

WALKER CASE STUDY - AGENCY EXPANSION, EFFICIENCY, FEE-FOR-SERVICE REPORTING

Headquarters: Needham, MA

of facilities: 2

Clients served annually: 700

Services: Mental Health Services, State-of-the-Art Special Education, Expert Professional Training and Consultation, Child Welfare Advocacy.

In 2009, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services began implementing The Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI) – a program designed to expand Massachusetts state services to provide integrated, comprehensive community-based care for children and families. These programs encourage agencies to provide more child services in the home or on an outpatient basis rather than placing children elsewhere for residential treatment.

Walker saw this as an opportunity to diversify and expand their operations.

While Walker has since discontinued their participation in CBHI for business reasons, this Case Study will examine how Evolv-CS, Defran's enterprise EHR and financial management system, enabled Walker to meet complex reporting requirements, expand into new lines of service, and improve overall agency efficiency, and continues to do so today.

CLIENT PROFILE

Walker is a network of facilities and professionals that provide world-class mental health services, state-of-the-art special education, expert professional training and consultation, and child welfare advocacy.

Additionally, Walker co-manages the Brighton-Allston Mental Health Association behavioral health clinic with its partner agencies, the Italian Home for Children and Family & Community Services (FCS). The clinic, staffed by employees of all three agencies, provides child and family assessments, school and community-based programs and outpatient behavioral counseling in addition to many other services valued by its community.

CHALLENGE

Eligibility for CBHI funding requires the use of data and evidence-based practices with its supported programs. To receive CBHI funding, agencies are required by the state to use a fee-for-service billing model rather than per diem or attendance-based billing methods. However, Walker's legacy software system only supported these older billing models for the majority of its services.

"We already knew that our industry was transitioning to a fee-for-service model," said Scott Preston, Director of Program Improvement at Walker, "This initiative provided us with a great opportunity to diversify our agency's services and improve our bottom line. We just didn't have the staff or monetary resources to make it happen."

At the time, Walker retained one administrative employee dedicated to re-entering progress notes as filed reports to facilitate Medicaid payments – essentially duplicate data entry. However, in order to manage the data entry needs of the fee-for-service billing structure required by CBHI, Walker would have needed to hire and train multiple administrative staff.

Problem:

Lack of evidence-based practices
Duplicate data entry

Solution:

Fee-for-service billing support
Centralized, integrated clinical & financial database

Results:

- Increased annual revenue
- Improved agency efficiency

WALKER

The amount of manual work required to link each individual service with one of the five distinct Medicaid agencies Walker works with would have been overwhelming, even with additional staff resources.

Additionally, Walker's existing processes did not require staff to document how much time they spent performing specific service activities. This meant that managers could not identify which employees were submitting too many or not enough billable hours for a given case.

Without a significant paradigm shift, the administrative cost of this transition outweighed its long-term benefits. Walker needed a solution that could improve efficiency while keeping staff levels steady, and it needed to expand into new lines of service without exponentially increasing the manual work it required to function.

THE SOLUTION

Since the agencies are closely affiliated and share some of the same patients at the behavioral health clinic, Walker, Italian Home and FCS chose to implement Evolv-CS together using a single database, and Defran was able to deliver a customized solution that automatically links services to the correct agency based on the employee providing them. Additionally, this shared database centralizes the processing of all fee-for-service billing through the clinic instead of individually routing it through the agencies, providing a centralized framework for the most efficient possible billing.

Evolv-CS also automates many of the manual tasks associated with fee-for-service billing. In addition to having the capability to bill based on individual services, it automatically ties those services to the appropriate funder, integrating the clinical and financial sides of the agency and eliminating the need for duplicate data entry. This fast and easy process replaces what would have previously required several full-time billing staff.

Evolv-CS also features numerous reports and alerts that optimize Walker's intra-agency communications, including staff productivity reports and supervisor alerts when client information is missing or employees are under or over-serve their clients.

THE RESULTS

For Walker, providing CBHI services not only diversified the agency's bottom line, but resulted in a two percent increase in annual revenue while maintaining existing staff levels – a clear ROI benefit.

"Without Evolv-CS, we simply would not have been able to move into the CBHI space," said Scott, "Additionally, we no longer need to spend our administrative resources manually linking services with funders. Instead we can focus on improving agency operations. The software not only improves our efficiency – it's made expanding into new lines of service cost-effective."

Supervisors can now ensure that staff are entering all relevant client data and administering the correct amount of service hours. Employees can now be held accountable for their mistakes as well, enabling supervisors to provide additional training which improves the overall quality of client documentation.

These benefits, along with the automation of manual data entry tasks, improve Walker's overall efficiency and free up its resources so it can grow, modernize and adapt to industry trends. This ensures Walker can serve its community and continually improve upon its operations for years to come.