

Microsoft®

Using CRM to Coordinate Cases
Across Social Service Agencies

 Microsoft Dynamics™

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Contents

The Challenge of Disconnected Service Delivery.	3
Case Coordination—A Solution That Puts Citizens at the Center	4
Technology Enables “e-Government”	5
Current Systems Can Hinder Progress.	6
Options for Investments in Technology	8
CRM Solutions Can Benefit Social Service Agencies	9
Microsoft Dynamics CRM Offers Unique Benefits	10
The Client-Focused Future	12

Health and social service agencies worldwide provide a wide range of services such as public health, child protection, child support, income maintenance, mental health, substance abuse, and education services. Historically both business practices and limited technology options have resulted in clients being served by multiple agencies in a disconnected fashion. Today, business drivers focusing on access, quality, and efficiency in the delivery of care, are demanding advancements in case coordination across agencies. Similarly, technology now can enable case coordination across multiple disparate systems that provide services to the same populations.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the case coordination concept and show how emerging technology can be used to drive improvements across social services organizations.

The Challenge of Disconnected Service Delivery

The business of providing social services offers a wealth of benefits to case workers and clients—from the rewards of making a difference, to comfort and hope for a better future. It also presents a number of challenges. Overburdened case workers are often frustrated by limited, un-integrated systems that prevent them from understanding and assessing clients' needs holistically. Clients are often hindered by confusing or disconnected paths to the services they need.



This scenario is all too real for social services departments. No case worker wants their clients to be confused by uncoordinated services or—worse yet—put at risk of eroded independence and possible institutionalization due to unreported needs. No agency commissioner wants their already overworked staff to be burdened with redundant paperwork and overlapping service delivery. Instead, the desire is strong to move toward environments where case coordination is possible, even fully automated.

A woman who recently completed an Agency of Elder Services assessment qualified for two programs and was assigned two different case workers. She struggles to understand and complete the separate program eligibility forms, each asking for similar information. Her case workers may notice potential risks, like unused prescription drugs or unsanitary conditions, when they're administering home health services or delivering meals in the woman's home. Because there's no single agency in charge of the woman's holistic care and no easy way to send alerts between agencies, risks may go unchecked, putting the woman at risk to lose independence or experience additional health issues. In addition, individual departments involved will have limited ability to view and report on activities and results holistically, which hinders their ability to secure funding to continue providing services so critical to the aging population.

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Case Coordination— A Solution That Puts Citizens at the Center

Case coordination among social services agencies supports the movement to citizen-centric service. In citizen-centric environments:

- Clients can more easily access services because their points of contact are better able to help them secure eligibility for services and coordinate them across multiple programs
- Case workers can more easily reach out across agencies to report unmet needs and optimize intervention strategies with greater assurance that appropriate follow-up action will be taken
- Case managers can better manage case loads and increase productivity due to a decrease in manual administrative tasks
- Commissioners and directors are assured activities and results are measured and tracked so funding can be secured

Driving incremental improvements by enabling case coordination across agencies can help department managers and commissioners:

1. **Tear down walls between agencies.** Sharing client data between applications ensures consistent service that takes a holistic view of client needs into account.
2. **Go broad, not deep.** Many clients need and are eligible for multiple programs that cross several agencies. Case workers need to easily access data that spans multiple systems to get a complete picture of appropriate action.
3. **Gain a 360-degree view of the client.** The trend today is to put citizens at the center to deliver services that better meet their varied needs. Having the ability to view data spanning multiple programs is essential.
4. **Empower case managers with the ability to customize.** A customized data model allows case workers to quickly change documents and personalize data for each client to meet their individual needs.
5. **Ensure management has a view into daily activities and overall progress.** Informed commissioners and department managers can properly evaluate program success and report on specific activities, which helps ensure necessary funds are granted.
6. **Integrate with existing applications.** The ability to tightly integrate front-end, client and case coordination applications with back-end systems creates a formalized workflow between agencies, creating timesaving efficiencies.
7. **Improve case manager effectiveness with efficient activity tracking.** Easily accessed client data helps case managers more quickly assess needs, review results of programs underway, and identify additional benefits available.
8. **Make it easy to navigate.** Case workers don't want to use a cumbersome system. An easily navigable application and contact manager enables collaboration to effectively and promptly serve citizens.
9. **Make it scalable for changing client needs.** An application should easily expand with an organization. A solution's flexibility keeps it relevant as client needs and programs change.
10. **Deliver knowledge driven health and social services from a connected knowledge base.** A system that enables case workers to search for research and program information across different databases helps resolve inquiries efficiently and accurately.

Technology Enables “e-Government”

Realizing the benefits of case coordination and streamlined service may seem out of reach for department managers faced with outdated systems, a shortage of experienced case workers, diminishing funds, and increased demand as population and eligibility for programs expands. Something has to give. Either processes become more efficient allowing case worker productivity to increase, or people receive lower quality care. It’s no wonder the need to do more with less is so urgent.

Recent advances toward the “e-government” vision prove it’s possible to leverage technology to deliver citizen-centric service, where citizens’ needs are addressed by “one-stop shopping” across multiple programs. For example, in 2006, the State of Alaska implemented a Customer Data Integration (CDI) tool from VisionWare PLC that provides a single view of a citizen through the use of a Common Client Index.¹ The system, which is being implemented across the state’s existing infrastructure, will help achieve their vision to improve service delivery, streamline business processes, maximize their IT investments, and prioritize the allocation of resources.

In 2004, London’s Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) implemented an online publication platform based on Microsoft technologies². A post-deployment business value analysis showed that the solution helps RBKC deliver yearly improvements in staff efficiency, respond more quickly to information requests and compliance audits, and minimize organizational risk on a constrained budget.

While these projects are promising, most departments continue to be hindered by siloed systems that are too expensive to upgrade or integrate, or present high risk implementations. More and more, departments are seeking innovative ways to effectively coordinate cases across agencies.

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“Today’s health and social services organizations have a strong desire to provide more seamless service to clients who have needs that span multiple programs. However, they’re challenged by legacy systems built to perform specific tasks in organizational silos. Any case coordination that happens is a result of manual action by committed case managers who are already overburdened with paperwork.”

—Steve Norton, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies

¹ “State of Alaska Select MultiVue”; press release issued August 16, 2006 by VisionWare plc

² “Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea”; customer case study published November 9, 2005 by Microsoft

All too often, case coordination efforts are achieved through the sheer tenacity of case workers who reach out across agencies on their own time; time they should be spending with clients, or rejuvenating themselves to avoid burnout.

Policy-makers, case managers and providers are responsible for designing programs and managing programs to help individuals and families to attain self-sufficiency. They need information and sophisticated tools to know what is available, to gain access to the relevant services and to ensure that their goals are being achieved. The emerging service delivery models lead to a growing need for health and human service organizations to manage information to ensure that needs and services are aligned and effectively used. There are a number of information and communication technologies available to address these challenges. These technologies will in some cases replace current legacy applications, and in other cases they will supplement them.

They include:

- Integrated case management solutions (often built on customer relationship management foundations) — to provide continuity of service across time, access and interaction channels as well as care delivery providers.
- Sophisticated rules engines—to automatically make eligibility determinations and even to develop and approve service plans through software algorithms rather than human calculation.
- Workflow tools—to ensure that the activities required to deliver services across multiple programs are properly sequenced and delivered and to gather information and generate reports on quality and performance measures.
- Knowledge management and collaboration tools—to enable teams of people in different places and at different times to work on cases using common information and common service planning and delivery guidelines.
- Computer tablets, remote access, wireless and other mobile solutions—to reduce the need for clients and case managers to go to physical offices in order to access information, to record encounter data or to deliver or receive service.
- Advanced data integration and business intelligence tools—to provide real-time data that will allow managers and caseworkers to adjust plans and discern unplanned trends.

Excerpt from "How Technology Enables Transformation of Human Service Administration," Martin Geffen, Vice President at Gartner Inc., and John Kost, Managing Vice President at Gartner Inc., December 2006 Policy & Practice—an American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) publication

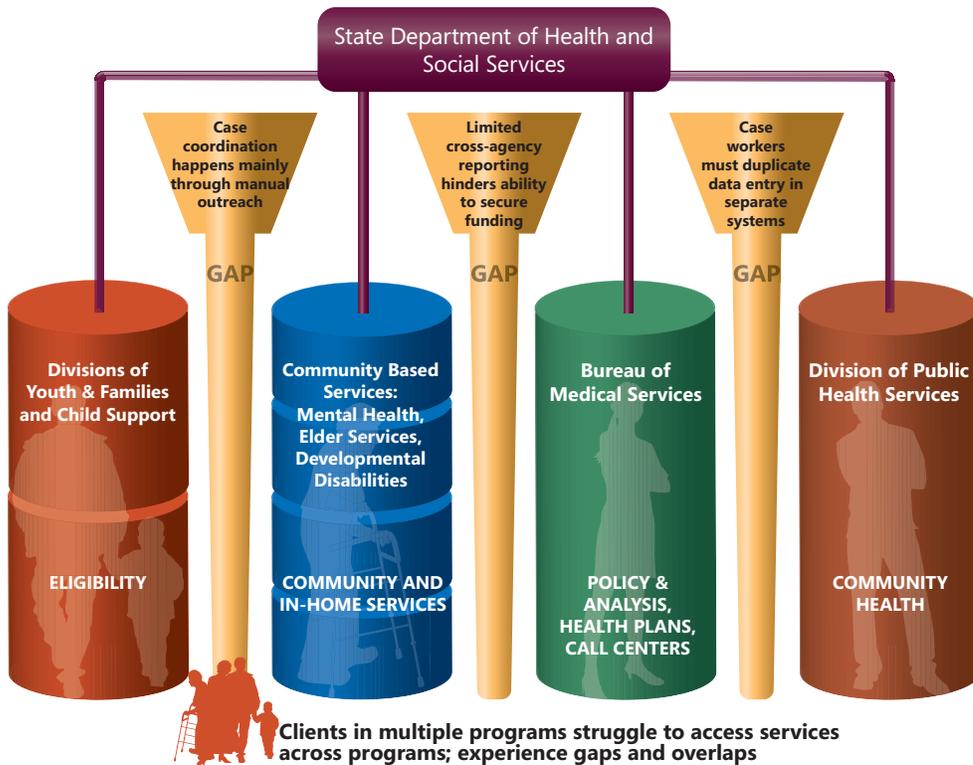
Current Systems Can Hinder Progress

All too often, case coordination efforts are achieved through the sheer tenacity of case workers who reach out across agencies on their own time; time they should be spending with clients, or rejuvenating themselves to avoid burnout. In many instances no automated systems exist, forcing staff members to use rudimentary techniques to process claims and coordinate cases. Many agencies use spreadsheets to track client data, which prevents them from completing even the most basic measurement and analysis of trends, results and client needs, or determining if the therapy and services is helping. Others require case managers to capture data and record activities on photocopied forms carried on clipboards, which provides no chance for them to identify progress, streamline services, or capture the information so it can be used elsewhere for analysis or reporting beyond that agency.

If computerized systems are in use within social services agencies, they often present additional challenges, including:

- ☑ Case workers' inability to assign access rights or to limit access to data, which can lead to a "close down the data" mentality that further hinders case coordination efforts
- ☑ Lack of holistic client and benefit information to support assessment, program eligibility, and case assignment decisions
- ☑ Clients required to provide the same information over and over, some of which—over time—will conflict; case workers required to duplicate data-entry
- ☑ Case managers overlapping services or working at cross-purposes
- ☑ Case workers spending an inordinate amount of time and effort collecting data and shuffling paperwork, which affords them less time for analysis and critical service intervention

The illustration below shows the gaps and limitations commonly found in Health and Social Services department technology environments. Each agency uses separate systems to house client data and administer program benefits. Case coordination isn't automated, and can even be hindered by current systems. Commissioners struggle to gather, analyze and effectively report on activities and results. Case managers are burdened with redundant administrative tasks. Confused and frustrated clients experience gaps and overlaps in their service.



Replacing aging existing systems (the process is sometimes called “rip and replace”) has long been perceived to be the best solution, mostly due to the lack of options.

With the emergence of software packages using Web services, driving incremental improvements has become an attractive alternative.

Options for Investments in Technology

Social services department managers and commissioners have three options when considering technology investments:

- 1) Doing nothing
- 2) Replacing existing systems
- 3) Driving incremental improvements

Given that the number of clients and their needs are increasing as fast as funds and resources are decreasing, doing nothing is a risky option. Delaying action increases complexity in finding or retaining resources experienced with outdated systems. The expense of maintaining outdated systems and the risk that upgrade paths may cease pose challenges to ongoing and effective service delivery.

Replacing aging existing systems (the process is sometimes called “rip and replace”) has long been perceived to be the best solution, mostly due to the lack of options. This strategy—pushed for by companies who develop large systems—is expensive and resource intensive. Large-scale system replacements can take two or more years. Staff members may be required to spend significant amounts of time providing input or responding to process changes during the design and development phases. During implementation, they’re often forced to operate in makeshift environments that introduce unforeseen obstacles to delivering essential services. In addition, case workers can struggle to learn a new system, which adds to their workload. During these implementations, agencies can lose the ability to accommodate changing client needs or take advantage of cost-effective technologies.

With the emergence of software packages using Web services, driving incremental improvements has become an attractive alternative. While some may choose to develop customized Web-based solutions that link client-facing services with case management, billing, and other systems, others are turning to commercial “off-the-shelf” software packages (COTS) to bridge gaps between current systems.

One of the reasons that technology can provide so much leverage in the transformation of health and human service administration is the availability of these commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products. The health and human service industry has grown so large and demanding that whole new suites of products have been developed for their needs. Given the strength of the market, agencies can count on the vendors of these products to maintain and enhance them to meet the growing need for features, functionality and interconnectedness.

Excerpt from “How Technology Enables Transformation of Human Service Administration,” Martin Geffen, Vice President at Gartner Inc., and John Kost, Managing Vice President at Gartner Inc., December 2006 Policy & Practice—an American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) publication

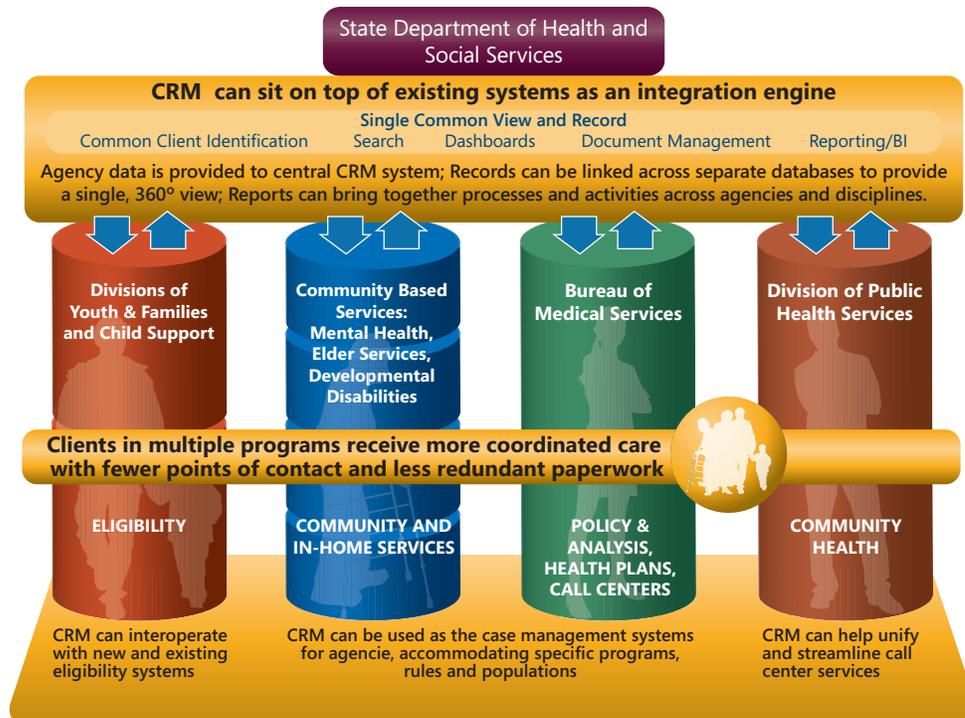
Implementing commercial software packages offers several advantages, including:

- ☑ Lower cost than replacing or upgrading existing systems
- ☑ Ability to spread expenses over time because discrete functionality can be implemented or enabled in phases
- ☑ Less burden on staff because software can be customized to map to current processes
- ☑ Reduced risk because incremental changes are easier to manage

CRM Solutions Can Benefit Social Service Agencies

Health and social services departments seeking to coordinate cases across agencies are driven by the desire to increase productivity and provide citizen-centric service to their clients. Because customer relationship management (CRM) solutions are designed to help organizations better manage relationships based on customer needs, more and more social services organizations are choosing them to help meet their service and process improvement goals.

Essentially, a customer relationship management (CRM) package can connect siloed systems by accessing separate databases to provide a common view to case workers across multiple agencies and programs.



The illustration above shows how a CRM package can connect systems and processes across multiple agencies, providing case workers with integrated data, cross-program and database search capabilities, efficient document management, and inter- and cross-agency reporting. With siloed systems connected:

Case managers can

- ask once and enter once
- efficiently view and manage data
- coordinate services across programs while continuing to use current systems and processes
- find relationships across databases to understand family situations and additional needs for services
- make holistic, knowledge-driven decisions to better serve their clients

Commissioners and department managers can

- view activities and reports using convenient dashboards
- easily measure and provide accurate reports of results, which helps secure funding
- make holistic, knowledge-driven decisions to improve the quality of service their agencies provide

Because Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions are designed to help organizations better manage relationships based on customer needs, more and more social services organizations are choosing them to help meet their service and process improvement goals.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM can help health and social services departments operate more productively by building cross-agency bridges between the different applications and databases they use to serve clients.

In addition, customer relationship management packages provide functionality that can enable social services agencies to streamline processes and move from reactive to proactive service. For example, many social services agencies provide telephone-based inquiry or follow-up service to their clients. CRM packages provide functionality that can help streamline call center services by providing centralized access to historical client or situation data and automating follow-up tasks.

This functionality can also enable proactive response to public health or safety hazards. For example, if a citizen finds a dead bird in her yard and calls in because she's concerned it might have been diseased, a CRM package can be used to record, track and follow-up on the situation in a fully coordinated environment. When the woman calls in, a case number is assigned and an alert is sent to a work crew who transfer the bird to a lab for testing. The lab workers add results of analysis to the original case log and an alert is automatically sent to the originating department. The system can also generate an automated response to the citizen who reported the potential risk. All activities and results of this case are stored in one place, which supports efficient disease tracking and trend analysis.

The practical application of CRM functionality opens many possibilities for social services agencies—from efficient follow-up on unmet needs across agencies to harm prevention, which is especially critical for case managers who encounter children in at-risk situations.

To assist with the creation of health and social services information networks that take advantage of pervasive Internet technologies and serve the broadest range of needs, Microsoft has developed a guideline for e-health software solutions called the Connected Health Framework. This framework provides health and social services organizations an architectural approach to developing information networks with common business and technical design definitions.

An important element of the Microsoft Connected Health Framework is clients being placed at the center, with dependable, economical, and connected technology services surrounding them to better meet their needs while increasing case workers' productivity. The framework is designed to enable the cost-effective use of commercially available software packages, including Microsoft Dynamics™ CRM, to begin and extend the transformation to seamlessly integrated, knowledge-driven systems.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM Offers Unique Benefits

Microsoft Dynamics CRM can help health and social services departments operate more productively by building cross-agency bridges between the different applications and databases they use to serve clients. Case workers can continue using agency systems required to support assessment and intervention functions while better coordinating cases across agencies by accessing holistic data and reports showing activity and progress. Staff members who take incoming client calls can be more efficient and responsive by accessing historical or ongoing case and client data.

While there are several customer relationship management packages to choose from, it's important for department managers to make informed, long-term decisions. Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides unique value in three key areas:

1. It enables reliable user adoption by working like and with familiar products case managers may already use, such as Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007 and the 2007 Microsoft Office system. If people don't use a system consistently, the system will have no value. The data within the system will be incomplete or out of date, and business processes simply won't execute consistently or correctly.
2. It can be customized to fit the specific needs of social services organizations by providing a flexible user interface and the ability to easily update business processes and workflow. Every organization—no matter how large or small—conducts its process in unique ways. It may be in following specific program requirements, or how they interact with particular groups of citizens based on age or need.
3. It is built on technology that is fast to deploy, flexible enough to adapt to changing needs, and built on dependable and affordable technology. This ensures that departments and agencies deploying the Microsoft CRM system can have a fast time to value, a low total cost of ownership, and the flexibility to respond to their changing program and technology needs.

Case workers need not be burdened with steep learning curves because Microsoft CRM works like and with other Microsoft products they're familiar with, and already use on a daily basis. For example:

- client appointments and activities are tracked efficiently within Office Outlook 2007, providing a familiar and intuitive work environment
- alerts tell case managers next steps, remind them to send e-mails and follow up on open items so citizens get better service
- customized workspaces provide case workers with personalized "home bases" allowing them easy access to client information, relationship management, and communication tools
- powerful reporting and analysis tools make it easy to identify cross-program opportunities and trends at a glance
- case workers can get instant access to client data from their personal digital assistant, laptop or browser using Microsoft CRM mobile support

The productivity enhancing benefits of Microsoft CRM can help your social services organization reduce costs and increase efficiency. When case workers in the field need to spend less time manually entering data, organizations save time and money. When access to client data helps service representatives resolve inbound calls more quickly, savings add up. More importantly, when case workers can easily coordinate cases across social services agencies, citizens get better service and case workers' workloads are reduced.

With a customer relationship management package like Microsoft Dynamics CRM in place, cases can be coordinated across agencies, placing citizens at the center. Their appointments and care can be coordinated across programs with one point of contact; one set of forms to complete. In turn, case managers collaborating on client care have access to holistic data, ensuring their individual efforts are aligned. All activities can be centrally reported, measured and analyzed, helping commissioners to secure critical funding.



The Client-Focused Future

Departments of social services strive to help clients improve the quality of their lives. Doing so with connected, intuitive systems can help improve case manager productivity while relieving the burden of tedious data management and manual case coordination. Gone are the days when costly, multi-year system overhauls are required. With the emergence of software packages, such as Microsoft Dynamics CRM that provide the capability to bridge the gaps between agency systems, providing citizen-centric service is becoming a reality.

To learn more about Microsoft Dynamics CRM and Microsoft Dynamics that can help your social services organization operate more efficiently and provide coordinated services to citizens, visit www.microsoft.com/dynamics/crm.



Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as the 2007 Microsoft Office system, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

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