

## Case Study

# Procura Mobile and Guysborough County Home Support Agency

## Overview

Within a home care agency, the relationship between the field staff and the back office administrators is symbiotic. While they are in the community, Home Support Workers (HSWs) want to feel that they are safe as they enter unpredictable situations and navigate potentially unknown regions. The back office administrators are concerned about the safety of HSWs, but they also need to trust that those who are in the field are accountable and accurate with each and every visit. This relationship is important, not just for the well being of the HSW, but also for the fiscal health of the Agency overall.

Guysborough County Home Support Agency (GCHSA) faced the challenges that are typically associated with this relationship. They were also confronted with the challenge of the new government Working Alone regulation, which required that certain safety levels were being met for their field staff. Concerns over HSWs became paramount when they were serving a primarily rural community in Richmond County, Nova Scotia. At the same time, questions were being raised over the level of efficiency at which the Agency was performing. To address these issues, GCHSA implemented Procura Mobile, an integrated mHealth solution, in order to improve communications between the office and the working alone staff, to reduce their administrative time and, coincidentally, to curb their environmental impact.

## The Challenge

GCHSA found themselves confronted with challenges to their business on three fronts: administrative and financial efficiency, home support worker safety, and environmental impact.

GCHSA was suffering the dregs of paperwork, which was taking them away from the business of providing care. In the field, significant time was being spent on manual and administrative tasks, which included completing paper timesheets and recording mileage by hand. Similarly, this was occurring in the back office, as staff manually entered and checked timesheets for payroll and billing. Everything was completed manually – printed schedules, honor-based mileage reporting and timekeeping, as well as outbound phone calls for schedule changes. This was time consuming, error prone, environmentally unfriendly, and ultimately tedious.

Recording and transferring client data from the field into the Procura Electronic Health Record (EHR) was inefficient. While working in the field, HSWs would spend time documenting important information at the client's home. This information would

then be delivered to the agency's administrative staff who, in turn, would enter the data into their Procura EHR system. This process was time consuming because it required the HSWs to travel back to the office with the paperwork, or mail it back to the office, or even talk to office staff about it. These communication processes wasted huge amounts of paper and were prone to error.

The Working Alone legislation was being enacted all across Canada, mandating that work environments, which are potentially high risk, enact a check in system to ensure employee safety. GCHSA already had processes in place to ensure employee safety. However, knowing that it was only a matter of time before the mandate came into effect in Nova Scotia, they realized that their existing manual processes were not enough. The methodology would ultimately end up being time



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consuming and very difficult to administer. They were challenged, not only to meet the upcoming legislation, but to continue to ensure the safety of their staff in remote locations.

Visit information was difficult to obtain, both for safety reasons and for financial efficiency. This information was dependent upon the “human” system. It assumed that the information that was reported back was correct when, in actuality, rounding errors and assumptions were being made. The agency could not truly ascertain whether an HSW had arrived at the client’s home safely and on time. Billing, expenses, reimbursement and payroll were also adversely affected because visit and travel information was self reported. Furthermore, the Agency could never be sure how much time an HSW spent travelling to a client’s home nor how much time they were there. Both of these are essential to getting proper treatment and the delivery of care for the client.

### The Solution

GCHSA implemented Procura Mobile, a Mobile Health (mHealth) solution that was designed to improve employee accountability, accuracy and safety. Using BlackBerry smart phones, Procura Mobile was integrated directly into the existing GCHSA Procura EHR solution. With GCHSA, back office administrators were able to connect with HSWs, issues with administrative and financial efficiencies were resolved, and concerns over worker safety were eased.

Back office administrators would be alerted if the HSW had not started/completed their visit within the acceptable variance. The HSW record could be accessed so that they could be located using the last Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinate. GPS coordinates would be seen as “breadcrumbs” on the map so that HSWs can be traced and tracked.

The accuracy of paper timesheets and visits would no longer be in question. HSWs could now confirm arrival and departure times with the mobile application, using what is typically referred to as Electronic Visit Verification (EVV). This is

accomplished at the beginning of a visit to check in and at the end of a visit to check out. The Agency would now be able to correctly obtain information about the length of each visit and visit verification would be automated.

The GPS feature of Procura Mobile would eliminate any rounding errors for mileage because of the ability to instantly track the exact distance between points and, therefore, limit the reimbursement errors that are common with manual mileage reporting. The GPS also has the added benefit of ensuring employee accountability, as they are able to commit to the best route to/from a client’s home. Similarly, the GPS would notify the Agency if the field staff both start and end a visit outside of the pre-determined client home radius.

Client information, which includes care plan activities, client status updates and concerns, would be keyed into the device at the client’s home. Information would be placed into the client record immediately, eliminating the need for duplicate data entry and facilitating enhanced communication between staff.

Any schedule changes and updates to client information are seen in real time with Procura Mobile. In addition an HSW is able to receive and respond to offers of work, thus eliminating the need for multiple telephone exchanges.

For GCHSA, the choice to choose Procura Mobile over other vendors was an easy one. “The Agency has been using the Procura system since 2004,” states Denise Halloran, Executive Director GCHSA, “Knowing that a mobile application can provide us with efficiencies in client service delivery plus be another safety provision for our employees that work alone in rural communities, choosing the Procura Mobile solution just made sense. The relationship we’ve built with Procura over these past years makes this endeavor a good fit, we know them and we trust them; it’s a good marriage!”

### The Results

Since they implemented Procura Mobile, GCHSA has seen a number of significant and positive changes, in addition to meeting the legislated Working Alone regulations.

The quality of the information from the field has increased. Client information is entered directly into, and can be changed from, the mobile device. These updates are realized at the Agency in real time. Similarly, any scheduling change can be completed in real time. Essentially, these efficiencies eliminated an enormous amount of time spent entering data into the Procura system. It also decreased the amount of paper that was needed to support the old, manual processes for visit data. Similarly, the data that was recorded about travel and visits increased accuracy, and HSWs took on more accountability because of the mobile device.

Less paper also led to an unexpected benefit, which included the elimination of chatter. Typically, staff would need to come into the office to pick up schedules. This would usually mean that field staff would spend a few minutes every morning

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talking and socializing needlessly with back office administrators. This took both back office and field staff away from their client care tasks. By eliminating the need to come into the office for schedules, there is now more time in their day to spend giving care.

In the field, there is evidence of an increased focus and dedication to client care. The Agency was able to increase its direct service hours by 2.53%, the number of visits made annually by 10.37% and its kilometers paid by 10.76%. They also increased travel time by 13.98%. While this may seem to counter cost savings, GCHSA states, "We travel more because we can help more." The statement is reinforced by the fact that, after it implemented Procura Mobile, the Agency was able to conduct 3,179 more visits in the year and to provide 916.33 more service hours.

Back in the office, the productivity of administrative staff increased because they had 34% less paperwork and they spent less time matching visit paperwork against scheduled visits in the Procura scheduling and time-and-attendance application. The time spent verifying payroll was cut in half, from two days to one. Furthermore, after Procura Mobile was implemented, postage that used to take the efforts of 47 employees, was reduced to between five and seven employees.

The unexpected benefit of implementing Procura Mobile was that GCHSA also saved 3.5 trees, or 59 reams of paper, annually. This not only helped them to reduce paper costs, but also to reduce their environmental impact. Also unanticipated was the effect that the mobile device had on work life balance. By being more accurate and by completing their documentation in the field, GCHSA staff no longer had to sit in their car, or at home, filling out paperwork at the end of the day. This freed up their personal time, which benefitted both them, and their families and friends.

Ultimately, there was a decrease in operational costs, with an increase in productivity and revenue. For internal efficiencies, the Agency now has accurate accounts of client visits, they have reduced the number of calls that staff made to the scheduler regarding schedule changes, and HSWs can better manage their entire day. Even better, the GCHSA HSWs say that they cannot imagine how they accomplished their job without Procura Mobile and that going back to paper is no longer an option.

### Partners, not Vendors

Yes, the world has changed and Post-Acute Care will lead this decade of innovation. It is a sign of a new age, which will breed new systems. It is a time for which Partners are required in order to achieve business goals.

You need a solution offering you the Core Foundation elements of a Mission Critical system, but you need a Partner committed to achieving the goal. Not all systems are built the same, but certainly, if they were, the most significant risk is in the ability to find a Partner that understands you, is committed to your market and is willing to work in aligning mutual interests.

### About Procura

Procura provides the tools to streamline every level of an organization from the clinician at the Point of Care to the Executive Director and higher. Our proven workflow processes, business intelligence, and key data collection tools in both the office and the field provide efficiencies and assurances to drive an organization towards stability and growth.

Procura is the software vendor of choice for home, community and aged care organizations across North America and Australia. Over 10,000 users at more than 1,400 customer sites use Procura to manage over 160,000 employees. Our customers range from small start-ups all the way through to multi-site and franchise organizations.

To learn more about Procura, please call 1.888.428.6614 or visit [www.goprocura.com](http://www.goprocura.com).