

Improved Data Collection, Reporting and Classroom Instruction with COMET



CASE STUDY: Data and Reporting to Inform Instruction

Upstate Cerebral Palsy provides innovative programs and services that support people and create opportunities to fulfill life choices... one person at a time, through everyday miracles.

"We thought we were getting COMET for the convenience and productivity of the staff but it's an excellent management tool as well."



Nancy Seller
Senior Vice President of Education Services
Upstate Cerebral Palsy

Executive Summary

Upstate Cerebral Palsy (Upstate CP) offers direct-care services and programs to people who are physically, developmentally or mentally challenged as well as to their families. Employing more than 1,900 staff members at 74 locations throughout central New York, Upstate CP provides care and support to more than 15,000 children and adults annually.

Special education services provided include:

- evaluation
- special education classes
- speech therapy
- physical and occupational therapies

Challenges

The New Discoveries Learning Center's Preschool Program at Upstate CP closely tracks attendance and student progress. The center compiles that data into a monthly report for each child previously using paper documents to collect the necessary data. Teachers and therapists took attendance daily on classroom registers and transferred the information along with associated notes into a form each month.

With the paper system, anyone recording information had to be at the site where the services took place to complete the documentation. Therapists often work with children at various sites and had to complete notes at every site they visited. Staff members circulated the handwritten monthly reports among themselves until all the necessary documents were complete. At end of the month, Upstate CP sent the report to the various counties responsible for student billing. The process was time consuming.

"Our funding is based on enrollment, so it behooves us to track attendance accurately. Whenever a child is in class or is seen by a therapist, we record that information."

How COMET Helped

Upstate CP installed COMET at one site in November 2010. The staff received training and quickly picked up how to use the system and the COMET team promptly resolved any issues that emerged. Since then, COMET has been rolled out to many more sites whose operations are benefiting from improved, real-time data collection and streamlined reporting.

The benefits of using COMET were quickly apparent to staff members at every level. They include:

- Creating and compiling monthly reports is less time consuming now that attendance is collected in real time instead of at the end of the month. Staff members can generate reports and collect signatures easily.
- After reviewing all the data, teachers and therapists are able to electronically sign all notes with a few simple steps.
- Program directors get real-time data by running a report whenever they want, negating the need to wait for the end of the month.
- Administrators no longer have to wait for monthly reports, track down a therapist, or pull reports for each child to evaluate attendance status, student progress or therapist productivity. They can easily download aggregate data to get an accurate, organization-wide picture.
- If a child is absent for an extended period of time, program directors can see the absence in time to address the issue before it affects the student's progress or funding.
- Upstate CP can download information from COMET into other applications in its system if necessary.

Results and Future Plans

Upstate CP is committed to evidence-based instruction, and having data immediately available is crucial. With COMET, they can meet the funding requirements of the counties it serves and the reports offer administrators, teachers, and therapists an ongoing way to gauge children's progress, and the success of New Discoveries' methods and the program itself. Upstate CP is also developing new reports for COMET that will look at funding and scheduling service resources for students.

"Having the data on hand almost as it is entered is fantastic. If the scores are not what we expect, we can quickly explore other instructional methods or materials. We're continually looking to improve and refine how we can use the information we're getting."

Questions? Call 585-673-3200

Contact Us

Personal Walk-Thru