

## North Ottawa Community Hospital Simplifies, Secures, and Controls Third-Party Access to Patient Records with iatricSystems™ Inc. SecureRamp™



**OBJECTIVE:** North Ottawa Community Hospital (NOCH) needed a consistent, secure approach for onboarding and managing third-party business associates who need access to patient records. The solution would have to be easy to use, while controlling and monitoring access activity to ensure compliance with HIPAA requirements. It would also have to be available at a price affordable for an 81-bed community hospital.

**SITUATION:** North Ottawa Community Hospital is an acute care hospital in Grand Haven, Michigan, serving patients in surrounding communities with a variety of inpatient, outpatient and support services. Like most hospitals, NOCH has relationships with numerous business partners and third-party vendors who need access to patient records for various reasons. They were using multiple log-in methods and technologies, which was both a security risk and a time-draining management nightmare for hospital staff.

**SOLUTION:** NOCH deployed iatricSystems™ SecureRamp™ to control vendor access to their networks while decreasing risk and simplifying connectivity. Rather than multiple log-in methods, third-parties access the hospital network using one secure VPN portal. The easy-to-use dashboard provides tools for managing access settings and reporting capabilities covering all access activity. Behind the scenes, SecureRamp performs security checks such as checking for up-to-date anti-virus and patch levels — two major factors in security breaches. It also requires multi-factor authentication, and verifies that each vendor has a valid Business Associate Agreement (a HIPAA requirement).

**RESULTS:** The implementation went smoothly and was completed on schedule. NOCH now has a solution that non-technical privacy staff can use to on-board and manage third-party vendors, while reducing risk. Over the next few months, the hospital plans to on-board several dozen vendors, with SecureRamp making the process easy, secure and compliant.

*"Now that SecureRamp is set up, I can assign anyone — technical or non-technical — the task of onboarding vendors."*

— Ian Evans  
IT Technical Services Manager  
HIPAA Security Officer  
North Ottawa  
Community Hospital



North Ottawa Community Hospital was facing a challenge familiar to many healthcare institutions: the need to open patient records to third-party vendors and other business associates. Failure to properly manage third-party access can result in HIPAA non-compliance, fines and bad publicity, and also leaves a hospital vulnerable to security threats such as ransomware. That's why NOCH deployed iatricSystems SecureRamp to manage and simplify remote access by third parties, reducing the risk of unauthorized access and malware attacks while saving time for hospital staff.

Before the implementation, NOCH was facing a litany of issues associated with onboarding third-parties. "Vendors were logging in to our network via multiple methods," explains Ian Evans, IT Technical Services Manager | HIPAA Security Officer at North Ottawa Community Hospital. "Often they would dictate which technology they would use, which was not just a management headache, it was also a security risk from outdated software." With no central management, auditing and compliance was a challenge, and required support from technical staff when they were available.

### Mastering Remote Access

NOCH searched for a solution to manage remote access of vendors, but found the per-vendor licensing model of products they considered cost-prohibitive for their tight budget. Then, they discovered SecureRamp, and its capabilities at a very competitive price point. "We were looking for a remote access solution, and SecureRamp looked like it would help us solve some of our biggest issues with remote management and compliance," Ian explains. "Our technical security team had exploratory calls with the SecureRamp team, and we walked away excited. We discussed it with senior leadership, and they agreed to move forward."

SecureRamp helps NOCH decrease risk and simplify connectivity by managing and monitoring third-party access to hospital networks. It verifies that a valid Business Associate Agreement (BAA) is in place and provides one secure VPN portal that reduces opportunities for unauthorized access. It also monitors devices attempting to access the network remotely to ensure that antivirus, encryption, automatic updates and the firewall are in place and up to date. The easy-to-use dashboard provides extensive vendor management capabilities including the ability to customize access in numerous ways and reporting tools to demonstrate access control and security for hospital leadership and auditors.

### Delivered On Time, Ready for Onboarding

Ian has a small staff, and everyone is very busy. He knew that getting the implementation completed on time would be a challenge, but iatricSystems delivered. "Guy and his SecureRamp team were very attentive to any issues that arose. We were able to stay on target and meet our go-live date. I have already used SecureRamp to onboard initial vendors, and it's gone well." He has also given feedback to iatricSystems for enhancements, some of which have been incorporated into the application.

### What's Next?

Ian and his colleagues can manage third-party access to patient records with the functionality, security and visibility their hospital depends on, without waiting for a technical specialist to become available. "Now that SecureRamp is set up, I can assign anyone — technical or non-technical — the task of onboarding vendors. We plan to onboard dozens of vendors over the next few months." And he has a tool that makes it easy, with the control and visibility that drives compliance.

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