



Park Nicollet Health Services Overview

Organization: Methodist Hospital, Park Nicollet Clinic, Park Nicollet Institute, and the Park Nicollet Foundation

Size: 426 bed hospital, 8,000 employees, 690 on staff physicians

Business Problem

Automate time-consuming and burdensome provisioning tasks to reduce the amount of time IT administrators spend provisioning users, and attain higher levels of security, provisioning process consistency and ability to demonstrate regulatory compliance.

Solution

Sentillion proVision

Applications

- GE Centricity Enterprise (formerly IDX Carecast / LastWord)
- GE Centricity RIS-IC (formerly IDX Imagecast)
- McKesson Horizon Patient Folder
- Microsoft Exchange Server
- Microsoft Live Communications Server

Park Nicollet Jumpstarts the Provisioning Process

After deploying Sentillion proVision, this Minneapolis health care provider greatly enhanced user provisioning through streamlined and automated account management.

Overview

Park Nicollet Health Services helps keep the Twin Cities healthy. The nonprofit's integrated health care delivery organization includes the 426-bed Methodist Hospital, which provides a range of medical, surgical, and specialty health care services; Park Nicollet Clinic, which offers care in 45 medical specialties and subspecialties, and is one of the largest multi-specialty clinics in the country; Park Nicollet Foundation, which uses philanthropy to build healthy communities in Minnesota by supporting patient care, research and education and Park Nicollet Institute, which advances the quality of health care through evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of existing health care processes and systems, conducting clinical research, and promoting education for the ongoing improvement of the patient care.

Manual Provisioning Efforts Prove Costly and Time Consuming

An area of internal IT operations in which Park Nicollet sought to improve efficiency was the way it provisions - creates, maintains, and deactivates - access for physicians, employees and temporary workers into nearly 100 separate business administration, productivity and clinical information systems. The existing manual provisioning processes at Park Nicollet had grown increasingly cumbersome with some IT security team members investing as much as 100 percent of their day to simply create and maintain application accounts.

Further complicating matters, the efforts to provision different users varied dramatically depending on an individual's specific roles and responsibilities. While it might take only 15 minutes to provision a base-level user who simply needed access to his/her Windows desktop and a single Clinical Information System, it could require upwards of 90 minutes of dedicated time to provide a physician with access to the full set of clinical applications that he/she utilized on a daily basis.

Another significant set of challenges facing IT administrators was the tedious process of identifying the exact applications various users required based on their job functions as well as the considerable time spent managing the ongoing access and associated user privileges for employees assuming new roles or ex-employees no longer with the organization.

The end-result was a provisioning process that had not only grown extremely time-consuming, but had also created opportunities for errors. Park Nicollet required a more effective way to utilize internal resources and automate as many provisioning duties as possible, while also making certain that best practices in identity management and access control would be maintained.

"Provisioning was definitely taking longer than we wanted - not only the ability to terminate users and their application access upon request, but also to eliminate application access creep for long-time employees," says Jim Mohr, Information Security Compliance Analyst at Park Nicollet. "And we wanted to implement a role-based security and access control framework that would streamline our efforts and remove inconsistencies identified in our processes."

Taking Steps Toward Centralized, Automated User Account Administration

After a careful assessment of available technologies, Park Nicollet selected Sentillion proVision to eliminate the burdensome, slow, and error-prone challenges associated with manual provisioning. Purposely built for health care, proVision also enabled Park Nicollet to "deeply provision" into the dense, multi-layered clinical systems that traditionally required the most time-consuming and onerous manual processes. With proVision in place, caregivers can now be up, running, and productive on a full set of information systems on their first day of residency, staff assignment, or upon receiving admitting privileges. Furthermore, as users change job functions or leave the organization, hospital managers use proVision to uniformly adapt, disable, or terminate access to systems and applications.

According to Mohr, proVision – one component of Sentillion’s open, standards-based set of identity and access management solutions - not only addresses Park Nicollet’s immediate user account management challenges, but also provides a solid foundation for future strategic IT initiatives such as self-service password reset and single sign-on. “Many identity and access management vendors have grown through acquisition, and their products aren’t consistent as a result. But Sentillion provides an integrated suite,” says Mohr. “The fact that Sentillion brought scalability and flexibility in addition to a lower cost of ownership sets it apart,” he says.

“Sentillion takes the pain out of generating audit reports. Because of its integration with Active Directory, we can extract report information directly. Whereas previously we would have to export information from each different user application, we now have greater visibility.”

“Sentillion has enabled us to improve efficiency and provide the rapid creation, management, and termination of user accounts.”

Further enhancing the value of proVision, Sentillion’s fixed-fee approach to services employs a proven yet flexible set of processes, meetings, and assessments that enable the organization to fully leverage the health care-tested technology of proVision and ensure a smooth implementation process. Working directly with Sentillion, Mohr and his team successfully tested proVision’s compatibility and ability to seamlessly integrate with many of the organization’s most vital applications, including IDX LastWord, Microsoft Exchange Server, Live Communication Server, and others. “We’re very wary of introducing anything new to these essential applications, but deploying Sentillion’s technology went quickly and was straightforward,” says Mohr. “The real challenge for us wasn’t the technology; it was modifying our internal change control processes,” he says.

The Results: Faster, Simplified and Consistent Account Management

Today, proVision has eliminated the guesswork that Park Nicollet’s IT staff previously experienced when assigning users to their proper accounts and systems. Also, proVision has greatly reduced the total number of steps and time administrators must spend managing ongoing access. “Sentillion has greatly helped us with process refinements and automation. Provisioners have expressed how much more effective Sentillion has proven to be than conducting these tasks manually and we’re now seeing consistency and time savings, which have been the most significant improvements,” says Mohr.

Such results would come as no surprise to the hundreds of local, regional, and national health care organizations throughout North America and within the UK that have turned to Sentillion to help automate their identity and access management efforts. Leveraging Sentillion’s Bridge technology, a health care organization can provision any application in the enterprise regardless of technology or architecture, thus enabling IT administrators to track users and application accounts throughout the entire enterprise. Administrators can report on which users have accounts in what applications, or whenever changes occur to access rights. Additionally, proVision provides flexible automation capabilities such as supporting information feeds from a variety of sources, including human resource systems, credentialing systems, helpdesk tracking systems, and others and rich delegation features that enable self-service capabilities for non-technical users. For instance, provisioned users can reset their own AD or account passwords, or unlock their AD account.

At Park Nicollet, some of those time savings include slashing the 8 minutes it took to verify the information within change request tickets, fulfilling the request, and then dispatching notifications, to less than half the time. And while security analysts previously struggled to meet their internal service-level agreement to finalize provisioning orders within five days, they’re now averaging fewer than three days to fulfill the entire range of requests. In addition, it’s now easier for teams to extract the information they need and run reports for regulatory audits (i.e., HIPAA and JCAHO), and the system has greatly reduced the opportunity for clerical errors. Park Nicollet expects to reap even more time savings by leveraging proVision to automate additional elements of their provisioning process.

Building on this success, Park Nicollet will continue moving forward with its near-term plans to add an additional 17 applications into the system for automated provisioning, with another 80 to follow in the next 2 years. “We want to get as many applications into the system as possible. The goal is to gain better efficiency and provisioning consistency throughout our entire organization,” says Mohr.

Mohr and his team aren’t going to stop there. Plans already are being drafted to reap the cost savings and improve productivity through self-service password resets and, eventually, enterprise single sign-on. “We’re just beginning. And Sentillion has the depth to support us as we move forward implementing these capabilities,” he says.