

## Health Alliance Plan

**Building a Healthy Storage Infrastructure while Reducing Administration Costs by 90 Percent with Symantec Solutions**



**Like all medical insurance organizations, Health Alliance Plan must protect its sensitive customer information and minimize the costs of administering its storage infrastructure. A comprehensive suite of Symantec products is meeting these needs, offering dramatic reductions in staff time and storage costs. Total cost of ownership of the company's storage infrastructure is down by 22 percent, while storage utilization is approaching 80 percent, well above the industry average.**

### Healthcare Consumers Get Involved In Their Own Care

In medicine, prevention saves lives—and money. Health Alliance Plan (HAP), one of the largest health insurance organizations in Michigan, is serious about prevention. Whether it involves mammograms, blood tests, immunizations, or education, HAP encourages its customers to be active participants in health.

IT plays a major role in helping consumers get access to information and services. “We understand that customers want information 24x7, online, and it's our job to make sure they get it.” says Daniel Trim, HAP's director of operations, UNIX Systems, and database management.

### Compliance Adds to IT Challenge

Regulatory compliance puts pressure on Trim's staff, too. “We run 18 production databases that deal with case management, claims processing, and other functions covered by HIPAA and other regulations,” he explains. “Some of the information has to be retained for seven years, and be instantly retrievable.

“And the volume of data keeps growing, not only through more patient records, but also because each record is getting longer, adding fields. We currently have about 36 terabytes of data and it's growing by 12 percent a year.”

### Storage Foundation Cuts The Load On Busy IT Staffers

HAP's first investment in Symantec software was to purchase Veritas Storage Foundation™, and it's proven its value over the years. In 1998, the company was in the process of moving from a Bull mainframe to an open systems architecture based on Sun servers running the Solaris Operating System. “The native Solaris disk management was complex and difficult to control,” Trim remembers. “Veritas Storage Foundation is intuitive and easy to operate.”

**“We've standardized on CommandCentral Storage and Storage Foundation because they unify our view of our diverse server and storage population.”**

#### Daniel Trim

Director, Operations, UNIX Systems and Database Management  
Health Alliance Plan

#### ORGANIZATION PROFILE

At Health Alliance Plan ([www.hap.org](http://www.hap.org)), one of Michigan's largest health plans, 1,000 employees work to provide health coverage and other healthcare product solutions and services to more than 565,000 subscribers in southeastern Michigan.

#### INDUSTRY

Healthcare

#### SOLUTION

Data Center Automation, Storage Management, Data Protection

Storage Foundation helps Health Alliance Plan manage five different platforms and reduce administration costs by 90 percent.

Storage Foundation’s heterogeneous support has given HAP the flexibility to change the mix of its server population, without having to adopt new tools. “We support five platforms in our environment—Solaris, IBM AIX, Linux, Windows, and Novell,” says Trim. “We’ve standardized on CommandCentral Storage and Storage Foundation because they unify our view of our diverse server and storage population.

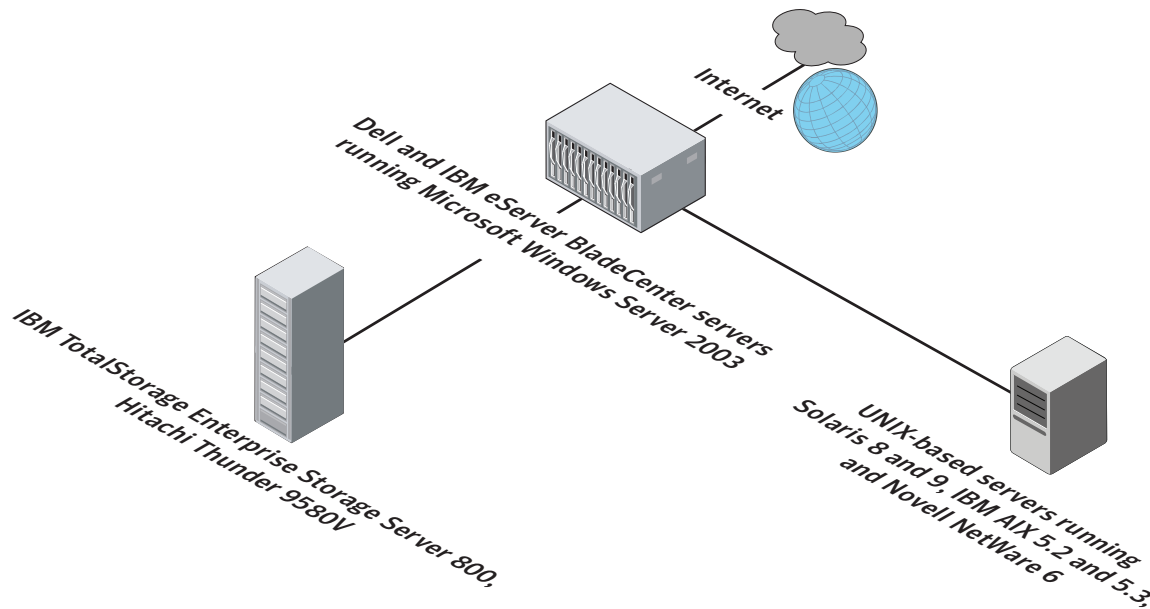
“CommandCentral gives me an instantaneous view of how storage is allocated throughout the environment. Then I can drill

down to any server to determine utilization. It’s great for heuristic reporting. I can take a point-in-time snapshot today and compare to one taken a year ago to determine trends. That helps me project my storage needs accurately so we don’t overbuy or underbuy.”

**The Need For Automated Storage Management**

In HAP’s dynamic environment, managing storage manually is difficult and time-consuming. “Our storage requirements change constantly,” explains Trim. “In

**Health Alliance Plan  
Storage Management and Data Protection Architecture**



**Veritas Storage Foundation** allows for heterogeneous online storage management from one console. It lets HAP work with five different platforms, and make changes without having to adapt to new tools.

**Veritas CommandCentral Storage** gives HAP’s IT staff central visibility and control of storage allocation throughout its environment. Storage point-in-time snapshots let HAP identify trends for planning purposes.

**Veritas NetBackup** provides data protection, safeguards ten years of HAP data as required by regulators, and enables a planned transition to disk-to-disk storage.

**Symantec Consulting Services** provided a complete assessment of storage utilization, which helped HAP choose the right SAN architecture. **Symantec Education Services** provided a five-day class in CommandCentral Storage onsite at HAP. **Symantec Essential Support Services** provides support 24 hours a day.

the past, two administrators spent most of their time allocating and reallocating storage space, a waste of talent that could be used on more strategic projects.” In addition, server administrators spent significant time monitoring and manually documenting storage allocations for each server.

Wanting to recapture this staff time, Trim’s group started to investigate the available storage automation solutions. “In addition to Symantec, we looked at IBM, Sun, EMC, and StorageTek,” he recalls. “Veritas CommandCentral™ Storage offers the most intuitive user interface and integrates well with our diverse infrastructure. And we were happy with Storage Foundation, so it was a logical choice.”

The combination of Storage Foundation and CommandCentral Storage was just what the doctor ordered. “People don’t believe me when I say that we’ve cut storage administration costs by 90 percent, but it’s true,” Trim insists.

### Dramatic Jump In Storage Utilization Rates

There’s more: Storage utilization rates are well above industry averages, and Trim is aiming higher still. “Industry averages are between 40 and 45 percent,” he relates. “When I first got here, IBM evaluated our environment and told us that we were running at 57 percent. I wasn’t satisfied, that’s why I pushed us to invest in new tools.

“Now we’re running at 79 percent, up a full 22 points. It’s still not high enough for me—I’m shooting for mid-80s. I don’t think 90 percent is impossible.”

Another way that Trim’s group contributes to the bottom line is with smart storage buying. After a comprehensive evaluation of historical trends, HAP was able to make a three-year purchase of IBM and Hitachi disk storage. “Making a single large buy saved us

literally 90 percent of the cost of our storage infrastructure compared to continually making incremental additions,” Trim says. “CommandCentral Storage provided us the historical data to drive our analysis. So when management challenged our conclusion, I could show them the actual numbers from CommandCentral Storage reports. That made the decision easy.”

### Netbackup: Reliable And Flexible Data Protection

In 1999, HAP was testing its disaster recovery system as part of its Y2K preparedness planning. HAP’s existing data protection solution could not restore the data from the backup tape. “We needed a more robust solution to protect our business-critical data,” remembers Trim. “So we turned to a trusted vendor—Symantec. Our analysis of Veritas NetBackup™ software’s total cost of ownership over a five-year period worked out better than the competition, but a bigger factor was the confidence we had in our local Symantec support team.” Veritas NetBackup software is now the backup solution of choice for all of HAP’s more than 150 servers. The scalability of NetBackup has been an essential capability, since HAP’s volume of backup data has grown from 3.5 terabytes in 2000 to more than 36 terabytes today.

Trim’s ROI projections for NetBackup software have more than materialized, showing a 100 percent payback in just 24 months. NetBackup software has also aided HAP’s regulatory compliance by safely storing ten years of historical data required by HIPAA, Sarbanes-Oxley, and other regulations.

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

### Business Drivers

- Reduce time and expense required to manage storage infrastructure
- Ensure reliable protection of vital enterprise information
- Avoid penalties for non-compliance with HIPAA and other regulations

### Technology Challenges

- Centralize and streamline storage management in heterogeneous environment
- Institute proactive monitoring of storage infrastructure
- Build scalable, flexible infrastructure
- Establish secure, readily-accessible storage for growing amount of regulatory data

### Solution

Comprehensive Symantec solutions to centralize storage management, reduce risks to information, and enhance compliance

### Symantec Products

- Veritas Storage Foundation™
- Veritas CommandCentral™ Storage
- Veritas NetBackup™ with agent for Oracle

### Technology Environment

- Server Platform: 10 IBM P550 and P570 servers running IBM AIX 5.2 & 5.3
- Database: Oracle 9i and 10g
- Applications: Diamond Claims System, Oracle Financials and eBusiness
- Storage: IBM ESS 800, HDS 9580v & AMS 1000 and IBM 3584 Tape silo

### Symantec Services

- Symantec Consulting Services
- Symantec Education Services
- Symantec Essential Support Services

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## BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

### Results

- 90% reduction in IT storage administration staff time
- 17% reduction in TCO for storage infrastructure
- 22 percentage point improvement in storage utilization rates (from 57% to 79%)
- 90% cost savings on storage through consolidated three-year buy
- 100% payback on NetBackup in two years

### Looking Ahead At Disk-To-Disk

At one point, HAP was having problems restoring an Oracle database from tape. “It turns out that the file was ‘fuzzy,’” remembers Trim. “The database was active at the time the backup job ran, so we didn’t get a clean, coherent copy of the information. Now, with the Oracle agent for NetBackup, that problem is history.” The NetBackup agent for Oracle enables hot, non-disruptive backups—full or incremental—of Oracle databases.

It’s part of Trim’s job description to be always looking ahead, and disk-to-disk backup is one promising area his group is investigating. “Our testing shows that a disk-to-disk backup strategy based on Veritas NetBackup will cut backup times by 50 percent,” says Trim. “We should have it in production before the end of 2007. We’ll use the Vault option of NetBackup to manage the disk as a virtual tape device.”

### Symantec Services Decisive In HAP’s Success

Storage management ultimately depends on the talent and dedication of people, not just the technology. As satisfied as Trim is with Symantec products, he is doubly so with Symantec services. In discussing his experiences, Trim relates examples of how each group—Symantec Consulting Services, Symantec Education Services, and Symantec Essential Support Services—have made significant contributions to HAP’s success. A firm believer in bringing

in outside experts, Trim relied on Symantec Consulting at crucial times over the past five years, going back to the original SAN implementation.

“Symantec Consulting did a comprehensive assessment of our storage utilization, a valuable contribution to helping us choose the right SAN architecture,” he says. “We’ve turned to Symantec several times since then to tune up our data protection plans.” In a recent case, Symantec identified a crucial setup configuration error for one of HAP’s backup policies that could have resulted in an incomplete backup. “It was a complicated configuration using multiple streams and multiple volumes,” Trim recalls. “The Symantec consultant looked at our setup and predicted that one of the backups was not running to completion. We pulled the most recent backup tape and found that he was correct. I was glad to find out when I did rather than after we had suffered a data loss that we couldn’t recover from.”

### Training And Support Add To Operational Efficiency

While he appreciates the ease of use of Symantec products, Trim nevertheless sees how training pays off by improving productivity and increasing the usage of more advanced features and capabilities. Trim is able to eliminate travel expenses and help stretch HAP’s training dollars by leveraging Symantec Education Services for onsite training.

“Symantec Education offered a five-day class on CommandCentral Storage right here in my facility,” Trim explains. “I was able to send my entire staff, something that would not have been possible if they had to travel. Now, every one of my administrators is fully up to speed on CommandCentral Storage.” HAP has also benefited from Symantec Essential Support Services. “No matter what time we call Symantec technical support, they always get back to us well within the designated time window,” says Trim. “And we solve a lot of our problems with online support, so we don’t even have to call.”

### The Benefits Of Proactive Storage Management

Like a surgeon giving his patient a clean bill of health, Trim assesses the outcome of HAP’s engagement with Symantec: “Over the last five years, we’ve upgraded the management of our infrastructure so that my staff is 95 percent proactive rather than reactive. Symantec products have made a major contribution by helping us stay on top of developing problems in our storage infrastructure.

“The big payoff is that Symantec offers us a total management solution for our storage infrastructure. NetBackup handles our data protection. Storage Foundation manages our disk storage. CommandCentral ties the reporting all together so that we can monitor backup status, tape drive utilization, disk drive utilization, and storage allocations—all from a single console.”