

# the prescription for “IT INSECURITY”

How healthcare provider Help at Home implemented a cloud-based business continuity solution that keeps critical IT services healthy—for the company and their patients.



an exclusive case study from iland



## executive summary

### IT Challenge

Help at Home's IT Manager needs to implement a robust and customized business continuity plan that minimizes downtime of mission critical applications used by hundreds of employees. It also needs to meet their Recovery Time Objective, and be easily managed by his lean staff and fit into a limited budget.

### Solution

The iland Continuity Cloud® offers redundancy, recovery, and reliability with flexible data protection and disaster recovery options that meet the needs of Help at Home—including standby resources and iland managed replication to multiple targets within the iland high-availability cloud computing environment.

### Benefits

Implementing the iland solution immediately saved Help at Home \$15,000 because it eliminated the need for upfront capital expenditures. Help at Home also estimates they will save \$150,000 over three years by using iland managed data replication—not to mention the millions of dollars saved in the event of a disaster because the iland Continuity Cloud can rapidly restore data and services to the business.





# about Help at Home

Healthcare is on everyone's mind. Not just because of rising costs and the reform debate, but for the simple fact that Americans are living longer and increasingly require healthcare assistance at home. With 50 million Baby Boomers retiring and over 32 million Americans living with disabilities, the need for in-home, skilled healthcare assistance is greater than ever.

Help At Home, Inc. provides the in-home care and respite services that elderly, medically fragile, and disabled individuals need. In business for over 30 years, they employ a large staff of trained Personal Care Aides, Respite Care Givers, Nursing Assistants, and Registered Nurses who provide 24x7 in-home care.

With over 100 U.S. offices, Help at Home's operational footprint includes Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The company has notable contracts with the Illinois Department on Aging and other state, regional, and municipal agencies involved in custodial home care services.

## Keeping their IT Healthy

Help at Home's IT organization is relatively small, but responsible for corporate operations and 103 branch offices. In addition to provisioning, help desk, and other support services, they manage an internally developed application for client management and billing that's used by hundreds of employees across the nation. This mission critical application ensures patients receive the care they need, company revenues are accurately tracked, and Help at Home meets the regulatory requirement of overlapping government agencies.



## doing more with less

Like most companies, the IT organization at Help at Home is asked to provide increased services to the business while at the same time reducing IT expenditures. “Increasing internal software development with our staff of .NET developers caused us to need more and more servers,” explains Eric Heidrich, Senior Manager of IT. But Heidrich knew adding server after server to their datacenter would increase electricity bills, create excess heat, require more space, and increase the burden of IT management.

### The business value of virtualization

Help at Home began to investigate virtualization as a method of making IT more responsive to business needs. This includes more efficiently providing business services and ensuring high availability, as well as lowering IT costs, streamlining IT management, and becoming more energy efficient.

“Instead of purchasing a bunch of hardware,” says Heidrich, “we decided to virtualize, which also helped us to stay ‘green.’” Even with server virtualization as a proven method for achieving many of their goals, Heidrich knew running a mission critical application in one datacenter was an invitation to unplanned downtime.





# solution to “IT insecurity”

Downtime costs more than money—it can cost customers. In the case of Help at Home, IT downtime could interfere with the delivery of healthcare to their clients. Heidrich and his team recognized the “IT insecurity” of a mission-critical application running only on in-house servers—vulnerable to natural or man-made disasters. They wanted a business continuity solution that provided redundancy, recovery, and reliability.

## Redundancy and reliability

Real IT security is about having the redundancy and reliability needed for robust business continuity. For Help at Home, that means redundancy in both infrastructure and data protection for critical files and business services. Their continuity plan needed to be able to restore operations in minutes or hours—not days. And it needed to be simple to manage for Heidrich and his busy team.

## The search for a solution

Heidrich spent time looking for a solution that would meet all their requirements. “By far, the most important thing was finding a company that would allow me to ship my virtual machine (VM) files to them and boot them up in their hosted VMware environment in the event of a disaster,” recounts Heidrich. “But not many companies offer a “standby cloud” for VMware, and many companies didn’t even understand what I was asking for.”

## The iland Continuity Cloud

“After many Google searches and phone calls, I thought I had exhausted my options until I came across iland. They were quick to propose the solution I needed.”

Help at Home selected the iland Continuity Cloud. It’s specifically designed to provide secure cost-effective business continuity options to enterprises of all sizes. The iland Continuity Cloud provides not just a replication target for Help at Home’s data, but the entire infrastructure solution including redundant and private standby cloud resources.



## recovery time objective

To achieve the desired recovery time objective (RTO), Help at Home selected a continuously live VM on the iland Continuity Cloud for continual data replication of their SQL servers. This combination of live and standby VMs within the iland Continuity Cloud minimizes IT expenditures—but allows Help at Home to easily test their standby environment and quickly recover from disasters.

### Data protection options

Help at Home had the ability to ship both VM files as well as entire hard drive images of physical servers over a secure VPN to VMs in the iland Continuity Cloud. In the event of downtime in the production environment, Help at Home can quickly power-on the standby resources in the iland Continuity Cloud. Now, Help at Home has a backup infrastructure that's always in place and available to run and restore business applications and data access.

### Team you can trust

“We needed a rock-solid disaster recovery solution that could be easily implemented, and easily managed by our small IT department,” explains Heidrich. “The best aspect of this entire process was working with the knowledgeable iland staff and allowing them to setup and manage the implementation as well as continual replication of our data.”





## results

“We reduced our time in procuring and deploying this type of disaster recovery solution, and immediately saved over \$15,000 in labor costs. Beyond that, the iland Continuity Cloud solution will save Help at Home more than \$150,000 over three years. That savings is from eliminated capital expenditure for SANs, servers, software licensing, collocation costs, and staff management time needed to replicate our production environment,” says Heidrich.

“And, in the event of a disaster, Help at Home will save millions of dollars by minimizing downtime, allowing operations to continue, and preventing regulatory penalties related to patient healthcare data. More importantly, we will keep vital medical information available to our care providers and ensure the safety of our patients.

### What’s next?

“As our VMware environment matures and grows, we will continue to add standby virtual machines within the iland Continuity Cloud,” explains Heidrich. “We are also evaluating a fully cloud-based environment with some production servers in diverse iland datacenters next year. In the meantime, iland provides an easy path for growth, is cost effective, and gives our lean department another IT team to leverage.”



## about iland

iland™ is a provider of cloud computing infrastructure delivering solutions such as disaster recovery, desktop virtualization, and hybrid cloud collocation for enterprises of all sizes. Founded in 1995, iland operates in dozens of datacenters across the US and Europe, with high availability hubs specifically designed for cloud computing in Boston, Washington D.C., Houston, Los Angeles, Dallas, and London.

## about the iland Continuity Cloud®

The iland Continuity Cloud® is specifically designed to provide cost-effective business continuity options to enterprises of all sizes. iland provides not just a replication target for your data—but the entire infrastructure solution including redundant, standby resources based on industry-leading VMware® solutions



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Learn more about iland products and solutions at [iland.com](http://iland.com), or give us a call at 800.994.0281.

