

Are you using your EHR to its full potential?

SUCCESS STORY HUMAN SERVICES



At a glance

Community

- Human Services

Organization

- The Villages of Indiana

Location

- Bloomington, Indiana

Challenges

- Reliant on paper for key workflows
- Delays to place children in foster homes
- Inefficient workflows and reporting
- Lack of internal IT resources

Solutions

- myEvolv® CareRecord™
- Netsmart IT Managed Services

Results

- More efficient workflows
- More time for direct care with families
- Quicker placement in foster homes
- Higher staff satisfaction
- Faster reporting process

The Villages of Indiana sees big gains after optimizing its EHR system

About The Villages of Indiana

The Villages of Indiana, founded in 1978, is Indiana's largest not-for-profit child and family services agency, serving more than 3,000 children and their families every day.

Since 2008, The Villages has placed more than 700 children with forever families, and 9 out of 10 children in their foster care program are placed in a single home. Additionally, over 90 percent of those children were adopted by their Villages foster family. The Villages is among the two percent of child and family services agencies that are fully accredited.

Challenges

When The Villages went through reaccreditation, the Council on Accreditation (COA) provided leadership with a summary of staff feedback. While most feedback was positive, the agency learned they needed to make better use of technology, specifically its electronic health record (EHR).

At the time, The Villages was using the EHR simply as an electronic file cabinet, not anywhere near its full potential. Leadership decided to tap Netsmart experts to help the agency use the EHR to its fullest capacity, which included adding key workflows in the system that had previously been paper workflows.

The cumbersome paper processes overlapped with EHR workflows, causing staff to spend too much time on documentation and not enough time with children and families. "Because most of our staff are out visiting families and children each day, they need to be able to document care and services directly into the EHR, rather than take notes and update the system after they get home from work," said Amy Sanderson, director of Quality Assurance and Information.

“We knew that without good use of our technology, we wouldn't be sustainable.”

Brenda Chapin
Vice President of Program Administration

Two other big challenges included completing monthly state reports promptly and expediting the agency's licensure process. Each foster care family must obtain a state license, which requires detailed information.

"The faster we receive information to get families licensed, the less time children must wait to be placed in a home," said Sanderson. "If we don't have enough approved foster homes, we have to turn away children."

Solution

The Villages took action to improve its use of the EHR, integrate billing and clinical processes, and optimize the system to boost efficiencies.

Leadership turned to Netsmart IT Managed Services to help the agency think in new ways to solve its challenges. "We knew that without good use of our technology, we wouldn't be sustainable," said Brenda Chapin, vice president of Program Administration.

“Our Netsmart advisor not only had expertise with the EHR, she also understood foster care.”

Brenda Chapin
Vice President of Program Administration

A mobile office

"We set up a technology steering committee and met regularly to focus on how our EHR could help meet business goals," said Chapin. Together, Netsmart and The Villages built out their foster care program within the EHR. Doing so meant staff would have a "mobile office" for providing care in the field, boosting efficiency, productivity and staff satisfaction.

"Our Netsmart advisor not only had expertise with the EHR, she also understood foster care," says Chapin. "With Netsmart, we gained a team of licensing, administrative, billing and technology specialists to help us improve the way we operate across the entire organization."

“The faster we receive information to get families licensed, the less time children must wait to be placed in a home.”

Amy Sanderson
Director of Quality Assurance and Information

"From a business perspective, we've seen a strong financial reward because of increased efficiencies and productivity," said Chapin. By optimizing the EHR, The Villages has been able to place children in foster homes sooner, which means they can serve more families.

"Time is a precious commodity when you work in social services," said Chapin. "Reducing documentation time and streamlining administrative tasks gives us more time to work with families."

Results

Staff got relief from administrative tasks and saved time by not having to search for records in multiple places. As a result, The Villages **reduced the number of days spent on monthly state reports by 40 percent.**

What used to take staff 10 days to complete a monthly state report now takes six days. With one source of truth inside one system, staff can eliminate confusion caused by back and forth exchange of spreadsheets and paper files.

Additionally, being able to access the EHR while in the field allows staff to complete documentation in real-time, rather than back in the office or late at night. The result? Increased job satisfaction, more time helping families and children, and more peace of mind.

"One of my team members shared that she sleeps better at night because she gets most of her work done while she is with her clients ... nothing hangs over her head at night," said Sanderson.

"We've waited so long for an EHR like this, and now it's here," is something Destiny Laster, EHR specialist, says she hears from her staff a lot.

“We feel like we’re ahead of the technology curve versus behind it,” said Chapin. “By optimizing our technology, we can spend more time serving children and families. That’s the best part – Netsmart helped make this possible.”

IT Managed Services impact:

- Streamlined clinical and financial workflows
- Reduced time to complete state reports by 40 percent
- Improved staff satisfaction with the ability to document in the field, rather than after work
- Increased speed in which children could be placed in foster homes because of a more efficient licensure process

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Vice President of Program Administration

New efficiencies reduced the number of days spent on monthly state reports by 40 percent.

Advice for others

When asked what advice to give to others experiencing similar challenges, Chapin says:

- Clean up your workflows before making changes to the system
- Get staff involved and vet their needs, so the technology meets their requirements
- Form a super user support group to continually refine and evaluate the system
- Keep communication open so you can constantly respond to user feedback

Learn more about Netsmart IT Managed Services at: <https://www.ntst.com/Solutions-We-Offer/it-management-services/>

About Netsmart IT Managed Services

Netsmart IT Managed Services helps free your staff to focus more on providing care. Keeping your EHR and IT environment running smoothly requires constant attention and the availability of skilled resources. Yet, many organizations are overwhelmed by rapidly changing technology and business demands, not to mention retaining proper IT talent. Our IT Managed Services can make your job easier, so you can focus on your core mission of helping others.