



BERKSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEMS, THE BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL CROSSING CONNECT - IT'S ALL ABOUT CARING

"The secure Global Crossing network allows for confidential physician communication, electronic patient record transfer, and image transfer capabilities, and supports our daily clinical needs." — Chuck Podesta, CIO of Berkshire Health Systems (BHS)

What is BHS?

The broad network of BHS affiliates provides high-quality, cost-effective and compassionate healthcare services to residents throughout central and southern Berkshire County, Massachusetts, and the surrounding communities. BHS affiliates also serve the thousands of visitors who come to the Berkshires every year to tour historical sites, attend cultural events, enjoy the foliage, and participate in dozens of outdoor recreational activities.

BHS is a private, not-for-profit healthcare system that offers a comprehensive array of services, from acute care to diagnostic centers, rehabilitation to cancer treatment services, home health care to long-term care, both day and inpatient surgical services and much more. BHS affiliates include Berkshire Medical Center, an expansive teaching hospital, and Fairview Hospital, specializing in emergency, acute and surgical care. The Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association is also an affiliate of BHS, and is the largest and oldest multidisciplinary in-home health services provider for Berkshire residents. BHS also operates numerous skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers, providing comprehensive short-term rehabilitation and long-term care throughout Berkshire County and beyond.

The Berkshire Connection

In 2000, BHS saw an opportunity to further its mission through an innovative network access solution developed by Berkshire Connect, a consortium of business, cultural, academic and community leaders, with Global Crossing and Equal Access Networks. This regional solution was the first of its kind in the country, one that creates a market by aggregating demand from all sectors and from all levels of users in the region in order to span the "digital divide".

The creative Berkshire Connect solution allows Berkshire County businesses, large and small, to leverage their collective buying power to obtain voice, data and Internet services that compare in price and quality to services previously only available in major metropolitan areas. BHS was attracted to Global Crossing as a "flagship" preferred provider of Berkshire Connect. Global Crossing offers special pricing to members for voice (local, intrastate, interstate, international) and data services that include frame relay/ATM, dedicated Internet access through T-1s, DS-3s, fractional Ts, and dial-up. Under the umbrella of collaboration services, Global Crossing also provides member organizations with voice, web, and video conferencing services that make complex communications simple, efficient and productive.

Recognition for BHS

BHS has been named one of the nation's "Most Wired" healthcare systems, according to the 2003 Most Wired Survey and Benchmarking Study by Hospitals & Health Networks Magazine™. For the fifth straight year BHS has been recognized for its use of technologies to solve strategic problems, and especially for its integrated electronic medical record system. This puts BHS in select company - achieving consistent "Most Wired" status over a period of five years that places BHS in a group of only 15 hospitals across the country.

BHS Applications Enabled by Global Crossing

BHS earned its "Most Wired" accolades for its internal Electronic Patient Record Transfer and internal

Picture Archive and Communications System (PACs) image transfer capabilities using Global Crossing's frame relay network as the backbone of its virtual private network (VPN). Multiple Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) connections enable BHS to deploy numerous applications supporting physician communications, e-mail transmission, file sharing, and patient information access.

"Our Global Crossing data network allows us to conduct our business confidentially," says Podesta. "The secure Global Crossing network supports our daily clinical needs, and the serviceability and network reliability have been excellent."

BHS uses Global Crossing's voice and data communications across 17 of its locations, and also depends on Global Crossing's full suite of collaboration services to enhance efficiencies. For example, audio conferencing services enable ten different program managers from various long term care facilities to meet and communicate on a weekly basis without leaving their offices. This translates into a business impact of additional time and decreased expenses for those facilities. In addition, the easy-to-use audio conferencing function supports the growing need for quality meetings with investors, banking institutions, and bond providers as BHS conducts ongoing negotiations for increased funding.

BHS is installing desktop video equipment in each of their facilities to provide physicians and staff with easy, effective video communications. The existing Global Crossing network will act as the backbone for IP video transmission, adding the impact of instant visual communications, enhancing collaboration, efficiency and responsiveness throughout the patient care system.

Why Global Crossing?

What was the Global Crossing difference for BHS? The attributes that BHS termed "exceptionally important" are:

- technical reliability
- account team attentiveness
- billing accuracy and single invoice delivery that simplify the administrative process
- flexibility

Because of the range of care facilities operated by BHS - from a large teaching hospital to imaging centers to long term care facilities - Global Crossing had to be flexible enough to tailor its services and installations for each type without interruptions to the critical mission of BHS affiliates - providing high-quality, cost-effective and compassionate healthcare. In other words, Global Crossing had to be caring enough to provide the caregivers of BHS with exactly the services they deserve.

"Global Crossing provides excellent overall service," says Podesta. "Beginning with a responsive field deployed account team, to reliable and professional trouble resolution personnel, Global Crossing has performed superbly."