Healthcare

Securing a Clear Vision: How Houston Eye Associates Focuses on Cyber Security

Customer

Houston Eye Associates, the largest ophthalmological and optometric care provider in Texas, operates over 20 locations, generating $100 million annually from healthcare services and eyewear sales. With more than 50 years in business, the organization has a longstanding reputation for quality care across Texas.

Challenge

Houston Eye Associates first partnered with Morphisec over five years ago, when then-CIO Tom Merkle sought to strengthen the company's security stack with innovative breach prevention. At that time, Tom relied on a multi-layered cybersecurity approach to complement his lean IT and security team.

He appreciated that Morphisec's preventative Automated Moving Target Defense (AMTD) technology reduces the pressure of response and remediation.

> "Morphisec is going to protect us beyond any signature-based product that's out there."

Industry

- Healthcare

Environment

- 1,200 endpoints running on Windows
- Over 500 employees across 20 office locations
- Endpoint protection technology in place, Microsoft Defender Antivirus, Morphisec AMTD for breach prevention, and Arctic Wolf Networks for security monitoring and alerting

Challenges

- Low ROI and insights from existing EDR technology
- High alert volumes from MDR provider, taxing the company's lean IT team
- Unpredictable and frequent downtime triggered by existing vulnerability scanner

Solution

- Eliminate redundant technology, update the security stack with Morphisec Adaptive Exposure Management and Microsoft Defender Antivirus for preemptive cyber defense
- Enhance Managed Detection and Response (MDR) services with Morphisec as a preventative layer

Results

- Significant risk posture enhacements with improved Mean Time to Detect (MTTD) and Mean Time to Respond (MTTR)
- 45% reduction in security-related costs by saving six figures annually through security stack consolidation, reduced MDR and incident response provider hours
- Saved over 40 hours per week, equivalent to one full-time employee, reducing the need for manual monitoring and response, allowing the IT team to focus on strategic initiatives
- Security posture improvements with the application of Adaptive Exposure Management

Challenge cont.

Additionally, Morphisec's ability to stop undetectable attacks provided confidence that sophisticated attacks are prevented at the earliest stage with Tom noting that: "Morphisec is going to protect us beyond any signature-based product that's out there."

Over time, the IT team expanded, and Tom, now the CEO, has continued to prioritize a robust cybersecurity strategy with a focus on exposure management. Facing challenges with endpoint solutions that yielded low ROI and minimal insights, Tom realized the need for a simpler, more effective approach.

Additionally, vulnerability scanning tools that the team were using were problematic, often triggering unnecessary shutdowns and systems downtime. These recurring interruptions required the team to manually investigate and bring systems back online, draining valuable time and resources.

Tom recognized that Morphisec's Adaptive Exposure Management (AEM) capabilities could streamline these processes by offering reliable, proactive protection with zero system disruptions, paving the way for a more seamless and efficient security operation, and ROI assurance.

Solution

Houston Eye Associates adopted Morphisec's Adaptive Exposure Management (AEM) solution due to overall cost efficiency, simplicity, and proactive protection. Unlike the more costly and disparate EDR systems and vulnerability management scanners the company was using, Morphisec offered an affordable model that aligned with their budget while strengthening their security posture with preemptive cyber defense.

Trusting Morphisec's advanced, non-signature-based protection and continuous threat exposure management capabilities, Houston Eye Associates mitigated the risks of modern threats while moving

away from reactive, detection-based solutions. This shift was further bolstered by consistently positive outcomes with Morphisec's customer support, reinforcing their confidence in the solution's effectiveness.

According to Tom, Morphisec's continuous vulnerability prioritization capability has become an essential part of their security process, helping his team proactively identify and address misconfigurations without system disruptions. "Morphisec proactively flags misconfigured machines, so we know what we need to fix and remediate fast – that's huge," Tom noted.

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MORPHISEC

Results

AEM helps Houston Eye Associates prioritize risks, and, as IT Director Kory Hornberger explains: "The Morphisec console tells us exactly how to remediate a vulnerability or misconfiguration with actionable steps, making it easy for my team to remediate."

This efficiency has allowed Houston Eye Associates to optimize their security strategy and operate a streamlined team without sacrificing security. Kory notes that: "Morphisec AEM is invaluable for our IT operations and a game-changer for our team."

With confidence in Morphisec, Houston Eye Associates has augmented the company's endpoint protection strategy with Microsoft Defender Antivirus and Morphisec, achieving cost savings and measurable impacts on key performance indicators (KPIs); the organization's Mean Time to Detect (MTTD) and Mean Time to Respond (MTTR) have improved, significantly enhancing their risk posture.

Morphisec's preventive approach, integrated alongside Microsoft Defender Antivirus, reduced the need for constant monitoring and response, simplifying the company's technology stack and allowing their lean team to focus on strategic tasks thanks to uptime assurance.

Additionally, Houston Eye Associates' decision to integrate Morphisec alongside their MDR provider, Arctic Wolf Networks, has reduced alert frequency and significantly reduced incidents overall. "Our security is stronger with Morphisec adding a prevention layer to MDR," says Tom. "Morphisec enhances our MDR strategy by preventing threats before they need detection."

Kory adds that: "Morphisec allows our MDR provider to focus on more critical tasks." The team reports other substantial benefits by applying Morphisec across MDR services including:

- **Prevention-First Approach:** Morphisec stops threats before they can execute, reducing the need for reactive responses.

- **Zero-Day Threat Protection:** Morphisec's memory randomization effectively prevents zero-day attacks, outperforming traditional detection methods.

- **Reduced Incident Response Time:** By preventing attacks upfront, the need for time-consuming incident response and remediation is minimized.

- **Cost Efficiency:** Proactively stopping threats is more cost-effective than managing incidents

- **Seamless Integration:** Morphisec complements Arctic Wolf's MDR service, adding a robust security layer without duplicating efforts.

- **Peace of Mind:** With proactive threat prevention, the team can focus on broader strategic initiatives rather than managing constant security alerts.

The team appreciates Morphisec's seamless integration both within their security stack and alongside their MDR service provider. By augmenting their security stack and adopting AEM Tom says that "We've seen significant improvements in our security posture."

Morphisec's solutions have transformed Houston Eye Associates' cybersecurity defenses, supporting their continued commitment to secure and seamless healthcare service delivery. Tom sums it up simply by saying: "Morphisec provides peace of mind by being our last line of defense."

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- Tom Merkle, CEO, Houston Eye Associates

"A layered defense consisting of AMTD obstacles and deceptions significantly elevates an organization's security posture."

Gartner® Tech Innovators in Automated Moving Target Defense

About Morphisec

Founded in 2014, Morphisec, a pioneer in blast radius resiliency, keeps your business safe by intelligently anticipating and neutralizing threats - minimizing the impact and blast radius of cyber incidents and ensuring uninterrupted business operations without the need for constant tech team intervention or impact to performance.

Powered by Automated Moving Target Defense (AMTD) technology, the next evolution of cybersecurity, Morphisec protects over 7,000 organizations across nine million Windows and Linux endpoints, servers and workloads. Morphisec stops thousands of advanced attacks daily at Lenovo/Motorola, TruGreen, Cipla, Citizens Medical Center, and many more. Learn more at www.morphisec.com

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