

Baylor College of Medicine Human Genome Sequencing Center Deciphers FISMA, HIPAA and more

About Baylor College of Medicine – Human Genome Sequencing Center

Located in Houston, Texas, the Baylor College of Medicine – Human Genome Sequencing Center (BCM-HGSC) is a world leader in genomics. Established in 1996, today the center is one of three large-scale sequencing centers funded by the National Institutes of Health and employs more than 200 staff. The fundamental interest of the BCM-HGSC is advancing biology and genetics through improved genome technologies.



The Problem

As an NIH grant holder, BCM-HGSC is required to comply with FISMA guidelines including NIST 800-37 (RMF) and NIST 800-137 (Continuous Monitoring). BCM-HGSC was required to demonstrate initial compliance on a tight timeline. To do so they needed to quickly onboard deep expertise and process experience to help them meet this goal. In addition, BCM-HGSC was looking to implement a risk management program to support the security authorization & assessment (SA&A) process over time, maintain their ATOs and sustain NIH funding.



The Solution

BCM-HGSC called on TalaTek to help with their immediate need for FISMA compliance. “Because we were starting from ground zero, we needed a partner that could hit the ground running on FISMA, TalaTek did just that” says Kim Andrews, Director of Information Technology at BCM-HGSC. “TalaTek was able to meet a critical compliance requirement in a very tight timeline, enabling us to stay focused on our research.”

Once the initial project was complete, BCM-HGSC engaged TalaTek to develop a risk management program for their unique needs. One that would meet their current compliance requirements and be flexible enough to grow with their business by addressing emerging requirements as well. The TalaTek solution leveraged deep expertise, proven methodologies and innovative technology to custom build a sustainable risk management program based on BCM-HGSC’s unique risk tolerance and metrics.

With the ECMS cloud managed service, BCM-HGSC was able to define their own risk profiles, establish a central repository of artifacts and build custom workflows tailored to their process, delivering a holistic view of their overall risk. From there they can easily track the progress of remediation activity, including POA&Ms, and ensure they are meeting requirements and maintaining ATOs.

“TalaTek brought an army of experts, sophisticated tools, vast experience and deep knowledge. We couldn’t hire that.”

Kim Andrews
Director of IT at BCM-HGSC

Today BCM-HGSC tracks compliance with over 300 Moderate NIST 800-53, Rev. 4.0 controls via continuous monitoring. TalaTek recently performed a HIPAA gap analysis for a planned HIPAA implementation, including a mapping of HIPAA controls and requirements to FISMA controls currently implemented in the BCM-HGSC environment. This mapping identified areas where BCM-HGSC can leverage previously implemented control standards to quickly determine the risk profiles and mitigation strategies needed to satisfy their new HIPAA requirements.



The Result

With TalaTek ECMS, BCM-HGSC has been able to integrate rapidly changing operational needs into their risk management program, adhering to configuration management and risk management strategies, maintaining compliance and tracking remediation on an ongoing basis. Through this integrated approach, the team has discovered strategic, tactical and operational benefits. Improved efficiency in their reporting, billing and capacity planning activities, reductions in data storage overhead and improved data hygiene are just a few of the quantifiable results. BCM-HGSC has also enhanced its identity management and access control processes, improving credentials management and employee security training.

TalaTek ECMS provided executive leadership with a holistic view of risk and its impact to the business. Now they are able to easily manage risk and achieve necessary compliance requirements. With this effective risk management program as a foundation, BCM-HGSC can be nimble in pursuit of business and funding opportunities without concern for risk management requirements, making them more competitive in the dynamic genomic research market.

“ *Understanding risk is a partnership, we both bring deep knowledge. TalaTek helps us deepen our understanding of security.* ”

Kim Andrews
Director of IT at BCM-HGSC



The Future

As BCM-HGSC expands its research and builds a clinical practice to bring the benefits of genomic research to the public, they now have the need to demonstrate compliance with HIPAA Privacy and Security rules. They are once again calling on TalaTek to provide a plan for integrating HIPAA controls into their existing risk management program. Andrews concludes “In the genomics market, your reputation is based on your credibility. Managing risk and cybersecurity with TalaTek protects us”.



About TalaTek

TalaTek, LLC, is a woman-owned business delivering truly integrated risk management services. With deep expertise working with federal agencies and other public-sector clients, TalaTek has delivered consistent excellence by leveraging a unique combination of methodologies, processes and technology. Each member of TalaTek is an IT professional with industry-specific certifications and experience. This quality and expertise, combined with innovative technology, ensures the successful outcomes your organization requires. Contact us to learn how ECMS can benefit you and your risk management team. To learn more visit talatek.com

