

Home healthcare agency increases field accountability with CellTrak and Sprint.



Cooperative Home Care Associates successfully implements CellTrak™, a mobile attendance verification system, and enhances overall care management.

Cooperative Home Care Associates (CHCA) is a nationally recognized, South Bronx-based home healthcare company. Founded in 1985, CHCA provides high quality, reliable, paraprofessional services to elderly, chronically ill and disabled clients throughout the Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Challenge

Cooperative Home Care Associates (CHCA) provides high quality healthcare services to elderly, chronically ill and disabled clients in New York City. Since 2001, CHCA had used a standard telephony time and attendance system that required the home health aides to clock-in and out of patient visits over the patient's landline phone. Although this system was preferable over a paper time sheet verification system, it had limitations as well. CHCA's greatest limitation was the difficulty in attendance verification when a home phone was unavailable. Another limitation was the inability to accurately identify the person who made the call from the home phone.

The Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 made identifying fraud, waste or abuse of state or federal monies used to finance healthcare programs a top priority, so it was critical for CHCA to track employee time and attendance as accurately as possible. In 2007, CHCA's former provider of the attendance verification system was purchased by a larger competitor. The company learned that it would eventually need to convert to a new telephony system and decided to research a new, more expansive solution that would address system replacement needs as well as new regulatory compliance requirements.

Solution

CHCA discovered CellTrak™ through exploration of alternative attendance verification systems. CellTrak is a leading provider of cellular solutions to the home health and hospice industry, allowing field staff to verify their attendance using mobile phone technology, and is a Business Solutions Partner of Sprint. CHCA began to work with both companies on a solution and was immediately impressed with the level of attention and professionalism exhibited by the staffs of both CellTrak and Sprint.

CHCA chose to embark on a small trial with the CellTrak application using Sprint wireless phones. Using CellTrak, the home health aide would turn on his/her cell phone and start CellTrak by selecting the patient they are visiting on the daily schedule displayed on the phone. The phone would send a GPS signal verifying the time and location of the aide in the back-office system, providing a digital, verifiable record of the visit. The system then pushed the visit task list to the aide's phone, including items such as bathing the patient, doing dishes or other light housework. The aide is able to turn the care plan into a completed visit record by recording tasks completed, refused and not required and automatically send the paperless visit note when the visit is completed. The data immediately synced with the backend system over the cellular network. While CellTrak provided the application, Sprint provided a wireless device and data services that were a fit for CHCA's needs and budget. Sprint and CellTrak worked collaboratively with CHCA to develop a solution that would provide greater functionality without raising costs above the old system.



“CHCA has been viewed by our industry as an innovative enterprise for the past 25 years. Not only will this project raise the bar of accountability in our industry, but it demonstrates what we, along with our workers, can accomplish by developing strong partnerships with wireless technology and software providers.”

- Michael Elsas, President/CEO, Cooperative Home Care Associates

CHCA began to explore the CellTrak application in conjunction with the additional services that Sprint can provide, and the opportunities for improved communications grew. They viewed the ability to use GPS in their work as a productivity increasing concept that was long overdue. CHCA places a high value on having their partners understand their organizational goals and helping them achieve their business objectives. Working with Sprint and CellTrak, CHCA reported that they felt they had a truly productive relationship with both vendors, where their needs were being met as opposed to being oversold on services they didn't need or couldn't afford.

Bottom line

CHCA started with a trial of 20 devices. The company found the technology to be reliable, accurate and consistent, and was impressed by the simple effectiveness of the system. From a post pilot survey, CHCA determined that 90% of aides were trained in 3 hours or less and felt comfortable with the solution within weeks, demonstrating its high user friendliness.

The new technology helped CHCA improve “visit integrity,” accurately capturing time and attendance while reducing instances of fraud. GPS allows the company to manage field staff more effectively. The CellTrak solution will eliminate manual timesheets processed due to visits that could not be verified using the “traditional” telephony system. Additionally, the solution enhances care management and helps CHCA improve overall customer service, to both clients and the workforce.

After reviewing the data that was delivered, the performance of the CellTrak solution and the Sprint network, CHCA concluded that the system met all requirements in the pilot phase and committed to rolling out the system to all of their 1,300 home health aides.

CellTrak's homecare telephony system has been granted approval by both the New York City Human Resources Administration and the Visiting Nurse Services of New York as meeting the criteria of an Automated Time and Leave system. In advancing the traditional telephony system, CellTrak has added many features such as real-time communication with field staff of schedules, patient specific care plans and requiring visit documentation beyond today's standards.

CellTrak Technologies is the leading provider of cellular solutions to the home health and hospice industry. The company provides a comprehensive suite of solutions for “point-of-care” documentation and visit compliance.



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