



Health Care Privacy Protection

About The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center



- *The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) is the leading health care system in western Pennsylvania and one of the largest nonprofit integrated health care systems in the United States.*
- *With more than 39,000 employees, UPMC is the single largest employer in western Pennsylvania.*
- *UPMC enjoys a strong national and international clinical and research reputation, drawing patients from across the U.S. and dozens of countries across the globe.*
- *UPMC has consistently been recognized among the "best of the best" in U.S. News & World Report's rankings of top hospitals.*
- *Ranked No. 1 in health care in the InformationWeek 500.*

Challenge: Blocking Intrusion and Managing Information Security Effectively in a Rapid-Growth Environment

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) is one of the largest health care systems in the United States. As an academic hospital system with significant medical research initiatives, UPMC must securely coordinate complex data sharing, research-oriented medical imaging, and HIPAA-protected patient health information (PHI) on one network. Ensuring security, protecting patient privacy around-the-clock, and simultaneously supporting the needs of multiple groups using various types of networked systems is a major challenge.

To meet this challenge, UPMC engaged VigilantMinds Inc., a leading managed security services provider (MSSP) that specializes in "best-fit" security solutions.

Why VigilantMinds?

"We started with a pilot project and quickly felt comfortable working with VigilantMinds," says John Kramer, CISSP, CISA, information security manager for UPMC. "We gradually broadened the scope of services and eventually signed an enterprise-wide contract. VigilantMinds was significantly more flexible and more responsive than the other vendors we considered. We feel confident expanding our relationship with VigilantMinds as we continue to grow."

Indeed, UPMC continues to grow while advancing groundbreaking medical research, academic excellence, and high-quality medical care across its network of health care facilities.

"One of our great challenges is that we are a widely dispersed organization," says Mr. Kramer. "We have a large and highly complex network environment running many different operating systems, software applications, and other types of network-attached equipment — all on one unified network that needs to be secured and monitored 24x7. VigilantMinds helps us do that."

Meeting Users' Needs While Maintaining Security

Communications across the entire organization makes the job of network security even more complicated, according to Mr. Kramer. "We have a large and diverse user population that has disparate needs, which require us to be flexible with respect to securing our environment while meeting those needs," he says. "Because VigilantMinds is flexible, they help us to better serve those users. Before we engaged VigilantMinds as our security partner, meeting all of our users' needs while overlaying appropriate security, was both difficult and expensive."

Because VigilantMinds processes so much data from a wide variety of sources from around the globe, it is able to identify and block emerging threats before they attack.



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC)

“Internally, we recognize that we don’t see enough security events on a daily basis to always know which events actually threaten our systems,” says Mr. Kramer. “We needed security expertise, and VigilantMinds adds great value by providing awareness of new security threats on the horizon.”

Mr. Kramer adds that a solid example of VigilantMinds value is seen when a high-profile undirected attack (like the Sasser worm, for instance) slams other organizations — but UPMC does not get hit.

“VigilantMinds helps us stay ahead of those threats,” he says. “People here send me e-mails or walk into my office all the time and say things like, ‘Hey, there’s a new worm out there.’ And, because of VigilantMinds, I am able to say, ‘Yeah, I knew about that this morning, or last week, or two weeks ago. Don’t worry, we’re protected.’”

Gaining Focus Through Risk Prioritization

UPMC uses the VigilantMinds Security Alert Service, which sends prioritized alerts and detailed reports through the VigilantMinds SecureXone™ security information management (SIM) web portal. This helps Mr. Kramer identify emerging threats, detect patterns, and prioritize his team’s actions.

“The VigilantMinds Security Alert Service is very good,” he says. “It saves us time because it aggregates information from CERT, SANS, and other security organizations. SecureXone is the tool, the aggregator of all the alerts, and the one-stop shop for all the vulnerability-related information that I need to see.”

SecureXone also provides a repository for all alerts and trouble tickets sent to UPMC. In reviewing this information, Mr. Kramer looks for patterns that will help him prioritize his team’s responses.

“That’s another area where we see value with VigilantMinds,” he says. “I’ll go out on the VigilantMinds Alert List and look for patterns to determine if there’s a related series of Level 2 alerts that I should pay more attention to than a single, high-level alert.”

“VigilantMinds adds great value by providing awareness of new security threats on the horizon.”

John Kramer, CISSP, CISA, Information Security Manager, UPMC

Mr. Kramer then has his team work with VigilantMinds to proactively mitigate the risk.

Supporting UPMC’s Strategic Mission

In addition to blocking threats, VigilantMinds adds value to UPMC’s security process by helping Mr. Kramer and his team risk rank their activities. As a certified computer information security auditor, Mr. Kramer recognizes the value of focus.

“What we do is identify and prioritize risks,” he says. “Then we start at the top of the priority list and work our way down until we reach the bottom of the list. With VigilantMinds as our security partner, we work through this process much more efficiently and proactively than we would otherwise be able to do. VigilantMinds helps us focus on how we proceed. They add value as they augment and support the work of our internal security team. We started working with VigilantMinds as part of a pilot project, and now we are on a progressive track toward improved network protection.”

As a result, VigilantMinds is able to free Mr. Kramer’s security staff to work on other tasks designed to support UPMC’s strategic mission — providing outstanding patient care and shaping tomorrow’s health system through clinical innovation, biomedical and health services research, and education.



Your future is now secure.