

# NetMotion Mobility® Helps Bloodworks Northwest Keep Precious Blood Donations Flowing

Bloodworks Northwest (formerly the Puget Sound Blood Center) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-supported organization that provides transfusion medicine services to more than 90 hospitals throughout Washington, Oregon and Alaska. As part of its mission, the organization operates 14 mobile blood drive units that collect much needed blood components from donors in the greater Seattle area. Bloodworks employees depend on reliable, secure mobile connectivity to, among other critical tasks, verify the eligibility of potential blood donors. In a side-by-side comparison with a competing product, NetMotion Mobility provided nearly flawless connectivity for both mobile and office employees, far exceeding the performance of the alternate solution. As a result, Bloodworks decided to standardize on Mobility for all its laptops, tablets and handheld scanners.

## Staying Connected Means More Life-saving Donations

Bloodworks Northwest plays a vital role in the region's healthcare ecosystem, collecting and distributing life-saving blood components to hospitals for patients needing surgery, transfusions or treatment for blood disorders. To reach as many potential donors as possible, the organization operates mobile blood drive units that travel around the greater Seattle area in addition to 12 donation centers.

Not every person who wishes to donate blood is eligible. For instance, there is a required minimum time that must occur between donations from any individual donor. So Bloodworks relies on its Blood Establishment Computer System (BECS) to verify donor eligibility and track inventory. That means reliable access to the donor database is a must; lost connections require staff to start the verification process over again.

"If we don't have the connection, we can't access that donor record information, causing delays or wasting critical time for our donors and staff," said Tony Sheehan, Network Services Manager at Bloodworks Northwest.

## Head-to-head, Mobility Wins

For several years, the organization had used two solutions to provide connectivity: NetMotion Mobility and a competing product from Citrix. When Bloodworks decided to look more closely at how each solution performed, the IT staff decided to standardize on Mobility across the organization. In fact, it was an easy choice.

"There was really no contest between the two solutions," noted Sheehan. "Mobility showed it was far and away the better solution for workers that need to get and stay connected from wherever it is they are working."



### INDUSTRY:

Healthcare

### OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure uninterrupted mobile connectivity
- Improve efficiency at mobile blood drive units
- Standardize connectivity solution across enterprise

### SOLUTIONS:

- NetMotion Mobility
- Laptops
- Tablets
- Handheld scanners

### RESULTS:

- Reduced help desk calls
- More reliable connections to central databases
- Consistent experience for staff

## **“If we don’t have the connection, we can’t access that donor record information, causing delays or wasting critical time for our donors and staff.”**

**Tony Sheehan** | Network Services Manager

Mobility provides Bloodworks with a secure and reliable mobile VPN tunnel that ensures workers always stay linked to the BECS. Even in cellular or Wi-Fi dead zones, Mobility temporarily pauses any active mobile applications rather than disconnecting them. And when laptops are closed and reopened, the connection is immediately reestablished without the user having to do anything.

By contrast, Sheehan noted an increasing number of complaints from employees who found it difficult to connect from home using the Citrix solution. In particular, staff members complained that their laptops would routinely disconnect from one of the organization’s central, shared Map drives.

“There’s a certain amount of bandwidth that is required to maintain a Map drive over Citrix,” said Sheehan. “That was causing a huge problem because while workers have the bandwidth at the main office, they might not have that level of bandwidth at home to allow it to work. No one’s ever lost a Map drive working at home using NetMotion, no matter how fast or slow the connection was.”

### **One solution, Many Benefits**

The move to standardize on Mobility is paying dividends for Bloodworks beyond more reliable connectivity. First and foremost, having a single, enterprise-wide solution simplifies the task of managing and administering the organization’s mobile workforce and provides users with a consistent experience.

Ease of use is another big plus. “Workers that previously used Citrix have found their Mobility devices are much easier to connect to the network when they’re off-site,” added Sheehan. “I use it at home all the time and find it to be so effortless. I can open up my laptop and it automatically connects to the network and I didn’t do anything.”

Mobility has made a huge difference in the usability of the organization’s handhelds while reducing the workload of the IT staff. In addition to laptops, blood drive workers use tablets to create donor-specific labels that are affixed to a patient’s sample and paperwork. Handheld scanners are then used to verify that these items correlate to the correct donor. Both these devices require a continuous connection to the BECS. Previously, when a connection failed, an oversized “error” message would appear on the device’s tiny screen, obscuring the instructions for how to reconnect.

“Mobility has flat out stopped this type of help desk call, which could take up to 30 minutes to resolve,” said Sheehan.

Mobility also provides built-in security features that enable IT or central management to selectively control which employees have access to sensitive health data. This is essential for ensuring that Bloodworks is in compliance with strict HIPAA and FDA privacy regulations.

With Mobility, the Bloodworks team can focus on its lifesaving mission without technology getting in the way.