Redundant infrastructure and connectivity enable WellStar Health System to provide ongoing patient care

Colocation delivers unrelenting uptime and a strong customer experience

With a major hospital and 300 ancillary sites, including urgent care centers and physicians' offices, WellStar Health System is the largest healthcare provider in Georgia. To provide comprehensive care to patients and meet its compliance obligations, WellStar relies on the availability of IT systems. This requires a high level of redundancy to ensure uninterrupted access to patient records and critical applications.

Redundant infrastructure and connectivity ensure operational integrity

Customer focus fosters a strong, forward-thinking partnership

Secure, resilient environment meets rigorous healthcare regulations

Self-service platform provides complete data center visibility and enhances efficiency

Meeting internal demands with an outsourced model

WellStar Health System requires a highly available, resilient IT environment to provide its patients with outstanding care and to meet the stringent compliance regulations of the healthcare industry. Initially, the non-profit system owned and operated its own data center. However, as the organization grew, so did the costs of managing and maintaining its expanding footprint— from buying new generators, UPSs and switch gear to the time commitment required of its internal IT team.

To better manage its resources, WellStar decided to investigate colocation, focusing on the metro Atlanta area to be close to its corporate headquarters. As it toured sites and interviewed data center providers, unrelenting uptime complemented by reliable, responsive customer service topped its list of requirements.

Redundancy upon redundancy to ensure patient wellbeing

The QTS Atlanta facility met WellStar's high expectations. Offering a world-class data center environment and strict adherence to policies and procedures, QTS delivers uncompromising uptime and supports the rigor and complexity of the healthcare market.

"*We wanted to partner with someone we could depend on, someone who would be there for the long run and could provide us with the infrastructure and service to support the level of availability we need*" said Andy McNicol, manager of technical services at WellStar Health System.

The redundancies built into QTS Atlanta were critical. The 120+MW DC1 facility offers 73+ megawatts of

redundant UPS power, 56 generators with onsite fuel storage, and a dedicated onsite substation—as well as plans for two additional onsite power substations. QTS Atlanta also provides access to over 20 on-net carriers and internet exchanges and offers four power feeds into the building. QTS ensures electrical redundancy via two feeds that power three onsite 40 mega volt ampere transformers, and offers cooling redundancy with 14 chillers, 20 cooling towers and 900 CRAH units.

To build on this redundancy and further protect its data and operational integrity, WellStar set up a secondary site at QTS Suwanee to provide a disaster recovery (DR) solution. Both data centers offer robust security features, including outer perimeter security fencing, video surveillance of the properties and their entry points, multifactor authentication for access and 24×7×365 onsite security guards. These features protect WellStar's systems and help it meet its HIPAA and PCI compliance requirements.

Foray into Cloud

Recently, WellStar entered the cloud market, using QTS to handle the backhaul to Azure. While Azure is designed for redundant connectivity, QTS' Switchboard solution, a self-provisioning, software-defined interconnection service, enhances this redundancy, providing two ports and two virtual connections for a fraction of the cost and in a fraction of the time—with live provisioning completed in hours versus the typical three to four weeks. WellStar is also preparing to utilize the same connectivity and redundancy from QTS Suwanee to Azure. Switchboard offers opportunities to cost-effectively deploy multiple, on-demand virtual connections to AWS, Azure and Google clouds, QTS data centers and carrier hotels from one dedicated port.

This migration to the cloud was not taken lightly as the healthcare industry is still somewhat hesitant to invest in the cloud. WellStar also questioned if they would receive the same level of service and resilient connectivity with the cloud. QTS eased these concerns, going above and beyond to establish the connection and expedite the process.

"*When we had an issue setting up the redundant circuit due to a system glitch, QTS quickly rectified the issue to ensure a smooth deployment. Within hours the circuit was*

active," said McNicol. "*From my perspective these are the things that stand out. The technician stayed on top of it, and even left the ticket open longer than necessary to make sure everything worked correctly.*"

Uptime and an outstanding customer experience provide a winning combination in a high-pressure environment

For WellStar uptime is everything, and QTS' series of redundancies underpin the highly available, resilient environment WellStar requires to deliver exceptional patient care.

"*When our practitioners are standing at the bedside of a patient, they're relying on our systems to deliver the appropriate care to that patient. If a system goes down or freezes up, they can't care for the patient,*" explained McNicol.

> "*I can't emphasize enough, how essential redundancy is in the healthcare industry. We need our systems to always be available. With QTS, we don't have to worry about outages.*"
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> **Andy McNicol, manager of technical services, WellStar Health System**

SDP enables self-service capabilities

WellStar also utilizes QTS' proprietary Service Delivery Platform (SDP), a real-time colocation orchestration platform that provides full data center transparency and visibility to every customer's environment. This real-time, on-demand portal allows WellStar to remotely visualize, control and manage its environment for improved efficiency and decision-making capabilities.

WellStar uses SDP to quickly order cross connects, shrinking deployment time to just days. This delivery speed supports the highly reactive healthcare

environment. SDP's 3D Mapper module also enables WellStar to view elevation diagrams to quickly decipher server locations. In the past, this was documented using Visio or Excel, which led to multiple versions. With 3D Mapper, everyone accesses the same updated elevation diagram for consistent information that makes it easy to direct a technician to the appropriate cabinet to rectify a server issue.

QTS' world-class data centers help WellStar meet their own compliance requirements and support audit requests. This is critical as the data centers house WellStar's patient-facing applications and sensitive data. WellStar also has on-demand access to HIPAA, PCI and SOC reports from the SDP dashboard, and uses the platform to generate weekly access reports. To enhance efficiency, QTS automates the delivery of these weekly reports for WellStar, demonstrating the level of automation and customer service SDP can deliver.

> *"QTS has acted as an extension of my internal team. The service we've received has been just phenomenal. When we need something, we get it."*
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> **Andy McNicol, manager of technical services, WellStar Health System**

SDP also allows WellStar to quickly run badge reports in an auditor-required format. While auditors require these reports quarterly, WellStar pulls them monthly to bolster security. These reports can also be self-automated through the SDP notification center for custom ranges.

QTS' self-service platform allows WellStar to:

- Connect to Azure cloud
- Rapidly deploy cross connects
- Automate audit reports
- Generate badge reports & notifications
- Control versions of elevation diagrams

In addition to the redundancies, security and automation, the customer service and responsiveness of the QTS team stands out to McNicol. *"I ran the data center for five years before we looked at QTS,"* he explained. *"My concern with outsourcing was that the outsourced company would not react like my internal team to address an issue. QTS has acted as an extension of my internal team. The service we've received has been just phenomenal. When we need something, we get it."*

McNicol detailed one example of this customer service. When one of their devices failed on Thanksgiving day, QTS identified the device, determined the issue, and rush ordered and installed the new device. This level of service is paramount to support WellStar and its patients.

"In healthcare, things change on a dime and they want it yesterday," said McNicol. *"If a vendor comes up with a new product that will improve patient care, we want to get it installed quickly. QTS has been there to make it happen."*

Visit our site to learn more about QTS secure, compliant colocation.

About QTS

QTS Realty Trust, Inc. (NYSE: QTS) is a leading provider of data center solutions across a diverse footprint spanning more than 7 million square feet of owned mega scale data center space within North America and Europe. Through its software-defined technology platform, QTS is able to deliver secure, compliant infrastructure solutions, robust connectivity and premium customer service to leading hyperscale technology companies, enterprises, and government entities. Visit QTS at www.qtsdatacenters.com, call toll-free 877.QTS.DATA or follow on Twitter @DataCenters_QTS.