

Q&A: Are You Using the Cloud To Improve Your Provider Enrollment Operations?

David Meier, Newport VP of Technology Solutions, discusses the increasing importance of using the cloud to manage your Provider Enrollment.

Q. The cloud is becoming increasingly important in healthcare. What are some of the things to consider when looking to move your healthcare data to the cloud?

A. As more and more of US healthcare providers move their data to the cloud, its important to understand some key reasons for doing so. 3 key reasons include:

1. **Increased Data Security** – Leading cloud providers host their client's data with HIPAA and HITECH compliant data centers such as Amazon Web Services (AWS). Provider data is housed in centralized and protected data centers and is monitored by physical security guards that use leading physical (such retinal and fingerprint scans to get into the data center) and data security measures (such as advanced firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and data encryption software).
2. **Lower Expense** – Cloud providers enable provider enrollment departments to implement leading hosting and security technology without the upfront cost of installing, implementing, and maintaining expensive servers and data encryption software.
3. **Scalability** – Cloud providers can easily scale to meet your provider enrollment department's data and storage requirements. Increased data capacity can be easily obtained through a quick discussion with your cloud provider.

Q. What are some of the questions to ask your cloud provider in considering moving to the cloud?

A. It's important to fully understand with who, how, and where your cloud provider stores your data. Ask your cloud provider the following questions:

1. **How is my data backed up?** Ask how your cloud provider backs up or "replicates" your data. Do they have "redundant back ups" (meaning do they have two or more servers to back up your data in the event that one fails).
2. **Is my data encrypted?** Ask whether your data is encrypted both "in transit" (meaning as it goes from the data center to your healthcare institution), as well as "at rest" (meaning while it is physically resting in the data warehouse).
3. **Where is my data physically stored?** Ask if your cloud provider's data is stored "on-shore" or "off-shore." Often, provider enrollment departments and healthcare institutions request that their data is stored within the United States.
4. **Does my cloud provider follow HIPAA and HITECH compliant security measures?**

Asking the following questions will ensure that your cloud provider is securing your data in the best manner possible and is doing so at a cost to you that is cheaper than you can manage in-house.