

# Leading the transformation of healthcare

## Customer story



Barnes Healthcare Services leverages Flexential hybrid IT solution—including hosted private cloud, colocation and data protection—to deliver home healthcare services that improve patient outcomes, reduce hospital readmissions and save healthcare costs.



### Flexential solution portfolio



Colocation



Interconnection



Cloud



Data Protection



Professional Services

### Flexential partnership highlights

- Secure hosted private cloud delivers high-performance environment
- Diverse connectivity paths promote operational resilience for continuous patient care
- Robust data protection services safeguard sensitive healthcare data

### Quick facts about Barnes Healthcare Services

- One of the largest privately owned medical equipment companies in the U.S.
- Founded in 1909 as a corner pharmacy
- Operated by fourth generation members of the Barnes family
- Provides chronic care, pharmacy, nutrition, respiratory and ventilation services to patients in Georgia and Florida

## The history

---

Patients throughout the Southeast are improving their quality of life through integrative home health support while hospitals are saving millions of dollars thanks to a multi-generational, family-owned business—[Barnes Healthcare Services](#). The company was founded in 1909 as a corner pharmacy in Valdosta, Georgia and has grown into a complex healthcare provider offering a broad array of patient-centric solutions ranging from chronic disease management programs and infusion services to respiratory, ventilation and pharmacy services.

“We have a unique point of view here at Barnes Healthcare Services. While we reduce costs for our patients and our payers, what we offer our patients is a better quality of life,” said Monty Pickren, chief process and information officer and chief compliance officer at Barnes Healthcare Services. “Our purpose at Barnes Healthcare Services is to take care of people by keeping them healthy at home. We understand how people get better, more quickly when they are recovering at their home environment. We are uniquely positioned to help our patients because we offer a broader range of services than most businesses typically can. We are more of a single-stop shop.”

Pickren cited the example of how Barnes Healthcare Services will work with patients diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes to not only provide the medicine and products needed to treat the disease but, to also support patients with their diet and exercise program to help them transition off of required drug therapies such as insulin.



“We have a unique point of view here at Barnes Healthcare Services. While we reduce costs for our patients and across the entire healthcare system, what we offer our patients is a better quality of life. Our purpose is to take care of people by keeping them healthy at home. We are uniquely positioned to help our patients because we offer a broader range of services than most businesses typically can. We are more of a single-stop shop.”

**Monty Pickren**

Chief Process and Information Officer & Chief Compliance Officer  
Barnes Healthcare Services

## The challenge

---

### IT infrastructure needed to ensure reliability and availability

In addition to enhancing patients’ health and overall outcomes, Barnes Healthcare Services is helping hospitals to lower costs associated with re-admitting patients. As a result of recently instituted federal mandates, hospitals are fined if patients are readmitted to their facilities within 30 days. Barnes Healthcare Services’ Healthy at Home<sup>®</sup> program enables hospitals to transition patients to their home environment by providing online monitoring with a panel of healthcare professionals, telehealth services, preventative interventions, educational programs, pharmaceutical and other necessary supports. Created seven years ago, the Healthy at Home<sup>®</sup> program proactively addresses a growing need in the market to lower readmission rates.

According to Barnes Healthcare Services, since the initiation of the Healthy at Home<sup>®</sup> program, the company has provided more than 800 chronically ill patients with disease management education and wellness coaching, achieving an 87% reduction in hospital readmissions and saving \$14.2 million of unplanned hospital costs associated with hospital readmissions.

“The Healthy at Home® program proactively addresses patient needs from medical, socioeconomic, and mental well-being to ensure we are providing our patients with not only enhanced medical outcomes but, a better quality of life all around,” said Amanda Martin, RN, BSN, director of nursing operations for Barnes Healthcare Services. The Healthy at Home® program requires getting that real-time data in order for the company to intervene on behalf of these patients and keep them out of the hospital.

From a competitive perspective, Barnes Healthcare Services is uniquely positioned in the market, as there are no other companies who provide the breadth of services to improve patient outcomes as its organization does. Pickren explained that some companies do telehealth or pharmacy services or home wellness programs, but none match the single-stop approach of Barnes Healthcare Services.

For Barnes Healthcare Services to deliver all these critical patient services and support their hospital clients, the company must heavily rely on its technology and IT environment.

### Seeking reliable it service to support home healthcare for patients

For many years Barnes Healthcare Services operated its IT infrastructure with an in-house team who managed on-premises equipment along with other data connection services. This approach, however, did not provide the level of systems reliability and availability required to operate its core business of home healthcare. If Barnes Healthcare Services experienced a service interruption, it adversely affected the company’s ability to serve patients at home. What is more, outages affected hospitals’ ability to support at-home recovery for their recently discharged patients.

## The solution

---

### Hybrid IT infrastructure ensures services remain online and secure

First and foremost, Barnes Healthcare Services was looking for a secure data center that was hurricane resistant and had redundant power supplies, cooling and connectivity in place. This was essential as the healthcare organization must abide by mandated guidelines and legal requirements around uptime and the delivery of healthcare services to patients. Any issues meeting these regulatory expectations equate to large fines for the organization.

“Barnes Healthcare Services was looking for a solution that offered high availability that we could count on to serve our patients,” said Pickren. “Being located in a small town, it can also be difficult to find the technical support we need for our staff.”

Barnes Healthcare Services tapped Flexential to provide this high-availability infrastructure and deployed the Flexential hosted private cloud for its primary systems, utilizing the Flexential – Alpharetta data center for its servers. This combination of a dedicated cloud environment and a highly secure facility with redundant

power and cooling ensures Barnes Healthcare Services’ systems remain secure, online and operating efficiently. The facility also offers physical security features including dual-factor authentication, biometric scanners and monitored security feeds to fortify the data center’s physical space and help Barnes Healthcare Services meet its compliance obligations.

Additionally, multiple, diverse connectivity paths allow traffic to be automatically diverted to maintain unyielding availability. This tailored solution promotes a high-performance environment that flexes to meet evolving business requirements and bolster Barnes Healthcare Services’ ability to support its patients and healthcare partners.

Barnes Healthcare Services also utilizes Flexential data protection services to back-up its critical data and meet the strict compliance regulations of the healthcare space. Data is replicated to a geographically diverse location to ensure the security of the sensitive patient information Barnes Healthcare Services accesses and stores.

In addition, the company relies on Flexential for its Microsoft SQL licensing and database administration services. These managed services offload Barnes Healthcare Services' internal IT team, allowing them to focus on more strategic IT initiatives that impact and improve patient health and well-being. The Flexential team is also always available to support Barnes Healthcare Services' IT needs.

"From a technical side, we like the high availability and responsiveness Flexential offers. To us, the most important differentiator is our partnership with Flexential and our ability to work with the team. We view Flexential as an extension of our IT staff—that is what sets Flexential apart. I cannot overstate the value of the partnership we have between Barnes Healthcare Services and Flexential."

## What partnership means to Barnes Healthcare Services

Barnes Healthcare Services is committed to volunteering in the communities it serves. In fact, the company gives its employees 40 hours of paid time off per year to volunteer in the community. As part of this commitment, Flexential has sponsored Barnes' Annual 5K Run charity event several times and had even had Flexential team members come and run. Pickren said, "That shows the real partnership we enjoy with Flexential."

Barnes Healthcare Services continues to transition additional systems to its Flexential private cloud environment, including the Health360 platform that monitors patients remotely, and potentially its retail pharmacy system as well.

Beyond the IT infrastructure growth, Barnes Healthcare Services plans to expand its retail and infusion pharmacy presence in the Southeast to provide innovative, cutting-edge technologies and services while maintaining the small-town pharmacy approach. The company also plans to broaden its wellness and early intervention programs to further improve patient outcomes and quality of life. These program expansions will help prevent and hopefully decrease the need for hospitalization.

Barnes Healthcare Services' 10-year growth plan looks to maximize service offerings in all four divisions—chronic care, pharmacy, nutrition and respiratory/ventilation—and achieve annual revenue growth four times what the company earns today.

## The results

### Cost savings, 100% uptime and growth

Through the partnership with Flexential, Barnes Healthcare Services has greatly reduced its IT costs, which has improved its operating expenses and positively impacted patients by controlling costs for them.

Barnes Healthcare Services has also grown its business based on the confidence and trust the leadership and IT team have in Flexential. The reliability Flexential offers is key to Barnes Healthcare Services' ability to expand as the company must meet the stringent requirements of its hospital clients and always be "on" for at-home patients.

"We can count on the high availability provided by Flexential, along with the technical expertise, to run our business. Flexential has done a great job helping Barnes Healthcare Services to operate more efficiently and cost effectively. Most importantly, Flexential ensures we can reliably access all that vital data we need to serve our patients at their homes."