When innovative healthcare meets innovative cyber-security – **HammondCare** uses Sophos to protect valuable health assets

Regarded as one of Australia's most innovative health and aged care providers, HammondCare is an independent Christian charity that offers hospital care, residential care, dementia advisory services, and community support services across Australia and the United Kingdom.

HammondCare, a not-for-profit healthcare provider since 1932, is passionate about improving quality of life for people in need, regardless of their circumstances.

CUSTOMER-AT-A-GLANCE

HammondCare

Industry
Health and aged care

Website
www.hammond.com.au

Sophos Customer
Since 2002. Sophos MDR has been used since 2020.

Number of Users
4,400 employees in Australia
1,100 volunteers at any given time
Caring for 28,000 members of the community

Sophos Solutions
Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR)
Sophos Intercept X
Sophos Central, Sophos EDR
Sophos Device Encryption
Sophos Phish Threat
Sophos Cloud Optix
Sophos Firewall

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Charles Gonzalez , Head of IT Security and Risk

Challenges

- A need to ensure proactive protection for its sensitive data. This required best-in-class, 24/7/365 managed endpoint protection
- A requirement for a cybersecurity solution that can handle the evolving threat landscape targeting the healthcare sector and support a small IT team

Why is cybersecurity important for healthcare organisations?

The Australian 2021 OAIC Notifiable Data Breaches report revealed the healthcare industry to be the single most breached sector in Australia, experiencing 19% of all breaches between January and June that year. Given the sensitive nature of information healthcare providers collect and store, they are regularly targeted by threat actors and require best-in-class cybersecurity solutions to defend their infrastructure against the most comprehensive threats.

In this ever-evolving landscape, the team at HammondCare is committed to staying vigilant and protecting sensitive data from breaches. However, as a not-for-profit organisation, the team has limited resources for in-house cybersecurity, and so went in search of a managed solution that would provide industry-leading endpoint protection tailored to the organisation's needs. Sophos provided an effective solution.

HammondCare Head of IT Security and Risk Charles Gonzalez said the organisation needed a strategic partnership with an effective suite of tools.

"Response times are key, so we required a safe pair of hands that could help us respond to threats in real time. The ability to quickly roll out with little disruption was important as well as support from a strong local team," Mr Gonzalez said.

"Ultimately, we needed something that made commercial sense as we are not-for-profit. Sophos delivered a very good value proposition and came out on top in these areas."

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Charles Gonzalez , Head of IT Security and Risk

Cyber-attacks are continually evolving, and aggressors have an array of tools readily available to enable them to strike organisations from multiple angles. This creates an ongoing game of cat and mouse between adversaries and security teams, requiring constant vigilance. To stay in front of the threats, HammondCare relies on Sophos' managed detection and response solution, Sophos MDR, to monitor and shut down threats in real time.

How do you secure valuable data from potential disaster?

It's crucial for healthcare providers to have rigorous levels of control and governance over their patients' sensitive data, and for real-time, managed security to provide constant vigilance over their systems.

"Patient data is king on the dark web, and highly sought after," Mr Gonzalez said.

Sophos' State of Ransomware 2021 report states that 34% of healthcare organisations were hit by ransomware last year. HammondCare is acutely aware of the threat these types of attacks pose, as well as the increasingly complex and sophisticated methods being utilised.

Mr Gonzalez said this vulnerability was why HammondCare relies on Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR). Sophos MDR acts as an extension of the IT team, mitigating risk of attack by monitoring their systems in real time, proactively identifying and isolating threats.

"Sophos' MDR solution has saved us at least once in the past year from a nasty malware incident that could have turned into a full-blown ransomware attack very quickly," he said.

"There's clear evidence to show where Sophos' solution prohibited malware from spreading, stopping what could have been a serious event if we didn't have this software acting in real time."

Real-time threat hunting is key to staying ahead of breaches, which have the potential to cause massive harm to patients and millions of dollars in financial damage to the organisation.

"This attack could have brought down practically all systems on our premises and encrypted back-ups, which we've seen happen to other aged care providers most recently this year," Mr Gonzalez said.

He said the threats landscape is significant and constantly evolving with the potential to leave cyber-attack victims with loss of sensitive data, expensive repairs, and damage to reputation. It's therefore crucial that HammondCare has a security system in place that it can rely on.

"Sophos MDR pays for itself in spades. If it stops one major incident a year, it's paid for itself ten times over, if not more," he said.

What benefits has HammondCare seen since implementing Sophos' MDR solution?

The healthcare industry landscape continues to face evolving breaches and attacks. Attackers are opportunistic and constantly tailor new ways to infiltrate systems. It's crucial for the industry not to become complacent or undertake "set and forget" security measures. Operating environments need to be constantly monitored and finetuned to stay ahead of attackers. Sophos MDR regularly evolves, with new features like machine learning to enhance protection.

Mr Gonzalez said Sophos hosts monthly governance meetings with HammondCare to better understand its needs and provides regular updates and resources. Sophos contributes like it is part of the HammondCare team.

"We now have an extension of our existing security practice without needing to build our own in-house capability and know we can trust Sophos MDR to monitor our endpoint protection 24/7," he said.

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