



# How Cascade Comprehensive Care Is Protecting Member Data with Managed IT and Cybersecurity



## INDUSTRY

Healthcare Management

## CHALLENGES

- Growing in-house IT became too costly
- Growing patient population exceeded onsite infrastructure
- No available staff on call to respond to sever issues

## RESULTS

- Vulnerability management software enabled prompt, proactive action when protecting patient data
- Backups and protection for onsite servers
- Managed end-user support to free in-house IT up to support patients more directly
- 24/7 monitoring to prevent security breaches and data loss

Cascade Comprehensive Care (Cascade) is a healthcare management company based in Oregon. Since 1992, their mission has been to provide members with reliable, accessible, and high-quality healthcare.

They serve over 27,000 Medicaid members, assisting with Oregon Health Plan memberships, acquiring prior authorizations when needed, building provider networks, processing claims, and connecting them with necessary providers.

Cascade's goal is to improve the well-being of their community holistically. That is why they also partner with other local organizations to help members find non-healthcare resources like food, rental assistance, and clothing.

## Quality Care in the Digital Age

For Chief Operating Officer, Michael Donarski, a top priority when serving Cascade's members is ensuring the group's operations are streamlined, secure, and effective—for which he relies on the group's technologies.

A key area of focus for Donarski is member security and privacy. "We value and care about our members' data—keeping it secure and in the right hands," he said. He believes the high standards held for Cascade's cybersecurity and data storage are one of the things that set the group apart from its competitors.

He holds those same standards for the technologies his staff uses every day. "Our information technology includes how we get our communications to our members, how we process claims, how we update our care plans—you name it." Nothing less than the utmost reliability and efficiency would do for Cascade.

## How To Scale without Growing Pains

Previously, Donarski used in-house IT staff to manage the information technology supporting Cascade's everyday functions. However, as their member population grew, he recognized that growing the necessary technology infrastructure and team to keep up with it would not be feasible.

Hiring, training, equipping, and maintaining a larger in-house IT team would be too costly. Recruitment challenges would place time constraints and lower productivity for Donarski and his staff. There was also no guarantee that an in-house team would have the flexibility to quickly adapt to industry changes.

"We didn't want to take on the full responsibility internally because we were getting too large," he said. "We had servers on-site and we were growing, and the data was growing. We saw the need to pull in an expert instead of continuing to hire people."

That was when he reached out to Meriplex.

## PARTNER



## Deploying Outsourced Managed IT and Cybersecurity

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In the past, Cascade had used Meriplex intermittently. “We had one technician in-house. So, when that one person would leave, we would turn to Meriplex until we found someone new,” said Donarski.

Donarski now recognized the need for a long-term technology solutions partner, and he knew Meriplex would be up to the task. “They offered a local presence to us and were willing to have people on-site the same day,” he said. “That was the commitment they would give.”

With Meriplex’s help, Donarski implemented annual security risk assessments and vulnerability management software to proactively monitor Cascade’s environment and report vulnerabilities. Other measures consisted of backups and protection for the group’s servers, which include notifications in the event of storage issues, outages, and risk of overheating.

“I would now get a notification on my phone saying, ‘your server room is too hot,’ and we’d be able to act right away.” Instead of responding after the fact, Donarski is now empowered to act proactively. He also has a dedicated team of specialists to support the group’s every technical need—big or small.

One benefit of Meriplex’s end-user support noted by Donarski was that Cascade’s staff were no longer responsible for routine internal IT issues. “Account setups, reset passwords—minor things like that, as well as our ticket systems,” he said when describing recurring tasks now outsourced to Meriplex.

While these everyday tasks may seem mundane, the cumulative time saved by transferring them away from Cascade’s employees has enabled them to rededicate their efforts to serving their members. Meriplex’s support has also helped Donarski and his staff during more serious, impactful events.

“We had an attempt on our data back in 2019, and our systems went down,” Donarski recalled. “They got to work that same day. They helped in our recovery and got us back up and running.”

### A Long-Term, Trusted Partner

Since partnering with Meriplex, Donarski has continued seeing opportunities to enhance how Cascade serves members. “They share industry best practices with us,” he said. “They make recommendations for solutions that we may not have necessarily been considering but have benefited several other clients in our field. That was behind our decision to move to a cloud service.”

This partnership also allows Donarski and Cascade to work with industry-leading experts to stay ahead of the changing landscape. “A big benefit is when there’s a big data breach in the industry or some kind of ransomware, they start implementing things for us proactively—even if we haven’t been impacted—because they want to protect their clients.”

When asked what the biggest benefit is from a partnership with Meriplex, Donarski said, “You’ll get more sleep. I do because I know they have their automations in place to monitor things I would normally be concerned with.”

Deploying innovative, reliable technologies managed by an experienced, specialized partner has given him and his staff a benefit he did not have before: peace of mind. For that reason, he plans to continue working with Meriplex to enhance how Cascade serves their members and community.

“We have a trusted partner,” he said, “and we look forward to a long, prosperous partnership ahead.”