Innovative data-driven tools and services benefit community pharmacies and manufacturing partners

Customer story

GeriMed delivers technology solutions for independent pharmacies servicing the long-term care population by leveraging Flexential hosted private cloud and colocation capabilities.

Flexential solution portfolio

Colocation

Cloud

Flexential partnership highlights

- Hosted private cloud enables GeriMed's most demanding applications and workloads, meeting its stringent security and compliance requirements
- Colocation services offer security, redundancy as well as efficient high-density power and cooling capabilities

Quick facts about GeriMed

- Founded in 1983 and the first group purchasing organization of its kind
- The company has grown annually by almost 400 pharmacies over the past year, bringing its total number of pharmacies served to more than 1,100

The history

Established in 1983, GeriMed is a group service organization committed to equipping independent pharmacies with exceptional tools and services to enable their business growth and providing quality care to the long-term care (LTC) patients they service. More than a traditional group purchasing organization that only provides clients contract pricing on pharmaceuticals and other products, GeriMed offers unique contracting and additional services to help independent pharmacies compete against national long-term care pharmacy chains without sacrificing the amenities that make them successful and profitable.

As a privately held organization and the first LTC group purchasing organization of its kind, GeriMed was built by pharmacists for pharmacists to assist independent pharmacies in maximizing profitability. Over the last 35 years, GeriMed has transformed its business from a group purchasing organization into a group service organization.

> " GeriMed has always been and will continue to be the leader in service innovation for our independent pharmacy customers by actively developing tools to meet the ever-changing healthcare dynamics To deliver these services and tools to our customers, GeriMed must have a reliable, scalable and cost-effective IT infrastructure. Flexential has proven itself as our valued hybrid IT partner."
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> **Karen Sims**
> Vice President of IT Services and Data Management
> GeriMed

GeriMed tailors its solutions to benefit community pharmacies servicing patients in long-term care settings such as skilled nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospice and intermediate care facilities. Among the unique pharmacy tools and services provided by GeriMed are pharma contracts; revenue enhancement programs (such as Medicare Part D prescription and commercial rebate programs); administrative and operational contracts; services to assist with adjudication fees, reimbursement rates and long-term care claims; audit compliance and resolution services; advanced analytics and data warehousing capabilities; as well as the GeriMed Profiles360® consulting software service.

The challenge

Organic, year-over-year growth presents need for more reliable, scalable IT infrastructure

When GeriMed launched its services, the company started with a single on-premise server in the office basement (an old renovated home) and worked with various outside consultants to run its IT infrastructure. As the business became more complicated, so did the IT systems GeriMed implemented as it added more servers and more domains. The company also wanted an easily scalable solution that could keep up with the pace of growth.

GeriMed's multi-vendor IT approach sometimes resulted in downtime and reliability issues for the organization and its customers. GeriMed could experience disruption in service two or three times a year, rendering its software tools and online services inaccessible until the system got back online. For example, since 2006, when Medicare D prescription services became available, GeriMed has provided data-driven services to pharmacies required to use online invoices to get reimbursements for their medication costs by insurance companies. Without its IT infrastructure operating at full capability, GeriMed cannot provide these critical online services and reports to pharmacies.

As a result of ongoing issues with downtime and the need to streamline all areas of business operations, GeriMed leadership determined the company would make the critical shift from a start-up mode mentality to an enterprise approach to its business—including IT infrastructure. As part of this realignment, the company began to look for a more reliable, scalable and cost-effective hybrid IT solution.

The solution

A true hybrid IT approach

GeriMed selected Flexential as its hybrid IT provider and moved its servers and equipment to the Louisville, Kentucky – Downtown data center. With a market capacity of 94,000+ square feet in data center footprint and power density of 150+ watts per square foot, this facility provides the secure, HIPAA/PCI compliant services GeriMed needs to be an effective group service organization for the local pharmacy industry.

Because managing HIPAA-related data is at the core of GeriMed's business, Sims said her team selected Flexential based in part on the security Flexential offers in its data centers, including dual-factor authentication access, biometric scanners and four-zone security access. The Louisville data center also provides 2N UPS redundancy, 3.09 MW critical local capacity, N+1 cooling and 100% power SLA, which is crucial for GeriMed's uptime requirements.

GeriMed also leverages the Flexential hosted private cloud with 28 terabytes of storage for its workloads and 28 terabytes of server imaging used for backup services that meet its business requirements. This cloud solution has the high-performing SLAs essential to GeriMed's success, including 99.999% availability of cloud computing and 100% availability of cloud network infrastructure. The company also utilizes Flexential connectivity capabilities through one internet circuit with blended bandwidth of 100 Mbps.

"Since being with Flexential, we have not had an outage or downtime," said Karen Sims, vice president of IT services and data services, GeriMed. "Flexential has exceeded our expectations for uptime and service availability. Further, we must follow strict HIPAA regulations, so security is very important to us. Flexential has also delivered on these requirements for GeriMed. Not to mention, we can access the data center facility when we need to, which ensures business continuity even in the face of issues such as severe weather or power outages in the Louisville area."

One example of how GeriMed is leveraging its Flexential-powered infrastructure is its data collection capabilities. GeriMed effectively collects and manages an incredible amount of data for its customers—including purchasing data from the wholesale companies, dispensing data when they provide prescriptions to patients and reimbursement data from the insurance companies. At the current rate, GeriMed collects about 50,000 files per month and houses about three million records.

The results

Ability to sustain hyper-speed growth

What began as a small start-up has emerged as a data-driven tech leader in the long-term care market, with GeriMed adding about 400 pharmacies over the past years to its business. The total number of pharmacies served by GeriMed is now more than 1,100.

Sims added, "Whenever I reach out to Flexential for any addition or improvement to our system, the team is very accommodating, and we have it set up within a few days. Flexential is able to grow with us, which is exactly what we need." Another real-time example of the power of the GeriMed-Flexential partnership is with the onset of the recent pandemic. With the support of the Flexential hybrid IT solution, GeriMed made the seamless transition to a work from home strategy for its employees.