



# Leading medical IT solutions consortium turns to Enventis and Cisco for core and more

## Customer Profile

Founded as a non-profit corporation in 1997, Duluth, Minnesota-headquartered SISU Medical Systems is a consortium of 16 member-owner medical centers throughout Northern Minnesota working together to share information technology resources.



## Situation

SISU Medical Systems provides high-quality, cost-effective information technology for its member-owner rural hospitals. When 3Com - its previous network provider - left the switch market in 2001, SISU immediately needed a core re-design.

"We're essentially the IT department for 16 hospitals," explains Bill Sislo, SISU's director of technical operations. "Without a core solution to reliably support these organizations or our own, we had to act immediately. Downtime wasn't an option."

SISU selected Cisco and Enventis (a subsidiary of HickoryTech Corporation) to implement its new network core. The Plymouth, Minnesota-headquartered company with approximately 130 employees holds numerous Cisco Certified Specializations including Advanced Routing and Switching, Advanced Unified Communications, Unified Contact Center, and Advanced Security, making the company the perfect fit.

Working with SISU, Enventis and Cisco implemented the network core within a month, the success of which prompted SISU and its member hospitals to migrate almost entirely to Cisco solutions—starting at the core and moving to the edge of the network.

## Solution

Enventis addressed SISU's own facilities prior to implementing any Cisco solutions in SISU's affiliated hospitals. The Cisco Gold Certified Partner's first installation was a Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switch to ensure a reliable network core that delivered Power of Ethernet (PoE) functionality with impressive quality of service (QoS).

Enventis then deployed Cisco Unified Communications that seamlessly integrates voice, data, and video networks onto one platform, enabling more effective communication and collaboration every time, everywhere so everyone's included.

To secure its entire network, Enventis deployed Cisco's Security Monitoring, Analysis, and Response System (MARS), which provides security monitoring for network devices and host applications supporting both Cisco and other vendors. Enventis

also implemented Cisco's Network Admission Control (NAC) solution that uses the network infrastructure to enforce security policy compliance on all devices seeking to access network computing resources.

## Results

Following a smooth implementation in its own facility and six of its member hospitals (with the remaining 10 currently being updated), SISU and its affiliates are enjoying the powerful advantages of the Enventis-deployed Cisco solutions.

"The solutions Enventis and Cisco delivered have proven beneficial throughout our own business and our member hospitals," says Sislo. "It says a lot that we began with the sole objective of redesigning our core and have since moved our and our hospitals' entire communication and collaboration platforms to Cisco."

SISU now has the core stability to reliably support its hospitals' data center needs and it uses its own facility as the proving ground for SISU members.

"We often tour hospital representatives through our facility to demonstrate how our Cisco solution works and how it can help them improve productivity, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness," says Sislo. "With features like four-digit dialing, toll-bypass, and mobility features, we and our hospitals operate and compete on a higher level."

Sislo concludes that he, SISU, and its affiliated hospitals are pleased with their new solution and look forward to building on it as their needs grow.

"Cisco has a proven technology record and they will be around for many years to come, which you can't say about all companies," says Sislo. "And Enventis has been with us every step of the way, and we'll continue partnering with them going forward."

**Enventis**

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