



iChannel delivers Georgia Community Support & Solutions a "Smart" Document Management System

Industry	Non-Profit Service Organization
Issue	Document Management
Solution	iChannel Document Management
Result	Established a custom system which was easily integrated with existing software, resulting in increased employee efficiency, a quicker billing cycle and increased regulation compliance.



Georgia Community Support and Solutions (GCSS)

GCSS was founded in 1999 to provide community-based services and supports to people with disabilities and their families. They are headquartered in Atlanta, GA.

The Need:

GCSS spent over a year studying their document management needs, looking at various technologies and software packages, and most importantly, creating a detailed analysis of their current workflows and processes. They developed two major goals, said Paul James; Director of IT.

The first goal was to have a paperless workflow for their back-office. Like most organizations in a health-care related industry, they collect a lot of paper for each person served. In fact, they had a fully staffed "Records Department" whose duties were gathering, auditing, and adding paperwork to binders. In addition, they removed old paperwork from the binders to send off-site for archival storage. The problems that arose from this process included people taking the binders out of the office, removing sections, getting the sections out of order, and keeping the records current.

The second goal was to continue using paper in their front-end process, but to make the paper "smart" meaning they would actually use paper as a data-input device. Initially, they tried going the high-tech route of giving staff member's laptops and wireless cards with access to a web-based system for recording the services delivered. They soon learned the high cost of hardware/software acquisition inherent in this model. The high costs of monthly cellular data plans, IT support, and staff training turned out to be unsustainable. The final straw was learning most staff members were using the paper to record their services, then returning to their home or office to enter their data into the system. They were having trouble with data connections, the time needed to start the computer and system, and finally the awkwardness of trying to deliver sometimes physically demanding health-related services and use a computer system at the same time.

The Solution:

Conarc was able to help GCSS design a set of "smart forms" that are filled out in the field, then faxed/scanned/etc. to a back-end system that Conarc also helped to implement. This system extracts data off the forms, applies business rules, adds the data to their existing business databases, and automatically routes the documents to the proper electronic queues within iChannel. Thus, GCSS has a low-tech system on the front-end (where it actually makes sense to have paper), and has a very high-tech back-end system capable of pulling data from the paper, applying business logic to it, and automatically routing both the data and the form images to our coordinators, managers, directors, QA staff, and yes, even our regulatory auditors.

"Since you can't "back up" paper, we had a very real fear of a fire in our facility and what that would mean for our ability to do billing or pass regulatory audits....I don't even want to talk about the nightmare of conducting paper-based regulatory audits! –Paul James, Director of IT



Currently, GCSS has over 300 employees who provide all levels of support to people with a variety of needs including residential support, employment services, respite care, family support, in-home care and day programs.

To date, GCSS has provided support and service to over 10,000 Georgians.

“iChannel has been the perfect product for us because of its flexibility, ability to plug-in and become part of a larger overall system, and the ability/willingness on the part of Conarc to extend the product into new areas, to the point where the software fits into our business rather than our business needing to change to fit the software.” Paul James

The Implementation:

Defining the types/categories of documents handled up front, made it fairly easy to get iChannel customized to "speak the GCSS language" when working with document flow. Conarc was also able to link the iChannel database to our existing databases so there is no duplication of effort and iChannel always has access to all of our "customers", their information and of course, all of their associated documents.

After the initial setup and data hooks were done, the Conarc staff came to our offices to conduct an interactive training of our staff in the use of iChannel. For the most part, we found all the screens to be easy to understand without much training.

Since we had a room full of existing records, our next task was scanning all of them into the system to serve as the base/starting point for our document management system. "We already have almost 30,000 documents scanned, properly categorized, and attached to the proper people," said James. "We knew this would not be an overnight job for us, so we setup a room in our office as the "back scan" room, complete with a few laptops and a few table-top scanners (that we just bought at the local Office Depot). We then trained a few staff members on the particulars of how to categorize documents, recognize specific information (like expiration dates), and how to "attach" those documents to the right "customer" in our system. With only a few hours of training, these folks were off to the races!"

The Benefits:

James states, "We have not yet made it through our first "smart-paperless" year, but we have already experienced many benefits."

Staff no longer has to come into the office and sit in the "Records Room" to review paperwork; they can do it from their desk, remote locations, or even from home using a VPN.

A state requirement to leave all "paper" at the physical sites for 60 days, meant billing for work performed took approximately 90 days. Now that is accomplished in about 2 days. Since they are heavily regulated and regularly audited, any mistakes such as missing paperwork or improperly documented care, would result in paying back any monies GCSS was paid for those services. "Let's just say that figure will be reduced significantly this coming year," added James.

"The staff went through an initial period of not wanting to change, it's just human nature. But, when we show them how they are able to instantly see any document and show them how our smart the back-end systems are at applying business rules for them and making sure that all staff forms are completed correctly and the data extracted, their eyes light up!"