic Inova system, with live ACD statistics going to 12 LED wallboards. This provided agents with real-time data including calls in queue, average speed to answer, and more. As the agents were clustered in small groups throughout the building, individual wallboards served these needs well.

As CareFirst grew, bringing on additional agents and expanding to multiple sites, their information needs became more complex. With 32 splits for ACD data, supervisors had to log into each server, run individual reports, manipulate data and calculate averages by hand. This took up to 30 minutes per report, increased the chance of error, and resulted in reports that were outdated by the time they were delivered.

In an environment where the situation can change by the minute, analysts were forced to make decisions based on stale data, and

executives were relying on snapshots of data taken hours previously.

“We were spending too much time running numbers and calculations by hand, and then taking even more time communicating this information, whether in person, over the phone, or by manually sending email,” said Paul Funk, Workforce Manager. “The live data from Inova’s standard system was a real boost in terms of our ability to track changing conditions, but as we grew, we placed greater and greater demands on that information.”

It became clear that a dedicated, centralized operations center overseeing the multiple sites and data sources was the best solution. And so when CareFirst built their new call center headquarters in Red Run, MD, they selected Inova again, this time to provide an advanced real-time system delivering multi-source data and formula-derived information to wallboards, desktops, and the Operations Command Center.

The Solution

After on-site consultation with CareFirst personnel and a discussion of needs and goals, Inova proposed and implemented a complete solution to collect, manage and share multi-source and multi-site data in

real-time. Upgrading and extending their existing Inova LightLink™ system provided CareFirst with the intelligent integration and consolidation capabilities they required.

“This was a comprehensive upgrade,” said Funk. “Our new, dedicated call center in Red Run, MD, was planned from the beginning to take advantage of the latest technology for maximum performance.”

The real-time data bus implemented by Inova enables the delivery of site specific and consolidated data to five physical wallboards; 500 “virtual” wallboards on individual desktops (using Inova MessageLink™); interactive pages on the corporate intranet; and, in the Command Center, a large projection screen.

The Results

CareFirst has seen a sea change in the way critical information is communicated. Instead of shouting across the room or phone calls to another floor or different building, real-time information flashes to high-visibility wallboards and individual desktops, as well as the centralized control screen in the Command Center.

The Red Run Operations Command Center now oversees the operations and performance of five regional call centers. Customized formulas and multi-variable business algorithms make it possible to instantly combine raw data from these multiple locations into views of current conditions, performance, and more. And comparing current conditions to archived historical performance helps managers develop a more contextualized understanding and adjust resources as needed.

Moreover, this information — even as its utility has expanded beyond raw streaming data — has become more easily accessible, enabling everyone from agents to executives to make better decisions.

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communicate real-time performance,” Funk said. “Inova’s contribution to these improvements has been fundamental.”

Dynamically publishing real-time information to a (password-protected) web page expands its accessibility to anyone at any location with a web-enabled PC. A second web level contains additional information for executives and is also populated with updated information every 10 seconds. Conditionally formatted (color-coded) fields make it easy to spot irregularities or to track trends through time. With a firm understanding of how call center performance interacts with hundreds of variables, executives and managers are better able to make the right decisions, faster.

“Inova enables us to deliver customized, real-time business intelligence via the corporate intranet, regardless of location,” Funk said. “Once executives had the ability to look at consolidated call center performance at a corporate level, and supervisors could use the same portal to assess performance for an individual business unit, we were able to focus on business management and decision-making when it was most needed.”
