



# CASE STUDY

## Helping Hands Orillia: A Busy Organization Streamlines its Operations and Analytics

### THE CHALLENGE

Helping Hands Orillia is a unique non-profit agency conceived in the early 1970s to address a growing problem for seniors in the region: access to transportation. Over the years, its mandate grew to provide a wide variety of non-medical support for clients in the community, and the agency now offers a wide range of home care and community support services for seniors and adults with physical disabilities in the North Simcoe/Muskoka region – personal care, Meals on Wheels, caregiver relief, and more.

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- Terri Soukup  
Vice President

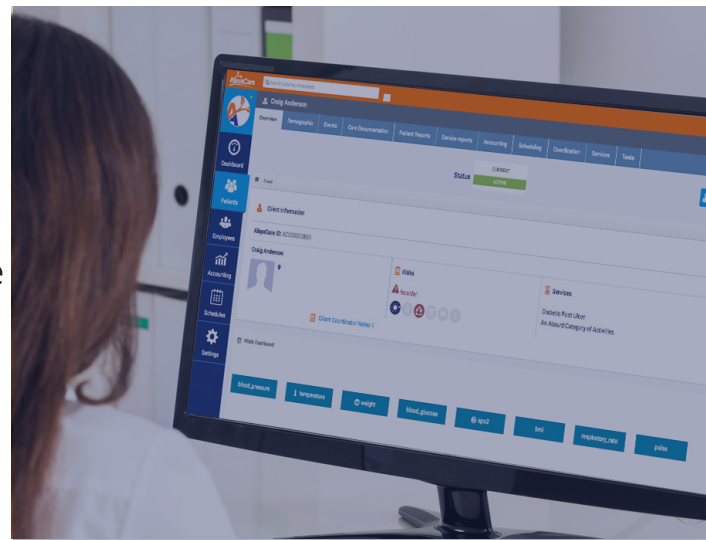
In fact, Helping Hands now operates 15 different programs, each designed to help older adults through the journey of aging and maintain their independence at home. It is one of Ontario’s only agencies to provide service of this magnitude; more than 2,000 members of communities across the region rely on the volunteer-driven Helping Hands every day.

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## HELPING HANDS

**Highlight** : After implementing AlayaCare, Helping Hands went live with AlayaCare’s Home Healthcare software solution in July 2017 and has already achieved noticeable benefits from streamlined services, readily available information, and the ability to respond to clients more efficiently and effectively.



## About Helping Hands Orillia

Within this complex non-profit is a no-barrier culture, as described by Helping Hands vice-president Terri Soukup: “Whether we have the funds or not, we don’t say no to clients,” she says. “If a client calls and needs something – even a ride to the food bank or help renewing a driver’s license – we make it happen.”

With over 100 employees and 130 volunteers tracking the care of 2,200 clients spread across a wide geographic area, the principal challenge for Helping Hands was responsiveness and efficiency. Schedules were printed on paper, which employees and volunteers had to visit the main office to collect. Once their shift was complete, employees then had to return again to report mileage. When clients would cancel, Helping Hands coordinators and schedulers would spend inordinate amounts of time calling employees to inform them and revise that day’s schedule. In addition, because schedules were historically static and difficult to change, like many organizations, clients were asked to book services well in advance and same-day bookings were discouraged. A key issue was payroll, a convoluted process taking nearly a week to perform.

These inefficiencies also meant that Helping Hands had difficulties partnering certain employees with specific clients – key to building a personal and trusting relationship. Despite their best efforts, scheduling challenges meant, in one case, that a single client had nearly 70 different staff go through their home in a span of six months.

## THE SOLUTION

Helping Hands went live with AlayaCare’s Home Healthcare software solution in July 2017 and has already achieved noticeable benefits from streamlined services, readily available information, and the ability to respond to clients more efficiently and effectively.

As a multi-service, registered charitable organization, Helping Hands serves seniors and adults with physical disabilities residing in Orillia and surrounding townships of Severn, Oro-Medonte and Ramara. Their services have evolved over the years to meet the needs of their clients and to support the health care system. However, providing in-home care and caregiver support remains at the heart of Helping Hands.

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**Improved client care and relations:** In a few short months, Helping Hands has made great strides in personalizing client care. With the team working in one system, schedulers can immediately pair caregivers and clients more thoughtfully, to help foster a consistent relationship. They have created easily viewable “care teams” for each client, across all the services each client requests. Such teams mean that clients no longer face a rotating cast of personal support workers who visit their homes. This means they don't have to repeat their story many times, and enjoy more consistent care.

*“ More personal connections between our employees and clients is very important, since many of those we serve are in somewhat vulnerable positions,” Soukup says.*

She noted the care itself is more efficient, since all client information, care plan and health status is accessible via a tablet so employees can prepare in advance and understand the individual needs of a client before they ring the doorbell.

**Easier Scheduling:** Prior to switching to AlayaCare's software solution, Helping Hands operated a decades-old information management system whose cumbersome nature meant employees had to enter a swell of data each time they entered a client's home. Schedulers were also continually tracking down care workers to follow up on client cancellations or schedule changes.

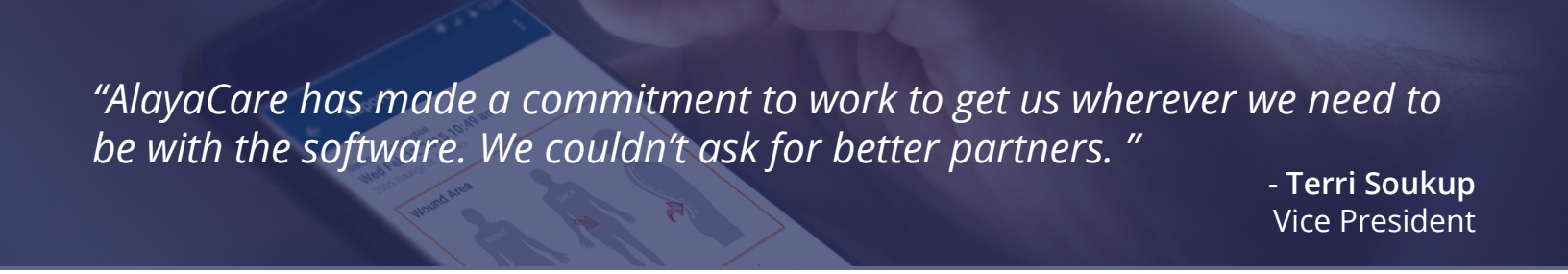
Now, all the data Helping Hands needs is immediate, secure and accessible for the workers who need to view it on their tablets. Schedules are updated and synchronized in real time, vastly improving efficiency to the point where the agency freed up half a full-time position in this area. Urgent phone calls to report cancellations are also a thing of the past.

“We've seen great efficiencies through staffing,” Soukup says. “Staff don't have to play catch-up on client schedules that are always shifting. With everything instantaneous and connected, we can respond to clients more effectively and redeploy staff members more quickly.”

Expanding Transitional Beds Program

Helping Hands runs a unique Transitional Bed program that supports clients leaving acute care settings – for example, if they've been discharged from hospital, are deemed palliative, or need respite services for a certain period of time. This program initially offered 15 beds in the Orillia area, and has recently expanded to Barrie where it will offer another 14 transitional beds.

The Transitional Bed program is a “shining light” for Helping Hands, vice-president Terri Soukup says, as it is easing pressure on local hospitals and directly helps clients in need. Helping Hands ensures that clients feel comfortable and are fully supported with personal care while they recover from an operation, feel well enough to return home, or wait for a permanent home to be prepared.



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**Payroll Problem Solved:** Soukup says one of the biggest pain points for Helping Hands was a laborious, paper-based payroll process. Coordinators could often spend up to four days approving the timesheets of 100 staff members’ mileage, expenses and schedule exceptions.

Since implementing AlayaCare’s software, timesheets are automatically recorded and the payroll process has been streamlined down to just two days in the hands of one staff member. Efficiencies gained in payroll have been a major contributor to the fact that Helping Hands has already reduced its paper consumption by 30%, cutting into the \$40,000 a year the agency had previously spent on paper each year.

**Improved Metrics and Reporting:** Helping Hands is considered an industry leader when it comes to measuring key performance indicators (KPIs). This not only helps coordinators stay on track, but supports the reporting requirements for the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). AlayaCare’s customized dashboard will help Helping Hands significantly refine its KPI reporting, allowing the agency to more proactively predict trends.

“Traditionally, agencies have been quite reactive in this field when it comes to implementing new services,” said Soukup. “We’re trying to be analytical in order to identify coming trends – for example, when we may have a surge or drop in clients. Having the data automatically exported via AlayaCare’s dashboard instead of manually entered into an excel spreadsheet has improved both the accuracy of inputting and efficiency of sharing the data.”

In fact, AlayaCare’s software has allowed Helping Hands to deliver highly accurate reports around fall prevention, in addition to key data around resident stays and cost per unit of its unique and expanding Transitional Beds program. Future plans for the software include evolving it to be able to “talk” to external stakeholders’ software, allowing Helping Hands to work even more collaboratively with its partners in community care.

**An evolution of ongoing advancements:** Overall, AlayaCare’s flexible solution means that Helping Hands will always be able to adapt to the community’s growing client, community and stakeholder needs. Additional plans include adding an ability to track drivers and vehicles in real time, based on GPS positioning, and a “geo-fencing” feature – the ability to virtually “fence” specific locations so that notifications sent to dispatch or staff are clocked automatically in those locations, when they cross the “fence”.

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