



“The big benefit with PointClickCare is that it gets rid of the potential for errors and enables all parts of our business to operate with the same set of data. We now have much better data than we did before.”

Craig Ater
 Senior VP, Finance, Heritage Enterprises



Heritage Chooses PointClickCare Solution to Solve Enterprise-Wide Data Access & Integration Problems

CHALLENGE

Heritage Enterprises needed to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the billing process for its 34 long-term care facilities, while solving a growing legacy system maintenance and support problem.

SOLUTION

With PointClickCare, Heritage was able to replace a number of old financial and clinical systems with a single, integrated and fully hosted, Web-based application that gives all users real-time access to the same set of enterprise data.

RESULTS

In addition to eliminating the maintenance and support burden associated with locally installed software, PointClickCare provides improved efficiency for internal processes and better integration with external systems, and eliminates many labor-intensive and error-prone manual data-entry tasks.

HELP & HOPE FOR SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Ever since Heritage Manor opened in 1963 as the first full-service nursing home in Bloomington, Illinois, Heritage Enterprises has established a long tradition of providing quality nursing home care in central and northern Illinois.

Through the 34 facilities that Heritage now owns or manages, a team of more than 3,200 employees is dedicated to providing residents the very best in residential and healthcare services, including skilled and intermediate nursing care, sheltered care, respite care, therapy and institutional pharmacy, supportive living facilities, licensed assisted living and independent living.

MULTIPLE SYSTEMS PRODUCED MULTIPLE HEADACHES

In the early '90s, Heritage implemented a number of electronic systems to bring automation and improved efficiency to key business processes such as accounting, billing and care delivery. Over time, and as the size and complexity of its business grew, however, Heritage began to have significant problems with its software application environment.

The use of different systems for their clinical activity and MDS reporting, accounting and billing, was especially problematic. Since each system involved its own unique database, the structure of data being used by the facilities was different from that being used at head office, creating inconsistencies and uncertainty. When it came to census data, for example – how many residents are in a particular facility on any given day – head office was coming up with different data than the facilities.

“We were always having to go back and forth between the data at head office and the facilities’ data in order to reconcile the differences,” explains Craig Ater, Senior VP, Finance, Heritage Enterprises. “This often left us wondering who really had the right information.”

These different systems also presented some significant integration problems. Resident and MDS data from the clinical system, for example, had to be manually re-keyed into the billing system – a time-consuming and error-prone task. Heritage was experiencing external system integration problems as well. For example, there was no effective way to electronically upload treatment data into Heritage’s clinical system from the third-party firm that provides therapy to Heritage residents, so this data, too, had to be manually re-entered.



"When we combined all this with some usability problems our users were having and our need to maintain and implement software upgrades for all these different systems, we were definitely ready to explore the market to see what other type of solution was out there and how it might benefit our company," says Ater. "We simply needed to find a better mouse trap."

POINTCLICKCARE WINS ON USABILITY

With the assistance of a consultant who helped them understand the strengths and weaknesses of their existing systems, Heritage defined a set of requirements based on a single new system that integrated clinical and billing functionality.

"One of our mandatory requirements was for a hosted, Internet-based solution," says Ater. "We never even entertained hosting our own solution again after all the maintenance and support problems we had with our previous systems," he explains.

After a number of prospective vendors and products were reviewed, PointClickCare (PCC) was chosen as the solution best suited to Heritage's needs by a selection committee consisting of Heritage's VP Nursing, Nurse Field Consultants, Billers, Administrators, MDS Coordinators and the Help Desk person responsible for training and for supporting their existing software.

"We felt that it really had a smooth look and feel about it," says Ater, explaining the committee's choice of PointClickCare. "It's well planned out for the work we have to do – the screens are logically laid out and all linked up, it all made sense, and it was easy for users to find the places in the MDS they wanted to go. The competitive products were just too complicated," he adds.

As a test, one of Heritage's field nurses tried creating a Care Plan using PCC with no training and just by following the screens that PCC presented. Upon successfully accomplishing her goal, she was heard to say that, "If I can do this with no training, just think how good we'll be when we actually know what we're doing!"

LEGACY SYSTEM CRASH PUTS PCC TEAM TO THE TEST

After a successful one-month pilot deployment of PCC at a single location, based on using PCC in parallel with their legacy system, the combined Heritage and PCC team proceeded to implement the new system at the remaining facilities, targeting completion of all 34 locations in just one year.

"We liked their desire to really understand our processes so they could take control of the system setup and configuration," says Ater about how the PCC team operated. "It was not us telling them what to do, but rather them telling us how best to set things up, and we were very receptive to that approach."

After only a few locations were up and running with PCC, disaster struck. One of Heritage's legacy systems crashed, leaving Heritage to scramble to convert 11 sites to PCC in just one month. A lot of data had to be mapped from Heritage's old system into PCC, a task that Heritage had been doing largely manually for the first few sites they converted; however, they knew they would not be able to do this for 11 sites in such a short period.

"Our saving grace was that the PCC team found a way to map all our old data over to PCC electronically," claims Ater, adding that, "This is where the huge effort we spent in the initial setup phase paid off, since a lot of the configuring and troubleshooting had already been done."

BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

- Financial and Clinical functionality fully integrated
- Hosted Web Application eliminates infrastructure support requirement
- Single database for the entire enterprise fosters data consistency, accuracy
- Better integration with external systems reduces effort and errors
- New levels of business process efficiency and automation

The switch-over to PCC went smoothly at the remaining facilities, and in the end, the total implementation expense came in at only 50% of what had been initially estimated.

PCC DELIVERS DATA CONSISTENCY, ACCURACY

PointClickCare has brought a new level of efficiency to Heritage's billing process, enabling them to operate with two fewer people than before. Previously, for example, the UB92 data required for Medicare was generated in one system and then had to be manually re-keyed into another system to produce the actual bill for submission. With PCC, however, the UB92 is automatically created and sent electronically to the Medicare fiscal intermediary.

In addition to integrating billing and clinical functionality into a single system, PointClickCare has also solved the problem Heritage had integrating with their therapy supplier. Now, resident therapy data can be electronically uploaded from the therapy firm's system directly into PCC.

"PointClickCare has eliminated virtually all duplicate re-keying of data from various sources," claims Ater. "This eliminates manual, error-prone tasks that aren't adding a lot of value to our business."

Nursing With PCC's single-system, single-database approach, all the different groups – at head office or at any of the facilities – can now access the same data at the same time, in real time, thus insuring consistency and enhancing management confidence in the validity of the data.

From a technical perspective, the hosted PCC solution has enabled Heritage to eliminate all the infrastructure baby-sitting, maintenance, backups and upgrades previously required to support their in-house systems.

"By taking care of all of this for us, PCC takes a lot of day-to-day issues off our plate; and their help line has been extremely responsive whenever we've called," says Ater. "Throughout this whole project, the PCC team has acted more like a partner than a supplier – it's been a 'breath of fresh air,'" he concludes.

