



CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL:

IowaHealth Systems Improves HIPAA Compliance and Controls Spam with Content Filtering and Email Security Technologies from GlobalCerts and SurfControl

Like many medical and health care providers, Iowa Health System is facing increasing regulations to protect patient privacy and manage costs. Founded in 1995, Iowa Health System is an organization of physicians, hospitals and clinics operating in nearly 100 Midwest communities. The organization is now running much of its business and healthcare functions through the Internet to speed up the provision of healthcare services and improve efficiency. With its increased reliance on electronic communications, Iowa Health had to manage the risks of potential security and confidential patient data leaks – particularly anything communicated through email. At the same time, the health care group faced a growing spam problem that averaged about 10,000-15,000 unwanted messages per day. In early 2004, Iowa Health installed SurfControl™ email Filter with GlobalCerts™ SecureMail Gateway™, a joint solution to manage spam, reduce network costs and protect outbound, inbound and internal email that contains sensitive or protected patient health information.

Iowa Health System: A New Approach to Affordable, Accessible Healthcare

Iowa Health System is Iowa's first and largest integrated healthcare organization, founded as a community-based group of doctors, hospitals, civic leaders and volunteers who shared a vision of delivering the highest quality healthcare services at the lowest possible cost.

With more than 18,000 employees, 100,000 yearly patient admissions and annual operating revenue of \$1.5 billion, Iowa Health operates hospitals in Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Waterloo, Dubuque, Quad Cities and Sioux City, and partners with about 450 physicians and clinics in more than 80 locations in Iowa, western Illinois and eastern Nebraska. At the heart of this healthcare group, is a very large and complex network with more than 10,000 users, many of whom telecommute.

The use of the Internet and email has had a profound impact on the healthcare industry. "Doctors are doing more remotely," said Tom Potts, Iowa Health's manager of information protection. "They're looking at X-rays or scans, reviewing patient files and sending data remotely. This saves valuable time and resources, and gives our physicians the tools they need to provide the best possible patient care when lives are at stake."

In addition to doctors' increasing use of the Internet, many administrative workers also work from home, transcribing treatment and billing records that are then sent electronically to other providers, the central billing office and health insurance companies.

New Laws Require the Healthcare Industry to Secure and Better Monitor email

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), requires better protection of confidential health data, and carries steep fines of up to \$250,000 and 10 years in prison for misusing protected health information with malice or for profit. Even accidental violations could seriously tarnish a company's image as a trusted provider. Compliance with HIPAA started being enforced last year and health care organizations are required to meet all security rules by April 21, 2005.

In light of HIPAA regulations, Iowa Health undertook a self-assessment of potential security risks and concluded that they needed new technology tools to comply. The organization needed a solution that would secure and encrypt email containing patient information, and would monitor email to make sure no employees were violating the law accidentally or intentionally.

Iowa Health Systems set out a list of criteria for its compliance solutions. The health system was looking for a solution that would be easy to install and administer while requiring a minimum of employee inconvenience or retraining. IT managers also wanted tools to control a growing spam problem, as 35-40 percent of the email employees were receiving each day was spam. Spam also was taxing the computer network and causing employee productivity problems. Employees were being forced to identify and delete an average of 1,000 spam emails per employee, per day.

SurfControl and GlobalCerts Provide a Combined Compliance Solution

Iowa Health reviewed and tested several different products before selecting a joint solution from SurfControl, the world leader in Web and email filtering, and GlobalCerts, a leading provider of secure messaging solutions, in late 2003. The decision provided a perfect fit for Iowa Health, which needed the best content scanning and encryption technology, combined with the best in secure email technology: SurfControl email Filter closely monitored all email communications to ensure that employees were complying with HIPAA. The SurfControl email Filter's Virtual Learning Agent, an artificial intelligence tool, also was used to automatically identify and flag messages as confidential if these contain sensitive health, financial or customer information. Iowa Health Systems also secured email content with encryption technology with the GlobalCerts SecureMail Gateway, a network server encryption appliance positioned at the email server level to encrypt and decrypt email and attachments. "The SurfControl email Filter features a medical terminology and legal dictionary that scans all email in its entirety and flags those that contain a certain number of key words, and the GlobalCerts product sees that flag and encrypts that email," Potts said.

Key Results: Compliance with Regulations and Spam Under Control

The integrated SurfControl and GlobalCerts solution has helped provide Iowa Health with a seamless, multi-layered and cost-effective solution to ensure compliance with the new privacy laws. The product helped reign in the escalating cost of spam and saved hours of sorting, identifying and deleting spam, according to Potts. In addition, Iowa Health's e-mail servers, anti-virus programs and other network resources are no longer being strained by the spam epidemic. Employees no longer have to be concerned with the task of determining which e-mails contain private health data – as the SurfControl E-mail Filter now automatically identifies those e-mails and flags them for encryption by GlobalCerts. "The SurfControl and GlobalCerts joint solution has done everything we expected it would do," Potts said. "Yes, we are addressing HIPAA. But, more importantly, we're putting good business practices in place to protect the integrity of our data and provide the best possible patient care."



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