

CASE STUDY: Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural Healthcare

Program: Rural Healthcare Impact Program | **Technology:** Starlink LEO Satellite | **Partners:** Rural Health Community, Starlink & CDW |

Executive Summary

Rural healthcare providers face a unique "connectivity paradox": they serve the most geographically isolated populations but often lack the reliable broadband infrastructure required to deliver modern care. Rural Health Community member organizations are leveraging enterprise-grade Starlink satellite connectivity to solve critical infrastructure challenges with the Rural Healthcare Impact Plan.

By securing access to high-performance bandwidth at 88% off retail rates, these providers are not just saving money—they are expanding mobile health fleets, integrating new access points for care, and ensuring 100% uptime for life-saving rural healthcare operations.

Success Story 1: Expanding Care on the Move

Organization: Ozarks Healthcare (West Plains, MO) **Profile:** A 114-bed acute care hospital and regional referral center serving an eight-county area across south-central Missouri and north-central Arkansas.

The Challenge: Ozarks Healthcare operates a Mobile Mammography Unit vital for reaching women in remote communities who cannot travel to the main campus. Without reliable internet on the mobile unit, transmitting large imaging files or accessing patient records in real-time was nearly impossible. Additionally, the organization recently acquired a rural clinic that lacked the fiber infrastructure to integrate into the main hospital's secure network, delaying operational readiness.

The Solution: Ozarks Healthcare deployed Starlink kits to both the mobile unit and the newly acquired clinic. The hardware arrived within a week of the request and was quickly and easily activated.

The Impact:

- **Mobile Health Enabled:** The mammography bus now operates as a fully connected "clinic on wheels," allowing for real-time data entry and patient scheduling from anywhere in the eight-county service area.

- **Rapid Integration:** The acquired clinic bypassed months of construction delays for fiber installation. Starlink provided immediate, secure connectivity, allowing the clinic to come online and begin seeing patients weeks ahead of schedule.
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Success Story 2: Critical Redundancy for Aging Infrastructure

Organization: Muenster Memorial Hospital (Muenster, TX) **Profile:** A Critical Access Hospital (CAH) providing Level IV Trauma care, therapy, and diagnostic services.

The Challenge: Muenster Memorial faces a common rural threat: Single Point of Failure. With no secondary internet provider in the area, a single fiber cut would sever the hospital's connection to its cloud-based Electronic Health Record (EHR), halting operations. Furthermore, the hospital's facility, built in 1964, has limited space, making complex hardware installations for backup internet unfeasible.

The Solution: The hospital utilized the program to install a Starlink High Performance kit as a dedicated failover line. CDW managed the logistics, coordinating technicians for a rooftop installation that integrated seamlessly with the hospital's existing firewall.

The Impact:

- **100% Uptime:** The hospital now has an active backup point. If the main fiber line is cut, the network automatically switches to satellite, ensuring zero downtime for emergency and trauma services.
 - **Zero-Touch Implementation:** *"Ordering Starlink and getting it connected into our network has been the easiest project I've been blessed with... We've had no issues and it's working like a champ!"* — Steve Fowler, IT Director, Muenster Memorial Hospital
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Success Story 3: Reaching the Unreachable

Organization: Health & Wellness Center (Stigler, OK) **Profile:** The largest rural health community center in Oklahoma, providing comprehensive medical, dental, and behavioral health services.

The Challenge: The center's mobile health unit serves the Veterans Colony in the Kiamichi Mountains, a rugged and remote area in southeastern Oklahoma where terrestrial internet

is non-existent. Previously, staff juggled multiple MiFi hotspots from different carriers, hoping to find a sliver of signal to conduct patient visits.

The Impact Program Solution: The center replaced the unreliable hotspots with a Starlink Mobility setup. The consistent high-speed bandwidth allowed them to deploy "Medpods"—self-contained diagnostic suitcases that require robust data connections to transmit clinical telemetry.

The Impact:

- **Clinical Capabilities Expanded:** The reliable connection allowed the center to expand from basic check-ups to full diagnostic visits in the field.
- **Future-Proofing:** With connectivity solved, the center is now launching a fleet expansion, building new mobile units specifically designed to bring hospital-grade care directly to elderly veterans who cannot travel.

The ROI: Enterprise Connectivity at Non-Profit Prices

For rural hospitals operating on thin margins, the cost of enterprise satellite data has traditionally been prohibitive. The Rural Healthcare Impact Program changes the math entirely.

This program is supported by:

