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**- Bart Hunter, IT Manager**

## Effingham Hospital

**Business:** Effingham Hospital is a 130-bed critical access hospital and nursing home located in Springfield, Georgia needing to stay HIPAA compliant and protect patient data despite limited IT resources.

**Perimeter E-Security Solutions:**  
Vulnerability Scanning

### Benefits of Perimeter:

Effingham Hospital is able to meet HIPAA network security standards while ensuring that their network is constantly secure.

## Effingham Hospital Case Study:

### A REGIONAL, HOSPITAL STAYS HIPAA COMPLIANT THROUGH ON-DEMAND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Effingham Hospital, a critical access hospital and nursing home in Springfield, GA, may not be located in a congested, bustling city but the private health information contained within their network is just as valuable to a potential hacker. Not only did they have to remain compliant with HIPAA regulations, they knew it was their responsibility to patients, residents, employees, vendors and many other stakeholders to ensure that their network was properly secured and continuously tested. They turned to Perimeter E-Security, subscribing to their Network Vulnerability Scanning services to test their network both internally and externally, as well as providing a host assessment for critical servers. Their decision freed up their IT manager to focus on other critical business, as well as saving them money by avoiding the need to hire more full-time staff members.

### The IT Security & Compliance Problem

Effingham Hospital, a 25-bed critical access hospital and 105-bed nursing home facility located in Springfield, Georgia, needed to demonstrate compliance with federal security regulations. As a covered entity under HIPAA, the small, hospital had to prove that it assessed the threats and vulnerabilities of its computer network that could jeopardize the safety of patient data.

Network vulnerabilities in a health care organization can create holes that could lead to the exposure of electronic protected health information (ePHI), defined as any information about health status, provision of or payment for health care that is linked to an individual. Under HIPAA regulations, covered entities such as hospitals are required to implement procedures to identify if they are vulnerable to malicious activity and to develop measures to secure their networks before damage is done. Like any corporate entity, Effingham Hospital's vulnerabilities existed at both the operating system and application level of a network. A vulnerability assessment to expose weaknesses and a solution to protect ePHI was needed. The rural hospital sought a solution that was comprehensive, reliable and affordable.

Hiring a full-time, highly skilled IT security specialist at an affordable rate to monitor the network constantly for vulnerabilities would have been extremely challenging for this rural hospital. Effingham Hospital has one full-time IT manager who is very busy maintaining the existing IT infrastructure and working on other mission-critical IT projects.

### The Perimeter E-Security Solution

Effingham Hospital decided to subscribe to Perimeter's Network Scanning Services on the recommendation of the CFO. The IT manager simply installed a server, which plugged easily into the hospital's rack of hardware devices. Now, Perimeter performs a Monthly Remote Network Assessment to test the effectiveness of the network security controls at the hospital and to identify associated weakness before malicious activity can take place. The

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service analyzes the external network (Internet perimeter) along with the internal network (key servers within the organization). In addition, a Host Assessment is conducted on critical servers comparing the server configuration with industry best practices.

In addition to the monitoring, analysis and remediation services, Effingham Hospital knows that Perimeter's vulnerability assessment services are continuously updated to combat the latest threats in the marketplace. Further, the hospital is assured that Perimeter's assessment services have been validated by multiple independent third parties.

Each month a certified Perimeter information security expert reviews the vulnerability scan results, applies a risk level to each vulnerability and recommends corrective action. This risk level and the corresponding corrective action provide Effingham Hospital with the steps to proactively correct network weaknesses. The Host Assessment provides a server compliance score and lists the details of each policy which is out of compliance.

Each quarter the Perimeter security expert and the hospital's IT manager hold a conference call to review the results of the assessments. When necessary, the consultant provides guidance on network architecture changes. Comprehensive vulnerability assessment reports are made available 24/7 to Effingham Hospital's IT staff on Perimeter ViewPoint portal site online. This combination of quality reports and detailed consultation provides a comprehensive, ongoing methodology for addressing network vulnerabilities.

The Monthly Network Vulnerability Assessment includes the following services:

#### **External Network Vulnerability Assessment:**

The external assessment is conducted from Perimeter's BorderShield Security Operations Center to give a true picture of the organization's external exposure. BorderShield's vulnerability assessment methodology utilizes multiple industry-tested and -approved scanning tools. The findings from these tools are correlated against each other to eliminate false positives and to allow the customer to focus on the true risks to the environment. Results from the assessment are reported to management and IT administrators to provide a clear snapshot of their network's current vulnerability status.

#### **Internal Network Vulnerability Assessment:**

The internal assessment provides details on the corporate network components (servers, workstations, etc.). A resource server preloaded with scanning tools is placed in promiscuous mode inside the network. On a preset date and time the server queries all of the windows servers within the network for known vulnerabilities. No interruption in network traffic flow occurs during these internal scans. The results are compiled into a report that is reviewed by Perimeter's dedicated information security expert.

#### **Host Assessment:**

As part of the Monthly Network Vulnerability Assessment service, a server audit is performed on critical servers on the internal network. Utilizing the resource server deployed for the Internal Assessment portion of the service, this assessment queries servers inside the network. The tool provides a detailed report of the state of policy compliance for each server. A numeric score shows the overall state of compliance (0 to 100, with 100 being full compliance) for each server. If a server configuration is out of compliance with best practices, the report details the corrective action to be taken on that policy.

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IT Manager

The review by the Perimeter security expert sorts through all of the detailed findings to determine the accuracy and relevance to the hospital's network.

The final report contains relevant information -- a risk level, the technical description, the recommended correction and the device(s) affected -- on all vulnerabilities.

### The Net Result

The final report contains relevant information -- a risk level, the technical description, the recommended correction and the device(s) affected -- on all vulnerabilities.

As a result of deploying Perimeter's Monthly Vulnerability Assessment Service, Effingham Hospital benefits from best-of-breed security technology and expertise. It receives:

- Comprehensive reports to identify relevant and accurate network vulnerabilities
- A dedicated Perimeter information security consultant to review the hospital's network each month and, via a telephone conference each quarter, to proactively correct network weaknesses in an acceptable time window. Risk is reduced by providing information a comprehensive audit trail for improving the state of network security over time.
- A secure, online portal providing 24/7 access to reports

Extensive high level and highly detailed reports to demonstrate the hospital's level of compliance to auditors. Reports also show senior managers the number of An affordable subscription-based service with no integration project, additional staff or capital expenditure requirements

- The flexibility to add more services on demand from Perimeter's integrated ViewPoint portal
- Vulnerability assessment services that are continuously updated to combat the latest threats in the marketplace and an infrastructure that has been validated by multiple independent third parties

Effingham Hospital is now compliant with the HIPAA regulations. Reports are available at any time to demonstrate to federal auditors that the hospital performs continuous vulnerability assessments.

“Our network is secure. The monthly reports make the CFO happy and we are ready for any auditor who should come our way,” said Bart Hunter, manager, Information Technology at Effingham Hospital. “Having Perimeter E-Security is like having a virtual security expert on staff. I am able to focus my time on managing our overall IT infrastructure and we were able to avoid hiring an additional employee to cover these types of vulnerabilities for us.”

### About Perimeter E-Security

Perimeter is the trusted market leader of information security services that delivers enterprise-class protection and compliance. Through its cost-effective and scalable SaaS platform, Perimeter offers the most comprehensive compliance, security and messaging services that include: hosted email, encrypted email, firewall management and monitoring, vulnerability scanning, host intrusion and prevention, email antivirus and spam, remote data backup and email archiving. For more information about Perimeter visit [www.perimeterusa.com](http://www.perimeterusa.com).

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