HOW MY AGENCY SURVIVED EVV

AN INTERVIEW WITH GREG SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE CENTERED SUPPORT SERVICES

MITC'S THERON KITHCART SAT DOWN WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE CENTERED SUPPORT SERVICES, GREG SCOTT, TO DISCUSS EVV AND HOW HIS AGENCY HANDLED THE NEED FOR A COMPLIANT SYSTEM.

THERON: Greg is the Executive Director of People Centered Support Services in Louisiana. It serves individuals in Northeastern Louisiana. Greg has been in this field of work for 34 years. Greg's agency has been using Agency Workforce Management since 2016. Louisiana was one of the first states to implement EVV after two failed attempts prior to 2016 using San Data and First Data. The state introduced a 3rd system, LaSRS, which has successfully gone live. Like many states, Louisiana adopted a data aggregator + provider choice model for EVV. Greg's agency decided to use Agency Workforce Management instead of the free state system.

Greg, many providers across the U.S. are struggling with the same dilemma you faced. Why did you decide not to use the free system provided by the state?

GREG: It started when I was at a meeting in 2012. I heard John Graham, MITC CEO, speak in Baton Rouge. John presented Agency Workforce Management to a group of providers that, at the time, was called CARSA. I was really interested in all that Agency Workforce Management provided. I sat on it for a few years. John flew down to Louisiana in 2015, and did a presentation. We had another provider or two that was involved in the meeting. I wanted to be the best provider I could possibly be. I really started this process before LaSRS even came about. I was just trying to see what I could do for the safety of the people that I served and for the staff that provide those services. That's how I got into MITC!

THERON: In Louisiana providers have the option to use the state system, called LaSRS. You understand what it does - the capabilities of it. What were some of the features and functionality that made you decide Agency Workforce Management would be a better option over the free state provided system?

GREG: Well again, I chose Agency Workforce Management before I even knew that the state was going to an EVV system. The providers thought I was crazy because of the cost involved. But the features really attracted me. We could do all our scheduling, track my mileage, use GPS to verify attendance, progress notes and documentation. We get real time alerts when people are there or not there. If staff are at a bad location, we get a red globe alert. Agency Workforce Management integrates with payroll and billing, manages our HR, tracks when licenses, certificates or background checks need renewal. We use a HIPAA compliant communication systems. I have tons and tons of reports I can look at to see where we are at with each individual. I have an 800 call in number for rural communities.

When we started to look into all this I saw so many shortcomings with what I was providing. I've been doing this a long time, I actually worked in group homes at some point, and I just knew we needed

something better that what we were doing with paper timesheets, people calling in, trying to figure out if they were really there, complaints from families. I just knew I could do something more than what we were doing. It was shortly after I decided and committed to go with MITC that LaSRS came out. Other than the GPS location, from a provider stand point LaSRS just doesn't give us all those other features. It is more designed for state use. It does have some positive benefits; I'm not going to say that it doesn't. But for us as a provider, it doesn't have the meat and potatoes that we need to be the best provider we can be.

THERON: A common complaint is the lack of documentation software in the state system. So how do staff at People Centered Support Services complete their documentation?

GREG: First, let me tell you what we used to do. Like everybody else we did paper timesheets. That's a hit or miss deal and always after the fact. After staff worked a week, staff were required to turn in/ drop off/email their paperwork by Monday morning before we did billing. We would try to monitor documentation to make sure we had it before we billed and we actually had done the work.

Agency Workforce Management provides us with electronic documentation that not only tracks the documentation, but also gives us GPS verification. You can custom make every clients' activities to their plan of care. So some people may need assistance with toileting, bathing, food preparation, going out into the community, cleaning an apartment - things like that. You can tailor it around the plan of care. For my supervisors, for example, I use staffing and scheduling, planning and paperwork, face-to-face in home, face-to-face other, telephone contacts. Every time staff change location Agency Workforce Management gives us the GPS location. So for example, if an employee enters that they are cleaning the apartment, it can show that they're at Walmart. I would call and say "hey, send me a picture, where are you?" If a staff is at their house, and this doesn't happen that often, I'm able to keep up with minute by minute electronic documentation. I can see it live.

We use a setting where staff cannot clock out until they've documented what they've been doing.

THERON: You mentioned GPS a few times. Obviously you're tracking the visits, where staff are working, at the beginning of the shift, at the end of the shift and perhaps throughout. So is Geo-Fencing supported throughout the state systems?

GREG: No it is not. We use a GPS Alert. If staff clock-in outside of, for example, a 1,000 foot parameter, we get a notification. We can call the staff and check to see if they're there or not. 9 times out of 10, it's correct. The employee states that they were running a little bit late, and they did clock in so we go in and back that time out. We are 75% to 80% green globes now which is pretty miraculous!

THERON: What sort of liability would your agency be exposed to if you weren't able to be notified in real time or receive red globes when a staff member isn't where you say they should be?

GREG: Liability wise, obviously if they are not where they're supposed to be, they're not face-to-face with an individual. That's Medicaid fraud if we bill for it and we know they're not where they are supposed to be. So we try to minimize that as much as possible. Another neat feature is creating associated physical locations with individuals. If a person we serve regularly goes to grandma's house, we consider that an associated location. If they go to a specific doctor, that's an associated location. Every time a staff or a supervisor goes with that person to that place, they are clocking-in or changing activities and we can see if they are there or not. You can put in as many as you want. I've done that here, so like I said we are pretty rural so I have the fast food facilities, the grocery store, Walmart, doctors, the movie theaters. So when they go we can see, are they actually at the movie theater? Are they actually still at the house? It's a really neat feature. We use it a lot. Again, every 5 minutes we get an alert if something is wrong. My staff check, they call. We always give the staff the benefit of the doubt. There are occasions when things happen, so we always ask questions. "We got a red globe alert, is everything ok? It shows that you're at the car dealership." I've had somebody say "Yeah I had to stop by, I was running late." But sometimes they are not at the car dealership, they're actually at the house and all you have to do is call and say send me a picture. And then we make a note of it and put it in the file.

THERON: Some states like Louisiana and Texas are asking providers about compliance. Please explain to our readers what this is and how you monitor the edit rate for your direct support professionals.

GREG: Our Agency has two methods of reporting. We do use, and have to use, LaSRS for one small program that we haven't converted to MITC yet. So I get two percentages, I get the state use program and I get an MITC or the contracting Agency percentage. So what that tells me is the number of manual edits and the number of manual inputs that our agency uses on a month to month basis. They withhold your payments for anything over 10% manual input. So if you're at 15% manual inputs, 5% of that will be withheld until you are in compliance. The problem is going to the reports to see that their numbers are accurate. I'm not knocking LaSRS by any means, but the reporting is a little bit hard to understand. They do take out things that are connectivity forms. So if someone does not have GPS or the phone doesn't work, they back those out. They back out transportation, but it's really hard to see because they don't have a report that really shows what's backed out so I'm constantly going in to make sure that the numbers are correct. It's difficult to navigate; I'll be honest with you. That's a scary thing knowing that you could possibly have your funds withheld at no fault of yours. I'm not sure what other states are doing, but that's what we're doing in Louisiana.

THERON: So while we're on the topic, what is the reporting like through the state system?

GREG: The reporting is limited. Again I'm not knocking our state system, but I will tell you that compared to Agency Workforce Management, it is very, very limited. We don't use LaSRS a lot to be honest. It doesn't give me any alerts. It doesn't do schedules. It doesn't tell me if people haven't shown up. It will tell you if a GPS is bad or good. It can tell you if you've exceeded PA's, if there are overlaps. It will tell you your utilization for the individuals. It's not designed for the provider. Agency Workforce

Management gives you tons and tons and tons of different ways to look at different things and obtain whatever any information you need to know about the employee, about the job, about groups, about billing, whether you're exceeding not exceeding, whether you are under billing.

THERON: Also the lack of payroll integration is a common complaint about many state systems. How do you handle payroll under EVV at People Centered Support Systems?

GREG: It's pretty simple. We have a module through Agency Workforce Management that we use with Quick Books. Quick Books integrates with Agency Workforce Management. Agency Workforce Management calculates everything. The bookkeeper only does a few little things. It's a real simple process. She's not going in and manually entering everything like she used to. We are currently using Quick Books but we are going to change over to MITC's Payroll. We haven't had time to convert yet, but that's where were headed.

THERON: We've heard that training support from the state is pretty cumbersome as well. Can you describe your experience working with MITC or your knowledge of the support services with the state system?

GREG: Well I guess I'll start with MITC. We had somebody come in when we first implemented MITC. A project manager flew down for two or three days. She did onsite training, implementation, kind of went over the basic stuff we needed to know. I wish we could have had her down for two weeks because you just can't think of all the questions. You don't know enough to ask things. Once she went back home, we were talking on the telephone and had WebEx Meetings about anything and everything. All of MITC staff were friendly and willing to help us anytime we needed. Whenever we had questions we just had to pick up the phone or put in a service request. If it was an emergency we were typically contacted within an hour or so. It's been great. We did a meeting every Friday, but we are to the point now that we've been doing this so long that we don't have to, but that option is there. If you want to have a meeting once a week, twice a week, whatever you need, MITC are always there to go through and look at things if things need tweaked. The thing that I found out was I'll try to do things on my own and I'll call in and MITC says "Greg you should have called in first because there is a simpler solution!"

With LaSRS, they sent us a notice stating that we were required to go down to Baton Rouge, which for us is four and half hour drive. We did a half-day group training. They try to run everybody through the state, and want you to implement it. They will try to call you back but I don't think their set up is nearly like MITC is. We don't have a weekly meeting. It was not nearly as comprehensive as what we experienced with MITC.

THERON: Is there any advice that you would like to share with other providers out there who are going to be facing this transition over the next year or so?

GREG: Absolutely, I would love to go through a few of the features that we use that we haven't had a chance to talk about that are super beneficial to me and my staff.

Here's how we use Agency Workforce Management on a day-to-day basis.

Scheduling is quick. It's easy.

The most important thing for us, after time & attendance, is the scheduling feature. We have a scheduling administrator that puts in everyone's schedule. We have a permanent schedule that we go by that we roll over week to week, and staff know when they have to work; before it was just verbal. We hoped that they show up. Now we have the staff go in and they have to confirm their shifts every week.

So we know that they know and they know that we know that they know. We implemented that so if something happens we can go to the state, we can go to the individual and say "Look we are sorry, we can't control everything but I will promise you they know their schedule, they confirmed it." That takes the sting out when you don't show up. You can't fault the staff if they don't know what they're supposed to do. Scheduling makes it easy for my supervisors and my on-call people.

We created titles. We have three types of staff:

1. People we hire just for on-call only

2. People scheduled but also want extra hours

3. People that scheduled and don't want any more hours.

"Staff are on the system all the time."

We use a filter where staff can go to an open shift if they want to pick up more hours and request to do the open shift. It's a really nice feature that helps us from always having to call and find people. Staff see it. They can request it. Staff love that feature. Staff are on the system all the time looking at what shifts they can pick up.

For example: if we are trying to fill a shift, we can choose an on-call only person, female, if I'm going to exclude males. Plus we might need someone trained in medication. Agency Workforce Management shows the top 10 people that would qualify best for that position. It makes it real simple. Very simple.

It's quick. It's easy. You don't have to know the staff. You don't have to know who works where.

Agency Workforce Management gives us reports when people no call/no show, if they're there early, if they leave early. Agency Workforce Management gives the employees the option to submit PTO requests.

We use a setting where staff can't clock in or out if they're not on the schedule. Before we had staff that did whatever they wanted to do. Now the supervisor will know when staff are supposed to be there, the client will know, the families know. Staff can't cover for each other now. If they are not there we get an alert and we call. Which usually didn't happen when you're the only staff working in a house - we didn't know if you were there on time or not. We do now. All the reporting with schedules makes it really easy. You can substitute staff in for another. It's great

We love the mileage tracking.

We like the mileage tracking. One can assign how much mileage is dedicated to an individual so you can keep up with it. We get so much reimbursement for mileage. It's real easy. The valid locations are in the system. Agency Workforce Management knows how far it is from point A to point B. If it's normally 10 miles from here to there and staff put in 18 miles, a red flag pops up. We love the mileage tracking. My supervisors use it all the time. I can assign how much mileage go to specific jobs. You can run reports by staff, by the job, by the supervisor. Whatever you want to do.

Alerts

I really like the alerts we get. Not only does Agency Workforce Management give you a GPS feature, but it gives you history. So if I have a staff that clocks-in with a red globe and you can see that they are 15 minutes from where they are supposed to be: did they open the timesheet and clock in once or did they open the clock in page and wait? No longer can they tell you "well I only did this once", there's a history that doesn't lie. So its very eye opening and when you have those red globes two or three days in a row and you bring the staff in here and show them the history feature, it's all green globes after that. It's really neat.

We talked about how every activity gives us the location. This is as close to knowing where your staff are, when they are supposed to be, as we can possibly get. What's really neat about those activities is that you can classify each one as billable or non-billable trackable activity. We do a lot of things as supervisors that we don't bill for but we track it. So for example, if we're providing 3 hours a day of services to an individual, I can see: how many times we are going back and forth to this persons house, how much time we spend on the phone, how many times we have staff that are calling that we're having to retrain, how many times are we doing new employee paperwork. You may see that you're spending 50% of your time on this 3 hour job. Is this really beneficial for us to keep this individual? Maybe it's time to let somebody else serve the person. It's a real beneficial service.

Pay and Billing Differentials

You can create shift differentials. So if the plan of care says from 10 at night until 6 in the morning you have a night rate, you can put it in at that time. If the next person is from 12 – 6, you put it in there so it automatically knows how much you're supposed to bill for. It calculates everything on its own.

We pay higher rates for high-need people. Agency Workforce Management automatically calculates that. When somebody is CNA, they get a higher rate for this high needs person and it automatically calculates what we're supposed to pay that person. You no longer have to go in and figure out so for this person; now it automatically knows it.

You don't have to clock in and out with the activities for progress notes - you just change from one job pin to another or one activity to another, without clocking in and out. It takes virtually seconds to do this. So if I'm cooking breakfast, I click on that when I'm done when I do my progress notes. I did bacon, eggs, juice, and then I go to the next activity. We're going to go to the laundry mat. With just a click of a button and you're changing from one thing to another.

Real Time

The supervisors can check documentation in real-time. They can look from minute to minute.."ok what is this person doing today". We don't have to wait a week later to see what was going on. We're not at the staff's mercy if they are turning in progress notes or not. We use a feature that won't allow staff to clock out if they haven't completed progress notes. Before we would have to chase down staff for progress notes before you could bill. We progressed from that and we wouldn't bill and wouldn't pay them until we got progress notes. But now you can sit there and tell the staff you have to fill out a progress note while you're at work or you can't clock out. This is a great feature!

No Show Alerts

No Show Alerts tell us if somebody doesn't show up. We set those parameters, whether its 15 minute window or 30 minute, whatever we want. We do not set it in stone but we try as much as possible. If you're scheduled to come in at 9, we try to do a 30 minute window give or take.

HR

Agency Workforce Management tells us when training is going to expire, when a license is going to expire, when background checks are going to expire. One can set up an unlimited amount of notifications in HR.

The violations of polices we are able to track and keep up with is really easy. For example, you can have a person that wants to be "on-call only" and they want you to just call them when you have an

open shift. Well I can track that I've called this person 6 times in the last month and they've refused the shift - we keep up with all that. After so many we take you off the on-call list. It's real easy to track. There's no more guessing. It's all very objective. All the policies you can create: whether it is staff calling in late, one can track all of that from an HR standpoint. We didn't have that capability before. We were using excel spreadsheets. We were trying to write stuff on calendars, now it is BOOM - instant.

I can see it, my HR person can see it, my scheduler can see it, we all can see it and know what's going on.

Communications

Communication is another great thing that we like. Staff can communicate back and forth. We can go back and look in real time at what's being said, important information, staff can share whatever, supervisors can see it, real time. They don't have to get a phone call, they don't have to wait until after the fact.
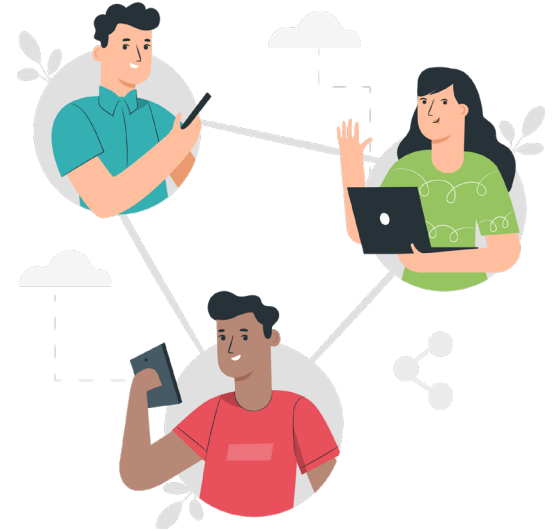
Telephone Timekeeping Backup

I like the 800 call in line. What we were doing before was staff would have to call the answering service after hours, we didn't know where they were then, they could have been at Walmart when they were saying they were at work. Now they call in using an 800 number, we know that they're there. That line is dedicated. It's either going be from that land line or that job, or that cell phone number, or an accepted number that we can use. Great feature, I love it.

Agency Workforce Management has been a blessing for my agency. One of the things that I've said is that it's a blessing and a curse all-in-one because now we know what we suspected before but the good thing is we can limit what we suspected and it makes us a much better provider.

Hands down, we are a way better provider than we were. And I know we are a way better provider than a lot of the other providers out there because we can see what we can do and what we can offer.

ABOUT AGENCY WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Designed specifically for providers serving I/DD and behavioral health communities, Agency Workforce Management supports all the needs of agencies — time & attendance, EVV, scheduling, HR, workforce analytics, payroll and billing integration, and more.

Visit www.mitcagencies.com or email info@mitcsoftware.com to learn more.

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