



Success Story: Bellwoods Centres for Community Living

For more than 60 years, Bellwoods has served its community with client-directed support services, transitional programs, independent living education programs, respite and accessible, affordable supportive housing. In Toronto, they aim to strip away barriers preventing adults with physical disabilities from leading the life they want.

In the past year, Bellwoods gave personalized support to 451 adults with physical disabilities. Their clients are most commonly those who have suffered a spinal cord injury, experienced a stroke, or live with cerebral palsy.

"Everything we do is centred around helping people live as independently as possible. As an organization, we always endeavor to take a holistic approach when working with our clients. We pride ourselves on continuously adapting to the needs of our clients."



**Susan Andrew, Vice President, Client Services
Bellwoods**

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Together with their clients, Bellwoods builds and implements a service plan for each of their clients. Bellwoods staff include personal support workers (PSWs), occupational therapists, nursing and social work. With this multidisciplinary team Bellwoods is able to support the broad needs of their clients.

Housing access is a key feature of Bellwoods services and as a property owner offers housing to individuals through their own residences as well as accessing housing services via arrangements with property developers in Toronto. Most of this housing is long-term, with support as minimal or as complex as necessary for each resident. Transitional housing and supports are also provided supporting clients transition from hospital back into the community.



AN EVOLVING AGENCY EMBRACES RECENT GROWTH



As with many home and community care organizations, Bellwoods is growing. In early 2018, it integrated with another organization, onboarding their staff and doubling the number of clients served.

Over the past years a number of new programs were created, with a particular emphasis on transitional services. The transitional programs at Bellwoods are aimed at addressing system gaps and patient flow in the health care system.

In Ontario, there has long been the need to alleviate the issue of alternate level of care (ALC), where patients who are not acutely ill and who no longer require intensive hospital resources are nonetheless stuck in hospitals and unable to transfer to a more appropriate environment. At Bellwoods, they see this as a critical area in need of new services to remove barriers to accessible housing and support services.



Bellwoods has grown since the launch of AlayaCare and is now offering respite services, helping individuals and their caregivers with the transition out of hospital back to home. **As the organization grows, so too does its use and needs within the AlayaCare system.**

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Affordable, accessible housing is often a primary barrier to individuals making the transition from hospital or to higher levels of independence. Supportive housing programs which meet both the housing and service needs of many individuals often at full occupancy. Bellwoods continues to seek housing opportunities to meet this key need for clients and will be opened a new housing site in November 2019 in cooperation with a property developer.

"These transitions are happening faster and faster and the key is to meet people's needs quickly. It's a more urgent response time – and we need efficient access to information in order to have more fluid operations."

THE CHALLENGE



Prior to implementing AlayaCare's software system, Bellwoods staff had to coordinate their operations through **multiple systems**. Data was pulled from many different sources, both automated and manual.

From an administrative standpoint, their biggest headaches were around scheduling and payroll. **Since they used many systems that were not integrated, there was the constant risk for duplicate data entry and other potential errors.** In fact, it was not uncommon that staff were spending one full day each week issuing and reconciling payroll.

The client journey often begins in hospital. For example, if someone sustains a spinal cord injury, they typically spend time in an acute care setting as they recover, as they prepare for the next phase of their journey a rehabilitation hospital is next where again they have around-the-clock medical care.

Upon leaving these environments and return back to the community, **independence is their goal and yet the need for support is still necessary.** In this example, Bellwoods supports begin prior to their discharge, helps to plan their care, manage services, interact with their health-care teams, re-establish them at home and in the community, and provide independent living education and support so enabling each individual to manage their own health and personal care needs.



"We needed a system that we felt was a one-stop shop, or at least one that was positioned to be so," says Andrew. "It was essential that the system we chose would reduce administrative time so that these resources could be directed to necessary client facing support and improve the quality of care we are able to provide our clients."

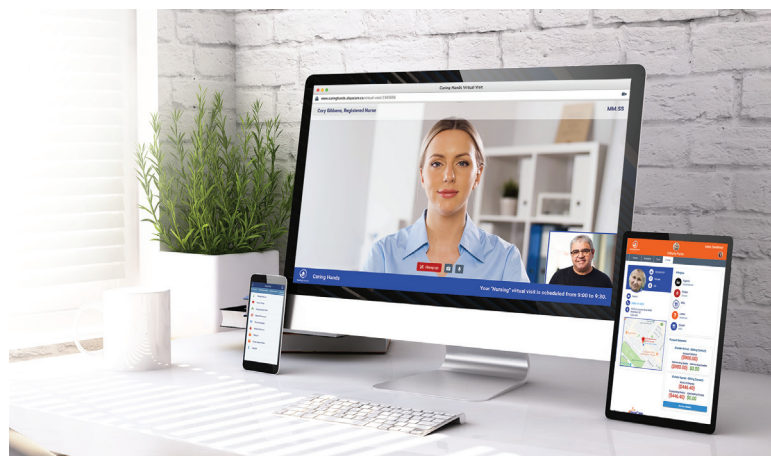
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The challenges didn't stop there; out in client homes, PSWs required a more effective "in the moment" way to communicate with one another and support their clients without them having to "repeat their stories".

Bellwoods was primed to grow, but needed a comprehensive strategy for sourcing data that would enable them to do so. They sought a versatile and scalable electronic system that would simplify how they shared information. Gaps in information were attributed to collecting information from multiple sources some electronic and some paper. The ultimate goal was to have the right information available to the right person at the right time.



Their previous setup begged the question: What did Bellwoods want to spend its resources on? Did they want to spend time and resources collecting data, or delivering the services their clients needed?

THE SOLUTION



Bellwoods went live with AlayaCare's comprehensive cloud-based software in May 2017. It didn't take long for them to start realizing the **efficiencies that flowed from the ability to quickly obtain and disseminate information through one platform.**

Better access to information meant that PSWs could be far more proactive in their care. Prior to arriving at a home, they could see what the current client needs were, how they were feeling, any alterations to the care plan, or any small details that clients felt important enough to mention to Bellwoods. Each PSW could communicate key findings and document concerns from previous visits in the software for the next person to see.

Now, when PSWs arrive at a home they are steps ahead. They know exactly where to focus, and clients no longer have to repeat what they've explained to others before. This directly impacts the quality of care and quality of life for Bellwoods clients. It also means care providers spend more time doing what they do well, and less time dealing with administrative tasks.

The experience of Bellwoods schedulers has been vastly improved, they can now coordinate care worker shifts more effectively using real-time information. It is now much easier to optimally match caregivers with clients with all the necessary information contained in a single shared database.

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When it comes to payroll, **Bellwoods has reduced the amount of schedulers' and supervisors' time from one day a week to about three hours a week – what amounts to over 60 per cent in time savings.** That time is now diverted to the service of clients in supporting the agency's care staff. Supervisors at Bellwoods now spend more time with clients, **ensuring their needs are being continuously met**, and staying on top of their individual care plans.

"We are able to use fewer resources on the back end and provide more services to more people at a higher quality," says Andrew.

"Advanced software allows us to understand how they've spent their time and where improvements can be made. By finally streamlining how we collect and pass along information, we have boosted the time spent servicing our community."

When it comes to payroll, **Bellwoods has experienced a 60% in time savings.**

BELLWOODS AND ALAYACARE: NOW EVOLVING TOGETHER



As Bellwoods grows within a changing home care landscape in Ontario, it is adapting its services to be set up for fully integrated care. After almost three years with AlayaCare, they are seeking to reconfigure their setup to respond to these market changes.

"We're working closely with AlayaCare to re-conceptualize the decisions we've made on how to configure and use the software system," Andrew says. "The emerging area of decision support and new reporting requirements are part of why we are looking at the system more broadly to tap its full potential."

A partner with its clients, AlayaCare's support staff will do their best to help any agency achieve what they want from a technology standpoint. The system and the app are customizable and configurable to any distinct needs of any one organization. To that end, Bellwoods is working with AlayaCare toward customizing accounting codes, service codes, bills and payments, as well as all of its workflows. Bellwoods also intends to implement features in AlayaCare that are new since going live and to extend its use to other areas of its operations that were not included in the initial roll-out.

"When you introduce a system, you can only see as far as you can see," Andrew says. "Our industry is evolving and what we do with it today isn't what we'll do with it tomorrow. We're thinking through these changes together with AlayaCare."

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