

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



## Tri-State Gastroenterology Associates

### Maximizing Server Uptime with the Stratus® ftServer® system

With more and more practices today moving towards electronic patient records and practice management solutions, information systems play a huge role in healthcare office management. System stability and reliability are more important than ever. In healthcare settings, system downtime may prevent a clinician from noticing a potential allergy or drug interaction in a patient. Billing issues may go unnoticed and impact revenue. Even planned downtime can disrupt patient care and practice workflow. Server downtime is an industry-wide problem that comes at a high cost in terms of missed charges, data loss, decreased productivity, interrupted cash flow and more. There is a remedy, however, that can cure this ailment.

Fault-tolerant, redundant servers can decrease the risk, time and cost of implementing and using information technology within a physician practice. These systems provide continuous access to applications and data, prevent costly unplanned downtime, protect against data loss and reduce system maintenance.

Tri-State Gastroenterology Associates, Crestview Hills, Ky. began searching for a fault-tolerant solution in 2007 to support its electronic health record (EHR) and practice management system from Sage Software. The practice had been using The Medical Manager by Sage since 2000, and upgraded to the Intergy by Sage practice management system and Intergy EHR by Sage in 2006. "We were satisfied with the Medical Manager solution, but wanted to upgrade so we could migrate to a Windows®-based system," said Beth Rudd, billing manager at Tri-State. "Sage (Software) offered us everything we needed in its solutions, so it was a logical choice to upgrade from Medical Manager to Intergy."

Tri-State's main office and its satellite clinic include nine physicians, two nurse practitioners and 68 users of the Sage Software solutions. Since 2004, all patient records were completely electronic as were many historical records dating before 2004 which were scanned into Intergy EHR.

Tri-State's move to a totally electronic system for practice management and patient records demanded that they have continuous 24/7 system availability. At the time, however, their existing server presented the practice with numerous challenges, including unplanned downtime, firmware problems and failed disk drives. While Tri-State was confident in the stability of the Intergy system itself, the practice realized that it needed to upgrade its hardware infrastructure.

Sage Software referred Tri-State to Stratus Technologies, a Sage Software vendor partner specializing in continuous-availability solutions that deliver five nines (99.999%) or greater uptime. While many hardware vendors offer systems with 99% uptime, there is a big difference between

**Customer:**

Tri-State Gastroenterology Associates

**Specialty:**

Gastroenterology

**Location:**

Kentucky

**Number of Locations:**

Two

**Number of Users:**

68

**Products:**

- Intergy
- Intergy EHR
- Clinical Task Manager
- Transcription Writer
- Electronic Prescriptions
- Interface with Quest and other third-party systems
- Stratus ftServer systems running Microsoft Windows®

**CHALLENGE**

The practice's increased reliance on Intergy practice management and EHR solutions demanded hardware as robust and reliable as the software running on the system.

**SOLUTION**

Implementation of the Stratus® ftServer® system.

**RESULTS**

The redundant server system with 99.999% guaranteed uptime has virtually eliminated downtime and remote monitoring has reduced system maintenance.

99% and 99.999% uptime. In 24-hour environments, such as health care, 99% uptime translates into 87 hours and 36 minutes of average yearly downtime. In contrast, 99.999% uptime translates into only 5 minutes and 35 seconds of average yearly downtime.

Tri-State purchased the Stratus ftServer system and implemented it in November 2007. The Stratus solution was selected by Tri-State because of its unique Continuous Processing® features, which include:

- Lockstep technology -- Replicated, fault-tolerant hardware components that process the same instructions at the same time. In the event of a component malfunction, the partner component is an active spare that continues normal operation.
- Failsafe software – Prevents software errors from escalating into outages by capturing, analyzing and reporting issues to Stratus. This allows support personnel to take a proactive approach in correcting software problems before they recur.
- ActiveService™ architecture – ftServer systems constantly monitor their own operation. Remote support capabilities enable Stratus service engineers to diagnose, troubleshoot and resolve problems online as if they were onsite.
- Active Upgrade™ technology – Reduces planned downtime by enabling users to perform online software upgrades, hot fixes and patches without taking the server or application offline.

Installing the ftServer system at Tri-State took only one day. Stratus engineers came onsite to configure the new server and worked with Sage Software to migrate the applications. Since the November installation, the ftServer system's remote monitoring capabilities have enabled Tri-State to avoid several potential problems because Stratus proactively contacted the practice to notify them of system alerts. In addition, the Active Upgrade technology has reduced server maintenance and eliminated planned downtime.

"The system practically takes care of itself and even automatically orders components – which we can usually install ourselves – when (if) there is a failure," Rudd said. "With the redundancy built into the system, we don't even notice when there is a problem until we receive an alert."

***"Sage Software and Stratus is a winning combination that enables our physician practice to focus on patient care and our operations, rather than our information technology."***

The improved stability of its server has greatly increased the Tri-State staff's confidence in its technology and its efforts to automate the practice. To maximize the use of the Intergy EHR, medical assistants streamline workflow by entering allergy and patient information into the system before nurses and physicians meet with patients. Tri-State is currently implementing a process where physicians enter their encounter documentation directly into Intergy EHR with point-and-click simplicity.

Further improving practice workflow is the use of wireless tablets by clinicians. These tablets are carried by clinicians so they can wirelessly access up-to-date information about the patient and enter clinical documentation during the encounter. In addition, the tablets accompany clinicians when they visit patients in the hospital, enabling them to access the patient's history for decision support.

"Our physicians also like that they can access Intergy from their homes which is a real time saver when they receive a call for an after-hours patient emergency," Rudd said.

On the operations side, Tri-State is using Intergy to streamline the billing process by submitting claims electronically. "Another thing that we really like about using Intergy is that we can batch our patient statements and send them to Sage (Software) for mailing," Rudd said. "Eliminating this labor-intensive process reduces the demands on our staff so they are free to focus on other efforts."

The bottom line, according to Rudd, is that "Sage Software and Stratus is a winning combination that enables our physician practice to focus on patient care and our operations, rather than our information technology."

## ABOUT SAGE SOFTWARE

Sage Software Healthcare Division is a part of Sage Software, the North American business of UK-based The Sage Group plc. Sage Software supports the needs, dreams and challenges of small and medium-size businesses (including medical practices of 500 employees and more) by offering leading business management, practice management and electronic health records products and services. More than 2.6 million North American small and medium-sized businesses and tens of thousands of medical practices currently rely on Sage Software applications.

For nearly 30 years, Sage Software Healthcare Division has delivered easy-to-use, scalable and customizable software for practice management, including private practices, multi-million dollar medical enterprises and community health centers. Sage Software is CCHIT Certified<sup>SM</sup> for their product, Intergy EHR by Sage Version 4.0 for CCHIT Ambulatory EHR 2007.

## Sage Software

2202 N. West Shore Blvd., Suite 300

Tampa, FL 33607-5749

www.sagehealth.com | 877-932-6301

