

Case Study



BlackBerry Smartphones Help Community Healthcare Professionals Manage Patients at the Point-of-Care

Company: Therapy Partners is a multidisciplinary healthcare company that provides occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language pathology, social work, dietetics and massage therapy to clients in southern Ontario, Canada.

Industry: Life Sciences /Healthcare

Region: Americas

Company Size: Small to Medium Enterprise
– 70 employees

Email Environment: Microsoft® Exchange

Type of Solution: Field Service, CRM and Dispatch Operations

BlackBerry Alliance Partner: Medshare™ for BlackBerry by Medshare

Challenge: Transfer the after-hours administrative work associated with patient care visits to the point-of-care in order to streamline scheduling and records-keeping, and lighten the therapists' workload.

Solution: As part of an eHealth project, give therapists BlackBerry® smartphones equipped with MedShare for BlackBerry, an application that provides immediate access to scheduling and records.

Results

- Better communication and time management
- Eliminates up to two hours/day of administrative work
- Increases therapist loyalty
- Shows commitment to the future
- Helps increase the number of patient visits



Life Sciences/Healthcare | Field Service | Business Case Study



The Challenge:

Lighten the Administrative Workload for Mobile Therapists

Therapy Partners provides a valuable service to their community in southern Ontario, Canada. Patients receive care from the agency's team of occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, speech pathologists and nutrition experts.

For the Therapy Partners' team that means a lot of commuting – to homes, long-term care facilities, schools and offices. Some therapists make the Therapy Partners' office their base, others use their home offices and many work out of their cars.

The priority is patient care, with therapists making anywhere from five to eight visits during the day. The administrative work – required for medical records, billing and scheduling – was often completed by hand, on paper, after hours, and at home. It could take an extra hour or two at the end of the day and interfered with family lives.

Once paperwork done by hand was completed, it had to be inputted into the back end records-keeping systems, duplicating the administrative process. For the therapists who used a computer to record the day's visits directly into the back end office system, a few struggled for speed with dial-up connections.

Why the BlackBerry Solution?

Therapy Partners looked at the BlackBerry solution as a way to transfer administrative work to the point-of-care. Instead of having to come back to an office, or work after hours, they saw wireless technology as a way of getting the administrative work done on-the-spot, while with patients.

"The BlackBerry smartphone is also small and portable," says Christine Reno, Business Director and Owner. "Because the wireless connection is working in the background, it has many advantages over laptops, which would mean a therapist had to find a high-speed connection to work."

The continual contact with email was also an attractive feature. Therapists used to communicate by phone with colleagues and other healthcare workers. Voicemails piled up and notes taken had to be retyped into an electronic format. With BlackBerry smartphones, the majority their communications can be handled by email.

"They love it," says Reno. "They can send an email to case workers to get more information before a patient visit instead of playing telephone tag with them. They get faster answers from our office or from other therapists on email and that helps them do their jobs better."

They are also using GPS-enabled BlackBerry smartphones, which is an important feature for people who travel to new locations several times a week. GPS mapping in this convenient form means they get to their destinations easier. "We pay mileage costs, so it's an advantage to us that GPS on their BlackBerry smartphones means they don't get lost circling around for hours," says Reno.

"The reality is money is not increasing in community-based healthcare. I'm very open to technology like the BlackBerry solution because it benefits my company's ability to make more patient visits and improve the quality of life for my therapists."

~ CHRISTINE RENO, Business Director

Partner Profile:



Company: MedShare

- Software company that provides electronic agency management and e-health record solutions to healthcare agencies
- Supplies MedShare Enterprise Server which provides mobile access to agency schedule, client information, decision support and care documentation tools
- MedShare for BlackBerry integrates with existing back-end applications, including their own MedShare HC billing and scheduling software

Featured Product: MedShare for BlackBerry

Application Type: Field Service, CRM and Dispatch Operations

"I'd say to community-based healthcare agencies that you'd better get onto MedShare now because it's the way of the future. They've been excellent partners to us throughout the pilot project and we believe for the future."

~ **Christine Reno**, Business Director

For more information, visit www.medshare.com



Alliance Member

Up-to-the Minute Scheduling and Patient Information

As part of a pilot project, Therapy Partners deployed MedShare for BlackBerry to 20 of their 60 therapists. This mobile application captures patient visit information and allows on-the-spot scheduling. A therapist can wirelessly book an appointment, confirm they've seen the patient and enter the details of the visit – all from their BlackBerry smartphones.

The solution is making the entire system more efficient. Whatever happens during a visit is now entered on the BlackBerry smartphone and it's automatically routed to the back end MedShare HC database. It eliminates up to two hours of administrative effort therapists were putting in every night. "It also takes out that middle step because it removes the need for someone to manually enter the information at our office," says Reno.

"This benefits our business because it means that therapists are able to increase the number of visits they do," she says. "Before, they'd either take the work home or they'd leave an hour at the end of the day to catch up with records keeping. Now, they do all this from wherever they're working and that means they're more efficient."

Using the MedShare for BlackBerry application, a therapist gets more background information about a case, while they're en route to the patient. Many details are stored in the application, such as case worker contact information, which can help fill in gaps in information.

Reno is also a strong advocate of being responsive to changing technology that supports her therapy team. Since many of her therapists are mothers, with home commitments, she wants to ensure that they're working day actually ends when it's supposed to.

"It means that more healthcare professionals might be attracted to work and stay in this sector," she says. "If they like to work with us, because we make it easier on them, then they get greater job satisfaction and we don't risk losing good people."

What's Next?

Reno is aware that the healthcare delivery model is changing for her industry. The move towards electronic records in hospitals is part of a broader movement. It's connecting patients and healthcare professionals with each other, and with the tools that can improve patient outcomes.

"Clients are more connected and involved with what is going on with their healthcare," Reno says. "By using this solution on the BlackBerry smartphone, we ensure we get information to the point-of-care. It's much more involving when it comes to the client, their family and the healthcare worker."

With the Pilot project completed, Therapy Partners has deployed the BlackBerry solution to their entire workforce. Reno continues to work with MedShare to include new features and optimize clinical record keeping using the BlackBerry.

She also hopes that test results will be available as part of the solution. That means that when a therapist visits a patient, they can check for any updates to blood work or X-ray results.

Results

Better Communication and Time Management: Email and GPS mapping on their BlackBerry smartphones helps therapists stay in touch with the healthcare team and get to appointments more easily.

Eliminates Up to Two Hours of Administrative Work Per Day: The MedShare for BlackBerry application means therapists enter their notes and do scheduling on location, eliminating up to two hours of after hours work and opening up the business potential to schedule more appointments per day.

Increases Therapist Loyalty: A solution that improves a therapist's quality of working experience will likely encourage them to stay in the community-based healthcare sector and with Therapy Partners.

Shows Commitment to the Future: Electronic communications and records keeping are the new wave in healthcare; Therapy Partners is a community-based organization that understands it needs to be a part of this, and has more plans for the future.

Helps Increase the Number of Patient Visits: Therapists are able to manage more visits to patients to increase the overall quality of their case

For more information on BlackBerry solutions, visit www.blackberry.com/go/success

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