

Non-profit Family Planning Services Organization Selects FirstLight for SD-WAN Solution

CHALLENGE

Since 1971, Maine Family Planning's mission has remained the same: to provide Maine residents with access to affordable, high-quality reproductive healthcare and education. While the values and commitment that lay at the core of Maine Family Planning's purpose have not changed, its operations and network of facilities have evolved significantly over the years.



With its headquarters in Augusta, ME, Maine Family Planning has grown to include 18 care facilities across the state, spanning from Fort Kent to Calais to Norway, Maine. These facilities were acquired over the course of the organization's 50+ years in business, each coming with its own unique technology, equipment, and connectivity. As these disparate environments multiplied with the addition of new sites, Maine Family Planning became increasingly aware that its infrastructure needed an overhaul, as well as support to efficiently manage it all.

SOLUTION

Maine Family Planning conducted an IT assessment across its locations, engaging an IT consultant to work alongside its team on an effective solution that would continue to grow with the organization. With uniformity and performance high on the list of requirements, as well as the need for deep visibility into technology across multiple sites and help managing that technology, all signs pointed to an SD-WAN solution.

FirstLight's wide-reaching fiber optic footprint in Maine, paired with its SD-WAN expertise as a Cisco Premier Partner and skilled engineering staff, made it the provider of choice for Maine Family Planning on its most extensive IT initiative to date.

With a heavy reliance on connectivity to support essential services like telehealth and Electronic Health Records, Maine Family Planning needed a robust Internet solution to deliver these services reliably and efficiently. FirstLight's expansive fiber presence in Maine allowed Maine Family Planning to access symmetrical, high-speed fiber optic Internet at all 18 of its sites. (CONTINUED)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMPANY: MAINE FAMILY PLANNING

INDUSTRY: HEALTHCARE

LOCATION: MAINE

CHALLENGE:

- Maine Family Planning had several care facilities with disparate network environments and antiquated equipment.
- There were blind spots in Maine Family Planning's network due to the variety of equipment and connectivity at each location. It was a challenge for its IT team to maintain visibility of every component.
- Maine Family Planning wanted to wipe the slate clean and implement a standardized, high performing solution across all of its sites, with easy access to and management of all components.

SOLUTION:

- Maine Family Planning selected FirstLight for an SD-WAN solution to update and standardize network equipment across all locations and provide insight into each component of its network.
- FirstLight's fiber presence in Maine allowed Maine Family Planning to leverage FirstLight's high performance network at all 18 of its locations as part of the SD-WAN solution.
- FirstLight's team of experts manages and maintains all of the network equipment, allowing Maine Family Planning to operate more proactively and with a leaner IT staff.

RESULTS:

- Maine Family Planning has been able to deploy telehealth services across all locations, making programs and care more accessible to a larger number of patients across the state of Maine.
- Staff at Maine Family Planning has a more seamless IT experience with faster, more reliable Internet access to make accessing and sharing files and Electronic Health Records more efficient while remaining secure.
- FirstLight's Managed Services have allowed Maine Family Planning to run with a leaner IT staff by relying on FirstLight to manage its IT environment.

With FirstLight's low latency, high-capacity fiber optics as the new foundation for its IT environment, Maine Family Planning could now deploy FirstLight's Cisco-based SD-WAN Foundation solution across all of its sites seamlessly. FirstLight installed a Cisco Meraki router, firewall, and wireless access points at each location, keeping the equipment uniform and easily managed from a single online dashboard. FirstLight's SD-WAN solution also enabled Maine Family Planning to move away from antiquated security solutions that were previously siloed at each of its 18 locations. FirstLight SD-WAN provides Maine Family Planning with advanced threat detection and up-to-date firmware throughout its

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environment, creating a consistent and cohesive security strategy, all managed through an online dashboard. FirstLight manages the equipment, network and security as part of Maine Family Planning's SD-WAN solution, allowing it to operate more efficiently with a leaner IT staff.

"I love having the ability to monitor the network activity at each of our sites through a single dashboard," stated Cathy Burnham, Senior Health Systems Technologist at Maine Family Planning.

"With FirstLight owning and managing all of the equipment, the convenience and reliability that come with FirstLight's SD-WAN and Managed Services have given our team the ability to focus on being proactive with our IT initiatives, versus the reactive state we formerly found ourselves in," added Mike Pratt, CIO, Maine Family Planning and owner, EntrePro Services.

RESULTS

Maine Family Planning had 75% of its FirstLight SD-WAN solution in place when the COVID-19 pandemic swept the United States in March of 2020, with the remainder of its sites installed and serviceable by August 2020. Because of this, continuity of care via virtual services was not nearly as challenging as it would have been just months prior. Maine Family Planning's new robust network across all sites allowed it to deploy telehealth services as its primary mechanism to continue seeing patients throughout the turbulent months of the pandemic.

Post-pandemic, Maine Family Planning has integrated telehealth services as a standard practice, allowing providers to better leverage their resources, access more patients, and provide more consults, all while upholding its commitment to exceptional care. It has been able to bring on programs in new locations that it previously was unable to service.

Internally, Maine Family Planning's staff has experienced a substantial shift in the way they work, with more seamless Internet access across offices, an efficient, secure foundation to support the Electronic Health Record system, and plenty of bandwidth to access files where and when they're needed.

Maine Family Planning's new network and equipment have given stability to its IT environment, which will allow it to build upon the technology and services it now has in place and grow with the company.

ABOUT FIRSTLIGHT

FirstLight provides a full complement of cost effective, high quality, scalable telecommunications services, including high speed Internet access, data center, monitoring, cloud, managed and voice services to retail and wholesale customers throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.