

CASE STUDY



Skilled Nursing solution

CareAssist

Years of change and effort lead to easier, more accurate documentation for Indiana Veterans Home.

The transition from paper records to a first-generation point-of-care solution was necessary for improved care efficiency at the Indiana Veterans Home. The change was initially met with resistance by staff but once implemented, MatrixCare CareAssist was fully embraced due to the solution's expanded functionality and user-friendly interface.



Challenges

- Major culture shift when transitioning from paper to electronic health records.
- Previous point-of-care solution required two screens, multiple log ins.
- No easy way to enter vital signs into software.



Solution

- MatrixCare Skilled Nursing solution with CareAssist.



Results

- Faster, more accurate medication pass process.
- Enhanced ability to meet new CMS activity charting requirements.
- Improved auditing and reporting capabilities.

When Emily Larimer returned to her job at the Indiana Veterans Home after working at a different state agency, she had her work cut out for her. As director of communications and technology, she was responsible for the massive job of changing from paper to electronic charting for the facility, which has approximately 200 residents in four buildings.

“Many of our nurses had worked long-term at our facility, so they hadn’t had to keep up with the profession as it moved into electronic charting,” she said. “We were a little behind because everyone else had already moved to an EHR, and then it became necessary with CMS documentation requirements. You can’t not have an EHR now.”

“I had a lot of nurses who knew their profession in and out,” Larimer said. “Then I slapped a computer

Everyone can see the benefit of real-time charting. They don’t have to chase down a chart from three buildings away to scan everything in. They just open the computer and it’s right there.

Emily Larimer, Director of Communication and Technology, Indiana Veterans’ Home

in front of them and said, ‘Here you go.’ There was some hesitation and concern because the computer itself was new to them. I had to reassure a lot of people they weren’t going to break it.”

But once orders and other records were moved from paper into the EHR, Larimer said her staff was quickly convinced the transition was worth the effort. “We haven’t looked back,” she said.

Phase two: Implementing CareAssist

After the nursing staff adjusted to using an EHR, the next step was electronic point-of-care. Larimer said nurses quickly became frustrated with the first-generation solution Indiana Veterans used. “There wasn’t an easy way to enter vitals and other information. They had to access two screens at once, or flip back and forth, which meant using two different log-ins or two different laptops,” she said.

The facility made the decision to implement MatrixCare’s CareAssist. “Using CareAssist has been pretty intuitive,” Larimer said. “We use a lot of agency staff, and it is very easy to turn them loose in the software, whether they’re a nurse, or a CNA, or a QMA. It’s really cut down on training time and medication errors for us.”



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Emily Larimer, Director of Communication and Technology, Indiana Veterans’ Home

“Having the ability to have the medication pass open alongside resident tasks has been the favorite feature,” Larimer said. “It has saved a ton of time. And when you’re with a resident, being able to see what needs to be done in the next hour—for instance whether activities are scheduled—streamlines the process quite a bit.”

New CMS activity charting requirements were a major part of the decision to implement CareAssist, Larimer said. “Our recreation department was using books that had one page per resident. But if a resident moved to a different unit, who moved the page to the right book? Especially with infection control due to COVID, that was a big concern. We didn’t have to worry about that as much because of CareAssist. When the census line changes, the resident is automatically moved to the correct unit in the software system.”

Larimer said that using CareAssist has been a time-saver for nursing staff. “They can chart in real time while they’re doing an activity with the resident. We can account for more activity time and spend less time charting because they don’t have to use an extra hour at the end of the day to reconcile books. That not only saves time but also helps keep us in line with what CMS wants to see. And it keeps us compliant so we can keep all of our certifications.”

With CareAssist, medication pass is fully electronic, which increases efficiency and accuracy. “Nurses are able to do two or three different units in the time it used to take them to do one. And they can double-check and audit the books and med carts,” Larimer said. The software’s flexibility has also been helpful. “We have some staff who are allowed to pass certain kinds of meds and others who can’t, so we were able to open up the software and revise our user templates to match our needs, which has been really helpful,” she said.

And there are additional benefits. “The auditing process with an EHR is much easier than using spreadsheets or flipping through binders of notes,” Larimer said. “Now when we pull reports, we’re not having to compile that data—it’s already pulled together by MatrixCare. That has been a big tool for my administrative nurses.”

Change is less daunting with support

Larimer said that although transitioning to an EHR was a major effort, she knew she had support from MatrixCare. “Implementing EHR was a huge culture change for us. I understand why my staff

were concerned. When you’re trying to do your nursing job and then someone dumps a bunch more learning on you and you have two weeks to get it right, it’s a lot of pressure. MatrixCare’s trainers and account managers have all been great. They’ve been supportive and provided multiple enterprise trainings, and expanded trainings, and lots of resources,” she said.

And since adding CareAssist, Indiana Veterans still count on MatrixCare’s support. “With MatrixCare customer service, I’ve always had somebody answer the phone. I’ve always had someone text with me for an hour to work through a problem I was struggling with. When things need to be elevated to a different level of tech support that always happens. Communication with the company and their willingness to listen to the end user have been great benefits of this partnership. Everybody I’ve worked with from MatrixCare has been phenomenal.”



Call 866.469.3766 to learn more, or visit [matrixcare.com](https://www.matrixcare.com)

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