



HOME CARE SUPPORT IN VANCOUVER GOES HIGH TECH

New system improves patient care while cutting costs, GHG emissions and paper use

VANCOUVER, BC (Nov. 25, 2009) - Effective December 2009, the Greater Vancouver Community Services Society (GVCSS), the non-profit society which provides more than 400,000 hours of home care support in Vancouver each year, will implement a new high tech communications system that will significantly improve patient care, worker safety and productivity while lowering costs, cutting emissions and reducing paper use. This innovation is a welcome development for a provincial health care system looking to get the most out of each health-care dollar.

GVCSS currently has 300 community health workers and nurses on the road providing a wide range of home care support to 1,500 clients in Metro Vancouver. Currently, employees travel to the head office to pick up work schedules, file hours, report vehicle mileage and deal with a variety of administrative duties.

The new system, called CellTrak, will eliminate much of their driving by linking each community health worker and nurse to the head office via a BlackBerry. Using GPS, CellTrak can track their precise mileage, provide optimal driving directions and note their location in case of emergency. With workers able to receive work schedules each morning, as well as file mileage and hours electronically, GVCSS expects its staff will drive 72,000 kilometers less next year, greatly reducing its GHG emissions.

The new system will also improve patient care by immediately providing workers with any medication alerts or updates to a patient's care plan. Community health workers will also have the ability to input any feedback, updates or information from their home visit directly into the patient's electronic file via their personal digital assistant (PDA).

Client billing and employee payroll will also be significantly streamlined by enabling community health staff to enter appointment arrival and departure times electronically into their PDA, eliminating the need, and the time required, to fill in the 150,000 time sheets and 18,000 business forms they currently file each year.

"Home care support is a key part of BC's health care system," says Ron McLeod, Executive Director, GVCSS. "By implementing an electronic system that can improve patient care while reducing administration costs and increasing productivity we'll be able to serve more clients more efficiently and demonstrate that we're one of the most cost effective components of the health care system."

"In addition, our new system will provide greater safety for our employees as we develop our WorkSafe BC working alone policy. Our employees will be able to punch in and out electronically, their locations can be tracked by GPS and, through their PDA, we can communicate with them at any time or be notified instantly if they have a problem."

Since 1971, GVCSS has provided a wide range of home care support in Metro Vancouver, allowing seniors and British Columbians with physical and mental challenges enjoy greater independence and quality of life in their own homes, while providing much needed respite to the family and friends that care for them.

- 30 -

Contact:

Greg Descantes
604-646-3564