

Good example of essay on cloud computing – homecare homebase

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The term cloud computing is now a part of the general lexicon in most workplaces. Office staff are now longer accessing tools that are located on a server in their company's IT department. Most are now familiar with the process of accessing remote servers usually in some kind of data farm via a website. As baby boomers retire and live longer, the home health industry is experiencing a boom. As the home health industry grows, many leaders in the industry are taking advantage of cloud technology. One particular cloud application in the home health industry is Homecare Homebase (HCHB). While HCHB is currently a leader in cloud services in the industry, there are viable competitors that compete for target audience and develop programming that continually streamline the operational requirements in an industry that must adjust to changing governmental regulations.

HCHB is an application that is a little of ten years old with operations based in Dallas, TX. It is owned by the Hearst Health Network. The application is comprised of several operational modules including scheduling, order tracking, human resource management and an electronic patient database. HCHB allows users to set up responsible positions within the application to complete nursing and administrative functions and has standard workflow tasks that are assigned to specific responsible positions. Clinicians are given Android tablets with compliance driven assessments that are completed while caring for a patient in her home. Once the assessment is completed, it is transmitted back to a server via the Internet. That server is a part of HCHB's data farm. The server houses data for the company's clients. The company has clients throughout the United States. Once the assessment is successfully transmitted to the server, office users access the HCHB

application via the Internet and are given a series of tasks, in the form of workflow, to review the assessment data before billing Medicare and various commercial payers for the service.

HCHB is targeted to mid to large size home health agencies throughout the country. Companies like Amedisys and the Visiting Nurses Association are current customers of the company. These companies often operate multiple locations within one state or in several states. Other companies that offer cloud services similar to HCHB included McKesson, HealthMedX and Axxess. Some offer the service on laptops with Windows operating systems for clinicians in the field, but all offer the back office services via an icon that connects the user to the Internet and the companies' data farm.

HCHB uses a thin client called Citrix that allows users to access large amounts of data through standard data lines. This is a strength, but it can also be a weakness if users are not using a work assigned desktop or laptop and have trouble loading Citrix. HCHB accesses a shared data farm with other HCHB clients. Customers who want to ensure that data is secure on a private cloud environment do not have that option with HCHB. This is a key weakness given the rise in online identity theft and the need to protect patients' health information.

Overall, HCHB is a viable option for home health agencies seeking a cloud solution. Significant efforts are made to encrypt data and secure cloud services. Home health agencies that want to efficiently manage large amounts of data may do so successfully with this cloud solution. HCHB successfully allows users to collect patient data, scrub it for regulatory compliance and bill it to a variety of payers.