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St. Catherine's Aged Care Services

St. Catherine's Aged Care Services Prepares for Growth With Easy-to-Use, Cloud-Based Epicor SLS

Company Facts

Overview
- ▶ Location: Eastwood, New South Wales, Australia
- ▶ Industry: Aged care services provider
- ▶ Website: www.scacs.org.au

Success Highlights

Challenges
- ▶ Aging system created access and stability issues
- ▶ Hard-to-read bill format caused customers to challenge their bills
- ▶ Manual work created inefficiencies
- ▶ Highly regulated industry required systems that assist with compliance

Solution
- ▶ Epicor Senior Living Solution (SLS)

Benefits
- ▶ Increased reliability and stability with always-available cloud access
- ▶ Reduced customer queries with easy-to-read bill design
- ▶ Cut manual work by one or two days per month
- ▶ Allowed for more effective competition and positioned the company for growth

St. Catherine's Aged Care Services is an aged care home committed to providing excellent care and services for its residents. St. Catherine's provides care at all levels—including specialised dementia care, palliative care, and care for the frail aged—all in a home-like environment with a culture of warm and welcoming attitudes.

St. Catherine's operates in a highly competitive industry that has recently seen regulatory changes that make it easier for new competitors to enter the marketplace. Simultaneously, the way patients are billed for services in this industry has changed. Previously, the government paid some—or all—of the costs for care. Now, customers are being given these funds and allowed more freedom of choice. This requires providers like St. Catherine's to find every opportunity for differentiation.

An old, inefficient system

St. Catherine's had been using an older financial system to manage the facility, and this system was due to be discontinued by the vendor. The system was no longer receiving updates, which caused instability that led the database to become corrupted and the staff to lose access.

Furthermore, employees were required to enter the same information in three different modules—sometimes in up to five different locations—as it wasn't integrated into one system. Consequently, information in the system was incomplete, so staff couldn't get a full picture of what was happening. Decision-making was therefore hampered.

These inefficiencies were compounded by the fact that the system couldn't provide efficient reporting and reader-friendly billing. The system only showed a lump sum amount when calculating adjustments due to daily rate changes. The confusion caused residents and their families

to question the bills they received. When this happened, the team needed to manually check the accuracy of the data and explain the billing details to residents or families. This created additional work for the team and potentially damaged relationships with residents and their families.

> "Having our software in the cloud also means a faster response if we experience an issue, because we're unlikely to be the only user experiencing that issue. The Epicor support team can then find and fix the issue faster, because they aren't dealing with individual customers one by one. This is much better than with an on-premises solution where you have to wait for a technician to get around to seeing you."
>
> -Ye | St. Catherine's Aged Care Services

Cloud-based solution for risk mitigation and efficiency

St. Catherine's needed to mitigate the risks presented by this situation and centralise its data so it could be distributed to different locations more efficiently, accurately, and cost effectively. It needed to be able to run fast, accurate reports to reduce the number of complaints or queries from residents and their families.

The team also needed a solution that was cloud-based, allowing the business to always have the most up-to-date version of the software and reduce both management effort and risk.

"Transparency is important to customers, particularly when it comes to billing," said Juliet Ye, business manager at St. Catherine's. "Residents incur additional charges for ancillary services—such as hairdressing or telephone rental. Accounting for these charges accurately was taking up a lot of time and effort because we had to manually enter the information every month for every resident. This created potential for human error, which we needed to reduce."

She continued, "In the past, if a resident queried their bill, we would need to dig to find the information, which was time-consuming. We needed a solution to simplify these processes and give us back some time so we could focus more on innovation."

Since aged care services provision is a heavily regulated industry, St. Catherine's needed to find a solution that was not only intelligent and user-friendly, but also complied with all relevant legislative requirements.

Epicor SLS ticks all the boxes

Based on Ye's previous experience with the system, St. Catherine's chose the Epicor Senior Living Solution (SLS), which is deployed in the Epicor multitenant cloud environment. This provides all the benefits of a cloud deployment and simplifies data entry by eliminating duplication. It provides a central repository for all resident-based data, and it helps the business to accurately manage billing and funding.

Epicor SLS is specifically designed for operators of residential aged care, independent living, and community care organisations.

Ye explained, "I had used a previous version of Epicor SLS at other organisations for nine years, so I knew firsthand that it would be the best solution for St. Catherine's. The layout is modern, and the new functionality is fantastic. The cloud-based solution suits St. Catherine's IT environment, and having a single login to access all modules and multi-windows applications made life much easier and more efficient."

By relying on Ye's pre-existing knowledge of the system—along with the ease of a cloud-based deployment—St. Catherine's was able to avoid the additional cost of using a third-party implementation partner. Instead, Ye teamed up with the Epicor consultants directly.

"The implementation process was very smooth," Ye recalled. "The project manager prepared a very detailed plan with all activities in different stages—along with the costs. The consultants were fantastic, and we worked together to overcome any issues or mistakes. Through a strong team effort and effective communication, the project went live within the expected timeframe and budget."

Significant time savings

Epicor SLS has delivered the expected improvements in terms of efficiency and accuracy to St. Catherine's. Because Epicor helps automate repetitive, manual functions, it has saved St. Catherine's a significant amount of time each month.

Ye explained, "We no longer have to enter miscellaneous charges for each resident individually every month. The Epicor SLS solution lets us create Microsoft Excel-based templates that are easy and fast to update, leading to improved accuracy and reduced manual errors."

"When it comes to reconciliation, it only takes half a day using Epicor SLS—instead of up to two days using our previous software solution," Ye continued. "With the template set up only once a year, each month we just click a single button and the recurrent or prepay journals pop up. The solution is incredibly easy to use, and this level of automation has dramatically increased our efficiency."

Epicor SLS has also improved the transparency of the billing system with reader-friendly information. For example, it clearly shows back-dated reversals of old rates and rebills with new rates when the daily fee changes. Such information makes the billing easy to understand and has reduced the number of inquiries.

Epicor SLS has a robust reporting facility that has revealed key information to the decision-making team at St. Catherine's.

Ye said, "Before Epicor SLS, we didn't get proper summaries of the financial position, so we never knew where the business stood. Now, we can get that information easily, so managers can make decisions based on clear data. That lets us think more about strategy, so we can be more competitive. Reports are detailed and seamless, so we don't have to spend a lot of time looking for the information we need."

Cloud benefits

Because St. Catherine's deployed Epicor SLS in the cloud, it gets automatic access to updates. For example, aged care relies on means testing so residents have an annual spending cap. The software automatically calculates—based on the means test—whether residents have reached this cap, and it can automatically stop incurring costs once the cap is reached.

"This type of automated functionality is invaluable, because it helps increase internal control and reduce the human element in processes," Ye said. "Having our software in the cloud also means a faster response if we experience an issue, because we're unlikely to be the only user experiencing that issue. The Epicor support team can then find and fix the issue faster, because they aren't dealing with individual customers one by one. This is much better than with an on-premises solution where you have to wait for a technician to get around to seeing you."

Future integrations

In the future, St. Catherine's plans to integrate Epicor SLS with iCare and Medicare for even greater automation and efficiency.

"We look forward to future upgrades of the solution that will streamline these integrations and continue to provide St. Catherine's with the ease of use and functionality we rely on to operate in a competitive landscape," Ye concluded.

Epicor SLS was a great fit for St. Catherine's because the system is designed from the ground up to help aged care service providers navigate and simplify the complexities in a competitive and crowded marketplace. It's easy to deploy and simple to use, so St. Catherine's finance team can avoid getting bogged down in processes and minutiae— freeing them up to innovate and focus on new ways to grow the business. With Epicor SLS, St. Catherine's is now fit to grow quickly and sustainably in the aged care industry.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, connect with Epicor or visit www.epicor.com.

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