Case Study:
From Paper to Productivity: How Actors Fund Home Transformed Care with myUnity

Actors Fund Home

Netsmart

CATEGORIES

◆ Clinical decision support systems, including those aimed at reducing inappropriate hospital admission and acute care transfers
◆ Interoperability and health information exchange
◆ Analytic tools

Organization Name:
Actors Fund Home

Main Contributor:
Jordan Strohl, executive director

Organization Type:
Assisted living facilities, short-stay rehab, skilled nursing facilities, memory care

Organization Description:
Actors Fund Home is a nonprofit senior care facility in Englewood, NJ, providing skilled nursing, assisted living, memory care, and short-stay rehabilitation services. With over 140 years of legacy, it serves individuals from all roles in the entertainment industry, from performers to backstage staff.

Project Description

Actors Fund Home, a nonprofit senior care facility, recognized the need to modernize its operations and enhance care delivery by addressing inefficiencies by replacing an outdated electronic health record (EHR) system. When the previous vendor was acquired, leadership identified this as an opportunity to address long-standing inefficiencies, particularly in admissions, care transitions, and manual workflows. After evaluating multiple vendors, the leaders selected Netsmart myUnity® due to its user-friendly workflows, scalability and seamless integration across care settings.

Implementation Approach

The transition to myUnity was strategically planned and executed to ensure a smooth and effective implementation. By adopting a collaborative and structured approach, the organization leveraged the expertise of the Netsmart implementation team to align the new system with operational goals and staff workflows.

Pre-Implementation Preparation
The foundation for success was established during the preparation phase. This included:
- **Stakeholder Engagement**: Key staff members, including nurses, CNAs, administrators, and IT teams, were actively involved in defining workflows and ensuring the system would meet the organization's unique needs.
- **Workflow Customization**: Netsmart worked closely with Actors Fund Home to adapt myUnity to the home's clinical and administrative workflows based on best practices.
- **Data Migration**: Careful planning ensured accurate and efficient migration of resident data from the legacy system into myUnity to ensure continuity of care.

Training and Go-Live Strategy
Training was integral to the implementation's success. Hands-on, in-person sessions empowered staff to confidently transition to the new system. The training environment mirrored the live system, ensuring familiarity and reducing the learning curve. By the time myUnity went live on September 1, 2024, staff were well-prepared to use the platform effectively.

Recognizing the potential for disruption, the implementation was designed to minimize impact on day-to-day operations. Clear communication, staff involvement, and a focus on building system confidence were critical to achieving a seamless transition.

For more information contact:
Scott Code, VP CAST
scode@LeadingAge.org
(202) 508-9466
LeadingAge.org/CAST

Collaboration and Support
Throughout the process, Actors Fund Home benefited from the dedicated Netsmart support team. As highlighted by Jordan Strohl, the collaborative effort ensured the project's success:

"The team that was assigned to us by Netsmart was phenomenal. They were structured, organized, and helped us every step of the way." – Jordan Strohl, executive director, Actors Fund Home.

Actors Fund Home successfully transitioned to myUnity with minimal disruption, achieving enhanced workflows, improved care delivery, and a system aligned with its operational needs. This implementation stands as a testament to the impact of collaboration and dedication to excellence.

"I had high expectations—and myUnity surpassed them. We expected chaos, but there wasn't a single major care-related issue. The Netsmart team was a true partner from day one." – Jordan Strohl, executive director, Actors Fund Home.

Outcomes

The implementation of myUnity resulted in significant efficiency gains, improved staff satisfaction, and enhanced patient care quality.

Key Metrics
- Reduction in paper chart reliance within five weeks:
  - "By [go-live], nothing goes into paper charts anymore: We upload everything directly into myUnity. We're already down to about 10% paper reliance in just five weeks." – Maria Box, director of nursing, Actors Fund Home.
- Decreased admissions time:
  - "With the old system, admission could take three hours. Now, with myUnity workflows, the process is seamless and significantly faster." – Maria Box, director of nursing, Actors Fund Home.
- Transition-related data re-entry fully eliminated, improving accuracy and care delivery speed:
  - "In five weeks, admissions have become smoother— no more weekend stress from manual entries or blocked admissions." – Jordan Strohl, executive director, Actors Fund Home.

Operational and Clinical Efficiency
- Simplified Workflows: Actors Fund Home experienced significant time savings, particularly with admissions processes, which transitioned from a three-hour task to a streamlined workflow completed by nursing staff.

- Reduced Paper Use: Digitized documentation led to a 90% reduction in paper charts within five weeks, putting the organization on track to be fully paperless by early 2025.

Improved Transitions of Care
- Seamless Data Sharing: With myUnity, staff no longer needed to manually re-enter resident information during care transitions, eliminating errors and reducing delays.
- Enhanced Weekend Operations: Nurses can now independently admit residents without supervisor involvement, ensuring continuity of care during off-hours.

Increased Staff Empowerment
- Positive Staff Engagement: The user-friendly system and hands-on training fostered a confident and engaged workforce, with agency nurses opting for full-time employment after witnessing the benefits of myUnity.
  - "It was an exciting moment to all of a sudden get a bunch of nurses that we've been trying to pursue for so long." – Jordan Strohl, executive director, Actors Fund Home.
- Workforce Stabilization: Actors Fund Home successfully transitioned to an all-employee nursing workforce, improving morale and consistency in care delivery.

By implementing myUnity, Actors Fund Home achieved operational excellence, elevated staff satisfaction and enhanced the quality of care, setting a strong foundation for sustained success.

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

Despite the largely successful implementation process, adopting a new software system inevitably presents challenges that require careful attention and proactive management. Based on Actors Fund Home's experience, here are some tips and strategies to consider to help avoid common challenges and pitfalls:
- Involve staff early in the decision process and make sure all team members understand the "why" behind the switch and the expected benefits.
- Choose a vendor that provides in-person, hands-on training tailored to the staff who will be using the system, helping them build confidence and ensuring they're ready to succeed with the new tools.
- Set attainable goals and include buffer periods for troubleshooting and adjustments to minimize disruptions.

- Choose a partner dedicated to delivering personalized support, fostering a collaborative relationship that not only meets your organization's current needs but also adapts to drive long-term growth and success.

Lessons Learned

"With myUnity, we have access to data and analytics we never had before. Our staff is more empowered, less stressed, and the technology is light years ahead of what we knew." – Jordan Strohl, executive director, Actors Fund Home.

The longevity of leadership and staff at the organization contributed to a level of comfort with these manual systems. Over time, these processes became ingrained as "the way things are done," even if they weren't ideal. This sense of familiarity allowed the organization to function but masked the underlying inefficiencies.

This led to "Band-Aid" solutions—temporary fixes that enabled short-term success but failed to address the broader need for automation and integration. While staff were resourceful in finding workarounds, they acknowledged that these methods could not scale to meet evolving demands.

The realization of how dependent they were on manual processes came as a revelation to the organization. It was only after transitioning to myUnity that the staff could fully appreciate how their previous methods had constrained efficiency and growth. This awareness underscored the need for change and validated their decision to adopt a more advanced solution.