

Aurora Health Care Uses SecureZIP[™] from PKWARE to Enable HIPAA Compliance

Company Background

Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit Wisconsin health care provider and a nationally recognized leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care. Aurora offers services at sites in 80 communities throughout eastern Wisconsin, bringing together clinics, hospitals, home care, family services, pharmacies, and other services, to allow for the coordination of care across a broad spectrum of needs.

Goal:

Aurora needed to be able to electronically transmit large volumes of financial and clinical data, including patient health records, from its mainframe computers to its partners and suppliers. This information is sent on a frequent basis to banks, state and federal governments, and suppliers for reporting, claims processing, and payment reconciliation.

Challenge:

The privacy provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), which took effect April 14, 2003, protect medical records and other personal health information created or maintained by health care providers, health insurers and others who engage in certain electronic transactions. In order to comply with HIPAA requirements, Aurora needed to ensure that any and all patient data it stored or exchanged was strongly protected so that it could not be accidentally or intentionally accessed or altered by unauthorized parties.

Solution:

Previously, Aurora had been physically delivering data to its external partners using magnetic tape, which was a time-consuming and costly manual procedure. In order to streamline this process, they needed to be able to electronically transfer the information over the Internet. To ensure that data could not be accessed or altered in transit, Aurora selected PKWARE's SecureZIP for zSeries to enable strong encryption, which allowed them to FTP information to their partners directly from the data center.

Key reasons why Aurora chose SecureZIP over other security products included the fact that it was straight-forward to implement and support and is completely interoperable across varying computing platforms and IT infrastructures. And, because SecureZIP is built on the widely-adopted ZIP data compression standard, Aurora is able to efficiently archive as well as transfer files to anyone while conserving precious network bandwidth.

"With PKWARE, we can transfer data to our partners in far less time and at much lower cost than we were able to do before. Not only is this process more efficient, but also more secure and much easier to manage," said Robert Burgess, IS project lead for Aurora. The fact that PKWARE has an enterprise-class technical support team was also a big plus, providing Aurora with the confidence needed for implementing mission-critical software within a data center environment.

“ We’ve been using PKWARE’s products within Aurora for the past 3 years and have been very satisfied with the compression and data protection capabilities. Like every healthcare organization, we needed a reliable and secure enterprise solution with very strong encryption in order to help us comply with HIPAA standards. We use PKWARE for any information we need to transfer securely. The installation was painless and PKWARE’s support had us up and running very quickly. ”

Robert Burgess
IS Project Lead
Aurora Health Care



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