For Immediate Release
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Equipment Upgrades Completed for Healthcare Network

Des Moines (12/1/2021) – Telehealth applications and remote connections are familiar to Iowans as they visit and communicate with their local hospitals and clinics. For those opportunities to occur, there is network hardware and virtual connections 'behind-the-scenes', which make those critical healthcare communications operate seamlessly.

Recently, Iowa Communications Network (ICN) engineered and implemented site upgrades to 191 locations of either physical hardware or virtual connections to Iowa hospitals and clinics statewide. These locations are connected to the Iowa Rural Health Telecommunications Program (IRHTP), which is the healthcare network managed by the Iowa Hospital Association.

Beginning in 2018, the task for the ICN was to replace aging network equipment to enhance redundancy and increased bandwidth. Of the 191 fiber-fed facilities, the ICN upgraded 44 core/aggregation sites and approximately 90 edge locations (hospitals and clinics). Healthcare is a 24/7/365 industry, and in order to keep existing broadband services up and running for the connected hospitals and clinics, ICN built a parallel Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) Network utilizing Ciena equipment.

"By performing the upgrade in parallel, it allowed for limited downtime for our hospitals, which is critical to their operations and the safety of their communities," said Corey Martin, Vice President of Education Services for the Iowa Hospital Association.

Over the course of the project, ICN installed new switches and migrated broadband services, hospital-by-hospital, from the legacy platform to the new MPLS Network. This new technology is designed with auto-recovery capabilities. "In the event of failed components or fiber damage, the network traffic will automatically reroute and follow a new ring path," explains Scott Pappan, ICN's Chief Technology Officer.

Replacing aged equipment keeps the network running efficiently. Martin added, "This new equipment allows for peace-of-mind and continues to showcase the value and importance the IRHTP and its members place in having a top-of-the-line closed network that limits the potential for outside intrusion."

Since 2008, the ICN has been the technical resource and maintenance provider of the IRHTP healthcare network managed by the Iowa Hospital Association.
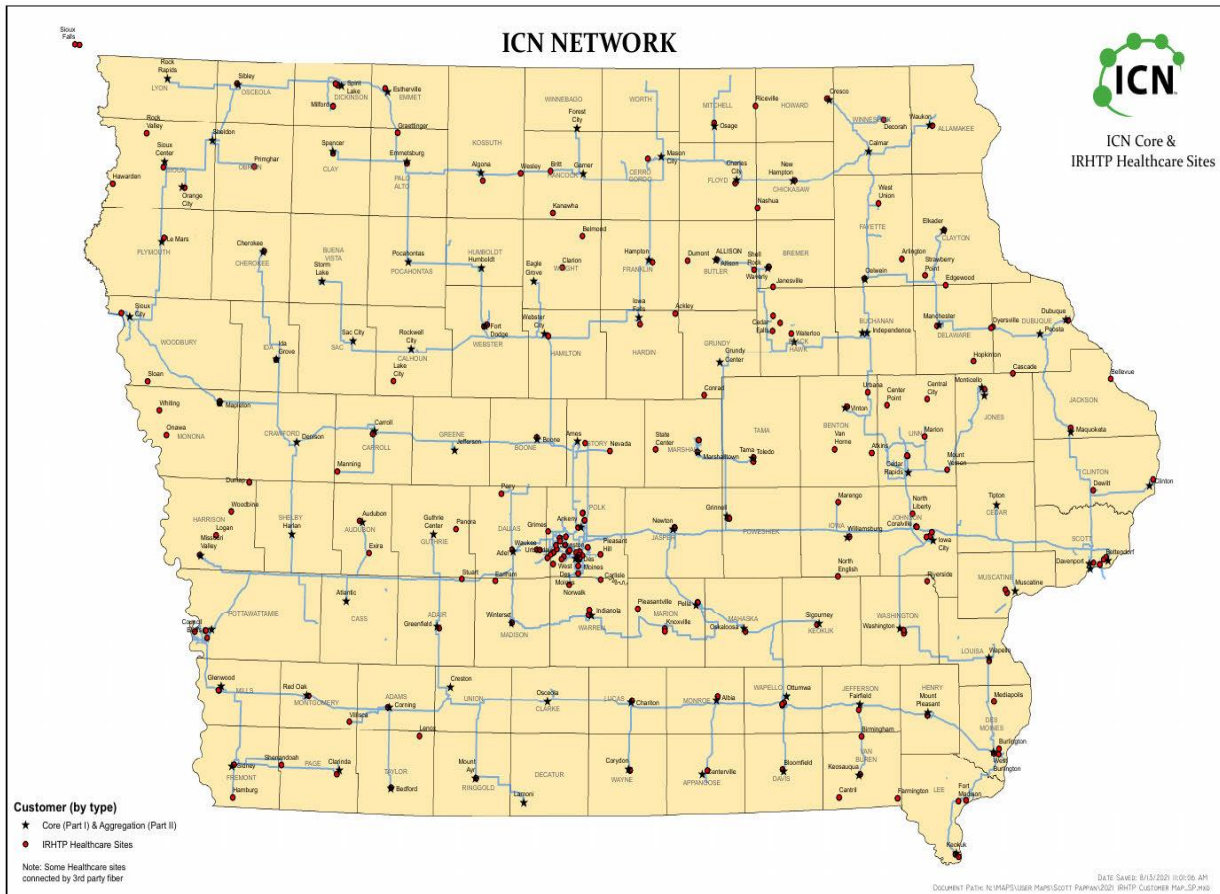
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IRHTP Network Site Map

About the Iowa Rural Health Telecommunications Program

The Iowa Rural Health Telecommunications Program is a joint effort of a consortium of 85 Iowa rural and urban hospitals, two South Dakota hospitals, one Nebraska hospital, the Iowa Hospital Association and the ICN. The program's purpose is to connect willing Iowa hospitals to a dedicated broadband fiber network using the ICN infrastructure. www.ihaonline.org/members-groups/irhtp/

About the Iowa Communications Network

The ICN provides high-speed Internet, data, voice, security, and consultation services. The ICN transport network is 100% fiber, which is the leading technology for telecommunications networks. https://icn.iowa.gov