

CASE STUDY

Sky Lakes Medical Center enhanced third-party access management security, saw 88% time-savings in IT efficiencies, and ensured compliance

Discover how Sky Lakes Medical Center enhanced security, overcame workflow challenges, and improved efficiencies with a cutting-edge authentication and remote access solution with Imprivata

Organization snapshot

Sky Lakes Medical Center, located in Klamath Falls, Oregon, is a not-for-profit healthcare organization committed to providing high-quality medical services to its community. The 176-bed facility offers a wide range of specialty care, including cardiology, oncology, and orthopedics, with more than 1,700 employees.



Challenges

- Fortify a difficult, inefficient, and unsecure access process for external users of critical systems and applications
- Reduce the complexity of the organization's user authentication processes
- Ensure compliance with industry regulations and protect patient data – particularly after suffering a ransomware attack

Solutions

- Imprivata Vendor Privileged Access Management (formerly known as SecureLink Enterprise Access) enables secure and efficient access for third parties to critical systems, infrastructure, and data
- Imprivata Enterprise Access Management (formerly known as Imprivata OneSign) streamlines enterprise access management for secure, No Click Access™ to on-prem and cloud applications

Results

- Enhanced security measures that improved the protection of patient data, and the ability to demonstrate compliance
- Achieved 88% improvement in IT efficiency and productivity – cutting the time it took to deliver vendor access from **two days to two hours** – with faster, secure access to critical systems
- Cost savings by decreasing the time spent setting up vendors with access and by eliminating the need for multiple password resets, reducing IT support requests
- Increased user satisfaction with a simplified authentication process that reduced time to authenticate and minimized login frustrations

In October 2020, Sky Lakes Medical Center experienced any healthcare facility's worst nightmare – falling prey to a ransomware attack.

"We went down with all systems – electronic health records, communications, email – everything offline," said John Gaede, Director of Information Services at Sky Lakes. "Every computer in the organization was down as a result of the attack. It was a perfect storm."

The attack lasted almost 23 days, with the recovery process extending much longer. Thanks to the actions of the facility's talented staff, led by Senior Integrations Engineer Kevin Crowder, Sky Lakes was able to recover. But damage had been done across all teams to the tune of about \$10 million.

"The greater effect was the stress it put on our doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, medical technologists, and other clinical teams. One of our nurses said, 'if I had to choose between a cyberattack and a novel virus, I would choose the novel virus!' Losing all of our tools to take care of patients was scary."

Sky Lakes turned this awful situation into an opportunity to reassess their cybersecurity risk. One particular area of concern was their approach to vendor access management and how this impacted their overall cybersecurity posture.

Challenge: Vendor access wasn't as secure – or efficient – as it could have been

Prior to partnering with Imprivata, Sky Lakes Medical Center faced several challenges in managing and securing access to their network infrastructure. They struggled with maintaining both efficient and secure access to critical systems and applications, leading to productivity losses and user frustration.

"We have way too much work to do," said Gaede. "We don't have enough time and I don't have enough 'Kevin Crowders' on our team to do all the work that we need to do."



The organization needed a solution to streamline and simplify their vendor authentication and their process for granting access to privileged assets, while ensuring compliance with industry regulations and the security of patient data.

“We lived the security nightmare,” Gaede said of the aforementioned ransomware attack. “So, when you talk about security, privacy, and compliance – to our facility, they are absolutely vital.”

In the past, the processes Sky Lakes used to provide their vendors with access were time-consuming and posed multiple security risks. While evaluating their old process of setting up vendor VPN access, they discovered several key concerns:

“If there’s a product that is going to bring efficiency to an engineer’s time, that moves it right up to the top of the purchasing list.”

– John Gaede, Director of Information Services at Sky Lakes Medical Center

- An inability to identify individual users, what they did and when, and which systems were accessed, due to the use of generic accounts
- Lost time spent managing vendor accounts, changing passwords, and hunting down account owner information
- Active accounts for a vendor they were no longer working with, and excessive time spent deprovisioning that account access
- No visibility into current employment status of vendor users; if a vendor employee quit or was fired, Sky Lakes was not notified, and that user would retain access that was no longer needed
- The cost of licenses in other systems that use Active Directory (AD) account information

After partnering with Imprivata, Sky Lakes found they could drastically reduce their third-party access risk and significantly enhance their level of security, while reducing the effort their IT team expended on vendor access management. All the workflow challenges and security gaps identified were resolved with Imprivata Vendor Privileged Access Management (formerly known as SecureLink Enterprise Access).

Solutions: A comprehensive vendor privileged access management platform that reduces security risks and saves IT staff time – by 88%

To address these challenges, Sky Lakes Medical Center implemented Imprivata Vendor Privileged Access Management to deliver enterprise remote access that controlled and secured vendor access to their critical systems, infrastructure, and data. This allowed authorized external users to securely connect to the network from any location with an internet connection, providing the flexibility needed to support secure remote work.

According to Gaede, Sky Lakes chose Imprivata Vendor Privileged Access Management because of its ability to effectively address their identified security and workflow challenges. The solution enabled them to create a repeatable, secure workflow to provision and approve access, along with the visibility they were missing before. Sky Lakes benefitted from the following capabilities:



1. Streamlined vendor identity and access management

The solution enabled Sky Lakes to:

- Define the vendor and what they need to access
- Enable vendor self-registration tied to users' corporate emails, based on the email domain; this had the added benefits of removing external users from the Active Directory, reducing license costs, and effectively verifying employment status at each login
- Define the application servers and connection types needed
- Add credentials to the native vault to facilitate connectivity without having to share passwords with vendors
- Eliminate the manual burden of account cleanup by having accounts automatically deprovisioned after a set amount of time



2. Visibility into access

The solution ensured that:

- Upon each login, vendors must retrieve a verification code from their corporate email in order to gain access, adding a layer of security and verifying current employment status
- The ability to require access approval for specific applications, or choose to enable access for a set amount of time, is available
- Sky Lakes receives an email whenever a connection is made to the system, and a summary email upon disconnection, detailing login information, who connected, and which systems were accessed

The decision-making process wasn't hard for Sky Lakes, and the performance of the solution quickly validated their choice.

"If you're going to ask us to purchase software that improves the efficiency of our engineers, it's a no brainer," Gaede said. "If there's a product that is going to bring efficiency to an engineer's time, that moves it right up to the top of the purchasing list. We saw it in action. We didn't need any other solution. On top of that, it was also fairly priced."

In the healthcare industry, the costs associated with cybersecurity and insurance have escalated over recent years. Healthcare is one of the most targeted industries for cyberattacks. For standalone, not-for-profit community hospitals, having to make additional investments in cybersecurity tools is a challenge.

“When we can demonstrate how we’re managing third-party risk, that impacts our risk and cyber insurance process,” Gaede said. “As we have audits and penetration testing for compliance, HIPAA risk assessments, etc., we can check the boxes. This is how we’re addressing risk and compliance, demonstrating continuous commitment to defense in depth.”

“Imprivata Vendor Privileged Access Management just works. We’ve had very few problems. I don’t have to worry about someone connecting to our VPN with an infected computer and spreading it across our network.”

– Kevin Crowder, Senior Integrations Engineer at Sky Lakes Medical Center

Results: A secure third-party access solution enabling increased IT efficiency

The implementation of this solution resulted in significant improvements for Sky Lakes Medical Center. The healthcare organization experienced improved efficiency and productivity. By delivering faster access to critical systems for vendors, the Sky Lakes IT team had more time to dedicate to other IT issues. This led to decreased downtimes, faster resolution of issues, and an overall positive impact on patient care.

According to Crowder, Sky Lakes was able to decrease the time spent setting up access for vendors – previously done with a VPN that was no longer needed – from **two days to two hours, producing a time-savings of 88%.**

“Imprivata Vendor Privileged Access Management just works. We’ve had very few problems. I don’t have to worry about someone connecting to our VPN with an infected computer and spreading it across our network,” Crowder said. “It just made getting vendors set up so much easier.”

Sky Lakes Medical Center was also able to achieve cost savings by eliminating dependency on IT for password resets and reducing IT support requests. Furthermore, the implementation of this solution enhanced security measures to keep patient data secure and meet compliance with industry regulations.

“When it comes to security, Imprivata Vendor Privileged Access Management works,” said Gaede. “It allows our IT leadership to take very cumbersome, time-consuming processes and efficiently manage them.” He added that, “From my perspective, the work the Imprivata team has done has brought a ton of value to Sky Lakes.”

Sky Lakes Medical Center has also been an avid user of Imprivata Enterprise Access Management (formerly known as Imprivata OneSign) since 2018. This solution ensures secure, No Click Access™, enabling quick and secure access to systems and applications for employees. By returning to Imprivata when seeking a new approach to vendor access management, Sky Lakes avoided the unnecessary complexity of adding an additional vendor to their stack while selecting the market-leading vendor privileged access management solution from an existing, trusted partner.

As a result of these positive outcomes, Sky Lakes has a more secure network infrastructure that increases their bandwidth to concentrate on patient care. The successful implementation of Imprivata solutions has been instrumental in helping Sky Lakes Medical Center achieve their goals of improved efficiency, security, and compliance.

The best part about Sky Lakes’ enhanced security posture? They didn’t have to sacrifice an efficient method of access for their vendors in the name of security. Now they can spend less time and energy on vendor access administration, and more time on enabling their clinical team to provide the exceptional patient care their community has come to expect.



Imprivata is the digital identity company for mission- and life-critical industries, redefining how organizations solve complex workflow, security, and compliance challenges with solutions that protect critical data and applications without workflow disruption. Its platform of interoperable identity, authentication, and access management solutions enables organizations in over 45 countries to fully manage and secure all enterprise and third-party digital identities by establishing trust between people, technology, and information.

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