

Specialty Care

Streamlines Administrative Efforts and Improves Care Delivery with PointClickCare

Challenge

To support its rapid growth and the continuous addition of new long-term care residences, Specialty Care needed to modernize its accounting system and introduce automation to the clinical side of its operation to improve efficiency.

Solution

Specialty Care chose PointClickCare fully hosted, Web-based application because they found it easy to learn, intuitive to use, and it had all the functionality the company required to efficiently manage their long-term care centers & retirement residences.

Results

Specialty Care is experiencing better information accessibility regarding its facilities operations and has automated many manual processes, resulting in utilization of critical resources, including nursing staff and other caregivers.

Introduction

Operating since 1977, Specialty Care Inc. is no newcomer to the business of providing quality long-term care and services to seniors and adults with special needs. Based in Toronto, Specialty Care owns and manages long-term care and retirement residences in a number of cities and towns across Ontario.

This family-owned business brings strong family values to work every day through a very personal and hands-on business model that fully embraces both staff and residents alike as part of the family. To achieve their goal of creating 'communities of caring', each Specialty Care facility is run as a separate community and incorporates local volunteers, students and programs from the surrounding community.

Results at a Glance

- Financial and Clinical components fully integrated
- Single application for the entire organization
- Duplication of resident records and data entry eliminated
- Information instantly available to those who need it
- Improved operational efficiency & greater records accuracy
- Significant reductions in manual paperwork
- Reduced effort in meeting regulatory requirements

Business complexity drives need for improved systems

Through an aggressive expansion program, Specialty Care recently increased the number of long-term care homes it operates to 14. However, like many similar organizations in Ontario, they were not computerized and did not have adequate information systems in place to manage an increasingly complex business.

To manage its financial activities, Specialty Care had been using an accounting package from a small software company. However, the software was difficult to use and the company was slow in providing updates to fix problems and enhance functionality.



“Each of our homes seemed to be running a different version of the program,” says Fern Ginsberg, CFO at Specialty Care. “With no consistency from home to home, the accounting system was simply inadequate,” she adds.

On the clinical side of Specialty Care’s operation, a labor-intensive paper-based system was being used, and virtually everything was being done manually. “With multiple disciplines recording information on each resident related to assessments and to the planning and delivery of care, there was lots of duplication going on,” says Lois Cormack, Specialty Care’s VP of Professional Services & Consulting.

To support its planned growth, Specialty Care needed a robust information system that would enable it to improve operational efficiency, manage costs and optimize the use of critical resources such as the nursing, dietary and programs staff, while maintaining the same high levels of quality care delivery to a rapidly growing family of long-term care residents.

Accounting first to experience new system benefits

Specialty Care started its information technology modernization program with a new accounting system. They chose to implement the financial modules of PointClickCare, an Internet-based, on-demand software application from Wescom Solutions that is designed specifically for managing all aspects of long-term care facilities.

In addition to getting a single, consistent solution across the entire organization, Specialty Care quickly realized that using an ‘on-demand’ solution - with users accessing a secure, Web-based application delivered over the Internet as a ‘utility’ - would be a far more cost-effective approach than traditional software installed in house.

Commencing their selection of PointClickCare, Fern Ginsberg explains, “PointClickCare offered significantly more functionality, and the Wescom team was extremely responsive to our request for enhancements. Because it’s Web-based, it was very easy to train on and far easier to use than our previous accounting systems,” she adds.

Specialty Care saw immediate results using PointClickCare’s Accounts Receivable and Billing modules. Rather than waiting for monthly accounting information from each home to be assembled and couriered or faxed to head office for example, the management team now gets information much faster by simply logging into the system and pulling financial data for each facility right from the PointClickCare database.

“The information we’re getting is now much better; and PointClickCare’s excellent reporting features allow us to get that information in whatever way best suits our needs,” enthuses Ginsberg.

PointClickCare tackles financial challenges head-on

To address the clinical side of its operation, Specialty Care implemented the clinical modules of PointClickCare. Staff felt that it surpassed other clinical solutions in terms of ease of training, ease of use and functional richness; and with PointClickCare, Specialty Care would not have to buy, install or support expensive hardware or software of any kind. “PointClickCare offered so many functions we were really getting a complete electronic health record capability for our residents,” explains Lois Cormack about choosing PointClickCare to manage Specialty Care’s clinical activities. “We could tell it was developed by people who know the long-term care sector - everything we need is built right into the system,” she adds.

A challenge arose because Specialty Care was opening new facilities and the PointClickCare training for the new staff was actually taking place before any residents had been admitted. As a result, there was no information on residents in the database to use for training purposes in the new homes. Wescom overcame this challenge by taking a snapshot of real resident data from Specialty Care’s existing facilities and creating a separate, non-production database in PointClickCare that could be used exclusively for training. This was also useful for training in existing homes, where nursing staff felt more comfortable training on non-production data, knowing there was no chance they could inadvertently alter or destroy real resident information.

Managing change and building confidence

Creating a separate training database however was just the start of a unique program created by Specialty Care to get active involvement and build confidence among nurses and other professional staff, a group that has historically not been at the forefront of embracing and using technology.

After an initial classroom-style training session, the nursing, dietary and programs staff continued developing their skills and confidence with the new system through an ongoing mentoring program called “15 minutes of Fame”. Selected power-users or “champions” spent 15 minutes working with a different peer staff member each day on real system operations to help them get comfortable using the system and get the most out of it. This was a critical factor in the success of Specialty Care’s PointClickCare implementation, and the professional staff responded well to the program because they were more comfortable taking guidance from a peer than from a supervisor.

“We’re thrilled about having been able to progress from having no automation on the clinical side at all, to having our professional staff completely trained and making full use of PointClickCare’s clinical and quality modules in all our homes just one year later,” enthuses Cormack.