

US Cloud Case Studies:

Healthcare

For a personal walkthrough, please feel free to contact our sales team at

 uscloud.com or  (800)-200-8440

Executive Summary

Over 40 healthcare organizations made the switch to US Cloud for Microsoft Support in just the last year. From small regional hospitals to Fortune 500 healthcare systems, US Cloud has helped to cut costs without sacrificing staff or IT capabilities.

Case 1: Ultra-Large Int. Health System

A very large healthcare conglomerate with 400 acute care hospitals across the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.K. turned to US Cloud to rescue their budget from Unified price hikes. With a complex Microsoft infrastructure, some IT staff were surprised to find that US Cloud was able to competently support them. But they were truly stunned by their new partner's unsolicited help on a critical security initiative at their own expense.

Budget Saved: \$980,000

Case 2: Large US Health System

A US Health System with over 50,000 IT users and a cloud-heavy hybrid Microsoft environment was shocked by a 200%+ price increase for Unified. With plans to accelerate migration to Azure, their support costs would mushroom in years two and three. However, it was the mounting frustration with Microsoft's poor service quality that finally drove them to look for alternatives.

Budget Saved: \$1,950,000

Case 3: Mid-Sized US Health System

The procurement team in an 8 hospital, 13,000 employee health system was tasked with finding significant cost savings during the stress of the pandemic. They found that with US Cloud, but it was a proactive Health Check from their new support partner that likely saved them from a potentially major data breach.

Budget Saved: \$326,000

Case 4: Mid-Sized US Hospital

A Southeastern US hospital with 5,500 employees was forced to depend on base-level MSFT Support after ditching Unified because of price. But when facing a potentially crippling system outage, Microsoft wouldn't respond. The Client's Microsoft account manager called US Cloud out of desperation and, fortunately, the crisis was averted. Now US Cloud provides an affordable support plan to the hospital for emergencies.

Budget Saved: \$58,000

US Cloud – the #1 Microsoft Support Alternative

US Cloud is the only Gartner recognized 3rd-party that offers a full replacement for Microsoft Unified Support:

- **Save 30% to 50% vs. Microsoft Unified Support**
- **15-minute initial response times, guaranteed**
- **MSFT-certified**
- **Supporting Fortune 500 and mid-sized enterprise**
- **Managed Microsoft escalations**

Just some of our current Microsoft Premier Support Healthcare Clients:



US Cloud Case Study #1: Consolidate Your IT

Healthcare Giant Bets Big on Independent MSFT Support Partner

Client: Ultra Large Multi-National Health System

Industry: Healthcare

Annual Revenue: \$14.1 billion

Key Drivers: Cost reduction

Client Profile:

A massive healthcare conglomerate with 400 acute care hospitals across the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.K. With over 80,000 employees, the Client maintains an extremely complex hybrid Microsoft ecosystem that is fragmented due to consolidations and acquisitions.

Why Leave Microsoft Support:

After consolidating IT spend over the last several years, the Health System was negotiating its master Microsoft EA and were surprised with an almost 80% increase in associated support costs under Unified. It was clear that they needed a less expensive alternative for Problem Resolution Support (PRS), but as a heavy user of Microsoft Dedicated Support Engineers (DSE's) they were concerned about losing access.

Switching to US Cloud:

Health System Procurement was tasked with finding a viable alternative and after an international RFP it was determined that only Microsoft and US Cloud were capable of supporting their Microsoft infrastructure. After extensive evaluation, including vetting US Cloud's elite Microsoft Partner Network that would provide DSE specialists, the Health System decided try an independent 3rd party for their support.

Budget Dollars Saved

Year 1: **\$980,000**

Cost Reduction

Year 1: **41%**

Cost Avoidance

Years 2-5: **356%**

Benefit:

The substantial savings allowed the Client to continue with critical Epic system consolidation. This effort would have been put on hold to fund the Unified Support price increase and would have extended security vulnerabilities inherent with connected Epic instances from smaller, less sophisticated hospitals. The Procurement Team credited this initiative for hitting their aggressive 2020 price reduction goal.

Support Example

An Unexpected Boost to Security by a New Partner

Issue:

After the first year of working with US Cloud, the Client was so positive about the experience with break-fix support that they agreed to act as a reference for US Cloud. However, it was US Cloud's flexibility and willingness to put the Client's needs first that anchored the decision to renew with US Cloud for a second year.

Like many health systems, one of the Client's top initiatives for IT in 2023 is enhanced data and system security. The DevOps Team was trying to bring security testing and controls into the development process instead of just scanning code and deployed applications late in development or even in the release cycle.

They had identified Microsoft Security Code Analysis (MSCA) as a valuable tool that includes both Static Application Security Testing (SAST) and Dynamic Application Security Testing (DAST to allow engineering to automate, catch, and remediate security issues early.

US Cloud's TAM learned that the DevOps Team's request for an annual subscription to MSCA had been shot down due to budget constraints. The TAM also knew that one of the planned DSE engagements was far behind schedule due to a shift in Client's priorities and was likely not going to use the hours repurchased for that initiative.

Solution:

US Cloud approached the Client with a solution -- US Cloud would have its elite CSP partner purchase the subscription on behalf of the client and convert DSE's hours to fund it.

The Client obviously agreed, and the DevOps Team was able to start using the MSCA tools almost immediately with zero additional cost to the Client organization.

Having renewed their contract for a 2nd year, the Health System continues to leverage US Cloud for breakfix, proactive support, and DSE's.

"I was stunned when our IT Infrastructure Director told us that US Cloud had proactively offered to help us purchase MSCA. It likely put us a full year ahead of where we would have been otherwise on securing our new app development."
— Bob W., CISO

US Cloud Case Study #2: Avoid Staff Cuts

West Coast Health System Realizes That Money Isn't Everything

Client: Large US Health System

Industry: Healthcare

Annual Revenue: \$8.8 billion

Key Drivers: Cost reduction, poor MSFT Support quality

Client Profile:

One of the largest Health Systems on the West Coast with 24 acute care hospitals and 200 clinics. The Health System has over 50,000 IT users and maintains a cloud-heavy environment that requires substantial DSE and proactive support.

Why Leave Microsoft Support:

The Health System was shocked by the 200%+ price increase that came with their new Unified Support quote. They realized with their continued push into Azure their support costs would also mushroom in years two and three. However, it was the mounting frustration with Microsoft's poor responsiveness and quality of support that drove them to look for alternatives.

Switching to US Cloud:

The Client hired a procurement consultant to help reduce costs. Familiar with other non-OEM support models for other technologies, the consultant sought out US Cloud as a potential alternative. After an extended RFP process, US Cloud was selected as the support provider. Even when Microsoft matched the price, reportedly knocking \$2 million off their Unified quote, the Health System stuck with the decision to switch to US Cloud.

Budget Dollars Saved

Year 1: **\$1,950,000**

Cost Reduction

Year 1: **43%**

Cost Avoidance

Years 2-5: **461%**

Benefit:

The Client's IT Team was able to avoid lay-offs that would have been inevitable if they had been forced to accept the Microsoft Unified pricing.

The Procurement Team won significant praise for both averting staff cuts without giving up capability or service in order to achieve savings targets.

US Cloud was also able to provide expert DSE's for Azure AD, SCCM, Intune, Dynamics, and M365 from its substantial elite MSFT Partner network.

Support Example

The Ticket to Nowhere

Issue:

After switching to US Cloud in 2020, the Client was having issues with Akamai (a global internet security service). It was flagging the Health Center's IPs as exhibiting malicious behavior on large public sites, including Microsoft.com— a major issue since this inhibited access to vital cloud portals and other critical online services.

This would be a major issue anytime, but in the middle of a global pandemic it was a potential catastrophe. Akamai advised going to Microsoft directly to have the IPs whitelisted because Microsoft was the customer using their product. At this point, the Client opened a US Cloud ticket to help manage the situation with Microsoft.

This was clearly a Microsoft issue and US Cloud immediately opened a Premier for Partner ticket to engage Microsoft. Given the criticality of the situation, US Cloud also opened an internal ticket and engaged a specialist partner to explore a work-around solution to get the Client back online ASAP in the case that Microsoft didn't resolve the issue quickly.

Microsoft transferred the ticket twice within 6 hours before finally (incorrectly) informing the Client that the issue was "out of MSFT support and [we] request you to check with the Akamai WAF support directly."

Solution:

Fortunately, within that same time period, the US Cloud and partner team identified a workaround solution to rotate IPs so that when an IP address was flagged, a new IP was used instead. This technically fixed the problem, but the Client still wanted Microsoft to resolve the root cause. What followed was a two-month struggle through the Microsoft bureaucracy that US Cloud doggedly pursued to resolve the ticket. Some statistics from the case:

- Number of transfers to different MSFT engineers on the ticket: 13
- Number of Microsoft engineers that just stopped responding: 5
- Number of "V-" badged, non-Microsoft engineers from 3rd party vendors: 7
- Number of times US Cloud contacted MSFT to push the process: 32
- Number of times the Client had to take time out to engage with MSFT: 3
- Number of times US Cloud had to pressure the TAM to intervene: 6
- Number of times US Cloud had to explain the issue from scratch: 8
- Number of times Microsoft apologized for delays: 9

"Without the work-around, this would have caused significant disruption for the Health System. And without US Cloud's continued help, we would have wasted a ton of time and likely never gotten resolution."

— Eric S., Director of Technical Operations

US Cloud Case Study #3: Proactive System Health Checks

How a Regional Hospital Saved Their Budget... and Then Saved Their Data from an Attack

Client: Large US Health System

Industry: Healthcare

Annual Revenue: \$1.8 billion

Key Drivers: Cost containment and growing cloud adoption

Client Profile:

A large not-for-profit network of eight hospitals and over 120 outpatient facilities in the upper Midwest. With 13,000 employees and over 2,000 physicians, the Health System serves a major role in the region's care.

Why Leave Microsoft Support:

The Health System was being forced from Microsoft Premier Support into Unified Support (before the pandemic hit). The Client's recent migration to O365 and Azure coupled with Unified Support's higher cost resulted in a price for support that was almost 50% more than the prior year.

Switching to US Cloud:

After identifying US Cloud as the only viable alternative for full Microsoft support in late 2019, the Health System made the switch and signed a one-year Premier Support agreement. The cost savings allowed them to afford several proactive consulting engagements, including a US Cloud system Health Check that discovered a major security flaw and an attack in progress.

Budget Dollars Saved

Year 1: **\$326,000**

Cost Reduction

Year 1: **29%**

Cost Avoidance

Years 2-5: **122%**

Benefit:

The Client's IT Infrastructure leader received system-wide recognition for innovative cost savings and for helping to discover the dangerous intrusion.

IT leadership avoided halting several initiatives to pay for Unified Support, a move that would have significantly increased their technical debt.

Support Example

Proactive Support Saves the Day Amid Pandemic

Issue:

The Client wanted to perform a Health Check on its ADFS / MFA configuration. Using pre-paid US Cloud PRS hours from their bank, the IT team was able to skip the lengthy process of getting a proactive project approved through their internal bureaucracy, currently bogged from the pandemic. Avoiding that delay proved to be critical because their system was already in the early stages of an attack.

The Client had recently enabled Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for Active Directory Federation Services (ADFS), but they were having issues with usage analytics failing to report. Beyond the reporting issue there was no indication that anything was wrong.

Solution 1:

The US Cloud team first helped the Client enable ADFS auditing that had been missed during initial implementation. That fixed the first issue around getting usage analytics, allowing the team to analyze the Client's authentication traffic.

However, after finding some unusually high rates of failed authorizations, US Cloud dug deeper and discovered an abnormally high number of failed authorizations. Furthermore, these incidents were primarily coming from a small subset of credentials that had not been reported or resolved.

Solution 2:

The Client's security team was notified, and they were able to confirm that these were from compromised usernames and passwords outside the organization and likely malicious. The security team was then able to investigate and mitigate the breach before any serious damage had occurred.

US Cloud then advised the Client that the current ADFS MFA setup still left the hospital open to attack. The system required user ID and password as the 1st factor before getting a multi-factor authentication from Azure MFA. This meant someone could still perform a brute force attack on user account passwords.

US Cloud recommended that the Client set Azure MFA as their primary authentication instead of secondary authentication, forcing users to use Azure MFA first. This guards against password-based incursions since attackers will never see a password prompt beyond the first MFA screen.

"If we hadn't been able to afford this security audit because of budget pressures, I have no doubt we would have been opened up."
— Daniel W., Senior Systems Administrator

US Cloud Case Study #4: Avoid Vulnerability

Mid-Sized Hospital Referred to US Cloud by... Microsoft!

Client: Mid-Sized US Hospital

Industry: Healthcare

Annual Revenue: \$900 million

Key Drivers: Cost avoidance, critical
outage with no support

Client Profile:

Mid-sized Hospital in the Southeastern US with 5,500 employees. The Hospital's Microsoft environments are all on-premise except for O365. The Hospital is looking at closing their data center and moving to Azure in 2023.

Why Leave Microsoft Support:

The Hospital simply couldn't afford Unified and opted out, planning to use internal IT resources and Microsoft Pay-Per-Incident Support. When vital systems crashed and they couldn't reach Microsoft, the Hospital was left completely vulnerable during the pandemic.

Switching to US Cloud:

US Cloud received a call from their Microsoft EA rep, desperately trying to get help for his client. The primary care Hospital had lost three of its four Exchange servers with the fourth only working intermittently. The outage could cripple Hospital operations and Microsoft wasn't responding.

IT staff called their main Microsoft account manager for help, but he could not get a response either. As a last resort, the Microsoft rep Googled Premier Support alternatives and found US Cloud.

Budget Dollars Saved

Year 1: **\$58,000**

Cost Reduction

Year 1: **66%**

Cost Avoidance

Years 2-5: **183%**

Benefit:

Within two hours of reaching US Cloud, the Exchange problem was solved – with “special pandemic” pricing of \$0.

The Director of IT felt that without US Cloud's help the incident could have threatened quality of care and potentially cost her and the IT Purchasing Manager their jobs.

Two months later, US Cloud created a plan the Hospital could afford and gave them an “insurance policy” for Microsoft Support moving forward.

Support Example

After the Dust Settled, US Cloud Support Continued

After averting the initial catastrophe, the Client used US Cloud for break-fix support on problems outside their IT group's skill set or when they just did not have time to solve an issue themselves. "Run-of-the mill" tickets included issues such as:

Issue:

This Client was using BitLocker for their Active Directory domain environment to maintain their HIPAA compliance. Recovery key information was not being stored in the MBAM database for hundreds of BitLocker encrypted systems within the Hospital. The issue had been ongoing for months and continued to create problems for the Client's Help Desk when systems were forced into recovery mode.

The larger concern was that the client would encounter an incident in which hundreds of systems would be impacted because a BitLocker recovery key does not exist.

Multiple troubleshooting steps were taken including: reinstallation of MBAM, ensuring group policy was applied and attempting to force a recovery key refresh before engaging US Cloud.

Solution:

US Cloud's investigation showed that the MBAM Version was 2.5.1100.0 was insufficient to properly manage current Windows 10 devices. The client was advised to update Server infrastructure to 2.5.1143.0, and the users to at least that level.

Following the prescribed fix, BitLocker recovery keys began accurately populating in the Database again and were able to be queried by client support staff.

"We didn't realize it, but we were operating without a safety net. If US Cloud had not been willing to jump in and help, we would have been in big trouble."
— Raja G., Senior IT Sourcing Manager