BlackBerry Customer Success Story

Hospice Provider Increases Productivity and Improves Patient Care with Help from BlackBerry Solution

Hospice of Baton Rouge is a non-profit organization providing medical care and grief counseling to people in the final stages of a terminal illness. Of the hospice's 60 staff, half are nurses, chaplains, social workers and certified nurse's assistants (CNAs) who care for patients in their homes within a 50 mile radius of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This interdisciplinary healthcare team serves approximately 800 patients and their families per year.

Industry: Life Sciences

Region: North America

Company Size:
Small Organization – 60 employees

Email Platform:
Microsoft® Exchange

Solution:
CellTrak™ by CellTrak Technologies, Inc.

THE CHALLENGE

Hospice of Baton Rouge healthcare providers drive to each patient's home to provide onsite nursing care and spiritual counseling. During a two-week period, field staff could travel as many as 2,000 miles to treat their patients. And, although mileage and expenses for the trips are reimbursed by the hospice, there was no way for administrative staff to accurately verify the distances.

"Staff would wait until the payroll due date to enter all their time and mileage," said Julia Aycock, the Onsite IT Coordinator at the Hospice for Baton Rouge. "They struggled to remember the precise time and distance and it took nearly a full day to enter two weeks' worth of information."

With 30 staff members on the road, it was challenging to keep track of everyone's location at a given time. When a patient needed urgent assistance, office staff would have to call around to find out who was closest to the address. The additional time it took to find the nearest nurse or chaplain meant a slower response time for patients and their families.

With the healthcare industry shifting towards electronic records, the hospice's paper records no longer fit within that model. Manually entering payroll, mileage and medical data into a computer after the fact was inefficient and led to errors.

THE SOLUTION

The Hospice of Baton Rouge partnered with CellTrak Technologies, Inc. (CellTrak), developers of mobile software designed to automate workflow and improve compliance in home and hospice healthcare settings. CellTrak suggested that the hospice deploy the BlackBerry® solution to help solve its challenges. The BlackBerry solution's built-in security features, combined with the mobile application, would act as a valuable and effective solution.

All 30 field staff now use the BlackBerry solution to track their time and mileage. Additionally, the CNAs use it to follow a plan of care designed by the medical director.

For example, when a new patient comes in to the hospice, all their contact, location and medical care information is entered into CellTrak's web portal. A daily schedule of appointments is uploaded to the application. When the CNAs launch the CellTrak app on their BlackBerry smartphone, it accesses the data on the web portal and they can quickly see their patient schedule for the day and the exact tasks required, such as washing hair, changing clothes or linens and making meals.

::: BlackBerry®

Hospice staff can use the BlackBerry® smartphone's GPS capabilities in combination with the app to map out their route. CellTrak calculates the shortest route to and from each location and automatically enters the distance into the mileage expense report for each employee.

Using the GPS on the smartphone, the web portal displays the real time location of field staff on a map of the area. In an emergency, staff can find the five nearest employees and send the closest to the location.

Once a field employee arrives on location, they open the appointment in the CellTrak app. As the field employee goes through their list of tasks on the BlackBerry smartphone, they can check off completed jobs and make notes to explain incomplete jobs. The information is synchronized with the web portal in near real time and is accessible offline when they are out of signal coverage.

HOSPICE OF BATON ROUGE'S BENEFITS

"After deploying our BlackBerry solution, we started to see a return on our investment right away," said Aycock. "During the first quarter, we believe we saved approximately $8,000 on mileage alone."

Because data is entered almost immediately into the system, the hospice is also saving the several hours it took the field staff to fill out the expense forms. The GPS function on the BlackBerry smartphone helps the hospice keep an accurate log of travel distances.

The ability to visualize the location of field staff also helps save time when a patient needs urgent help. Dispatch can find the closest nurse within seconds and without picking up the phone or sending a page. This feature also helps with accountability since CellTrak is designed to send a notification to a supervisor when an appointment is activated before the field worker has arrived at the destination. "In the past, a nurse might have recorded a one hour appointment on paper, when in reality, the appointment started at 2:35 p.m. and finished at 3:20 p.m.," said Aycock. "Because our BlackBerry solution records the time, date and location, we know the appointment was actually only 45 minutes."

The CellTrak app accurately tracks and reports the time and duration of each appointment, a process that used to be done inefficiently with pen and paper. "It used to be a nightmare for office staff to do payroll and create reports from those paper sheets," said Aycock. "Work that used to take our team three days, now only takes them two days with the BlackBerry solution – we're saving an entire work day, in terms of productivity."

A reliable and verifiable checklist of tasks means that the hospice can be more confident that their CNAs are compliant with the medical director's plan of care. Each patient plan is unique and the checklist ensures the right patient is getting the right care. "With the BlackBerry solution and CellTrak, we now have a complete electronic visit record that matches the care plan," said Aycock. "That means that we're providing better care for our patients and we're doing it in a secure and responsible way."

KEY BENEFITS

- Reduces mileage expenses
- Increases productivity of field and office staff
- Improves compliance with medical plan of care
- Helps with faster responses in medical emergencies

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