



Jessica's team guides her through an interactive therapy session at Rotodale Nursery School in Bradford. From left to right - Linda Abernathy, resource teacher, Simcoe Community Services; Laurie Rife, occupational therapist and Barb Wenzel, physical therapist, both with Closing the Gap.

## Case Study

# Children's Treatment Network: Jessica's Story

### January 2013

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learning  
how to say  
'I love you.'

Jessica is learning how to say 'I love you.' For the independent nine-year-old from Lefroy, Ontario, putting this phrase together and adding it to her vocabulary of almost 90 words is one more significant achievement on a long road filled with tremendous challenges.

In 2005 while the family was travelling in the U.S., two-year-old Jessica contracted a strain of encephalitis that caused a grand mal seizure, leaving the left side of her body paralyzed. She spent six weeks in hospitals - first in the U.S., then McMaster University Hospital in Hamilton, and later at SickKids Hospital in Toronto.

Considered medically fragile on arriving home, Jessica's intensive rehab program consisted of physical and occupational therapy from North Simcoe Muskoka Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). Although developmentally delayed, Jessica had been progressing well and could almost walk unassisted; after her illness she stopped eating and speaking, required a feeding tube, and could no longer sit, crawl, stand, or walk.

By the fall of 2006 Jessica had improved and no longer required the intensive level of care she had been receiving through the CCAC. This meant that Jessica would be transferred to a new team of professionals. Her mother, Theresa, felt an overwhelming sense of panic.

# How GoldCare's Innovative Software Solution Supports the Single Plan of Care Process



It was at this time that an innovative new service delivery model for children's services, Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe York (CTN) was being implemented. During these early stages Theresa couldn't have known that CTN would provide an answer that focused on the coordination and continuity of care.

CTN, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, was formed in 2005 to remove barriers to families' access to care by better coordinating services for 4,500 children and youth with multiple disabilities aged birth to 19 years and bringing more specialized rehabilitation services closer to home. By establishing CTN, services such as physiotherapy, seating and mobility, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, audiology, augmentative communications, neuropsychology, feeding, and developmental pediatrics were made available closer to home in Simcoe County and York Region.

Previously, families had to navigate a fragmented children's service system in which client information was not easily accessible among service providers. Providers from various agencies across the region worked alone documenting their assessment findings and progress. Families acted as liaison between team members, managing the sharing of information, communicating results and recommendations, and setting appointments among service providers.

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With its formation, CTN focused on the coordination of care among providers and laid the foundations for integrated service planning and delivery. This Single Plan of Care (SPOC) approach links over 40 service provider agencies through the use of a shared Electronic Health Record (EHR), utilizing common tools and practices for collaborative care planning, service delivery and outcome measurement.



## SINGLE PLAN OF CARE APPROACH

CTN's groundbreaking Single Plan of Care approach, focused on children with multiple special needs, is structured to ensure that every member of the child's care team from multiple disciplines and sectors, including health care, education, hospitals, recreation, social and community service agencies, as well as the family, work together as equal partners to jointly define the vision, goals and treatment activities for the child.

CTN's shared EHR supports the development and monitoring of a Single Plan of Care. For Jessica, this has enabled her team to work better together—through GoldCare's technology, all team members have access to the same information and are kept informed of changes and progress being made. The shared GoldCare electronic record and collaborative approach have helped improve Jessica's quality of life.

The Single Plan of Care approach consolidates what would have been several different care plans from each service provider, and provides a common framework for setting the direction and focus of the child's care. It also eliminates the need for the family to continually retell their story and explain their concerns, goals and special requirements to each service provider. For Theresa, this approach is responsible for improvements to Jessica's health care that are "an indescribable relief to our family."

"I don't have to be the sole provider of information anymore," she explains. "Service providers will come in and ask questions, but I haven't really given the entire history of what happened with Jessica since we've started using the EHR. I haven't had to – they're all using it, they all know. That information is there. Prior to the shared record we would have had to tell our story over and over and over. We were exhausted and it was stressful and time-consuming and emotional."

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This interprofessional approach begins with an initial comprehensive interview that is completed by a CTN Service Navigator. The Child and Family Interview (CFI) focuses on the child and family's strengths, areas of need, and developmental and treatment histories. These are documented in GoldCare's Assessment module. The template form supports the structured interview and makes this information available to all team members. This interview helps to inform which assessments and services are required to meet the need of the child and family. For children with multiple team members and a complexity of needs, a Single Plan of Care Coordinator is

assigned whose role it is to coordinate the team, lead the planning process and support all team members through the process.

*"Prior to the shared record we would have had to tell our story over and over and over. We were exhausted and it was stressful and time-consuming and emotional."*

*Theresa*

Building on the information in the shared record, the Single Plan of Care Coordinator works with the family to help them articulate their vision for their child. This will drive the child's plan for the next 6-12 months and the resulting vision statements are entered into the shared record to help guide the creation of measurable and integrated team goals and activities.

The key step in the process is the Single Plan of Care meeting. Assessment information collected from the various disciplines is documented in the shared record and available to all team members. Team members are asked to review this information prior to the meeting so that time is not spent repeating this type of information, but rather planning together and setting realistic goals. The entire process and its philosophy of collaboration is a stark contrast to the fragmented approach that parents and Network partners once experienced.

## HOW GOLDCARE SUPPORTS THE SINGLE PLAN OF CARE PROCESS

Information for each stage of the Single Plan of Care process is documented through electronic templates and forms that are stored in a shared EHR. Rather than multiple records from numerous agencies on various systems, there is a single record for the child that consolidates all assessment information, clinical documentation, reports, progress notes, treatment activities, and of course, the Single Plan of Care. Having just one central record minimizes the inaccuracies and inefficiencies associated with using information that is duplicated, out-of-date, incomplete, or superseded.

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**This timely access to shared information means providers can immediately respond to changes in the child's health and ensure continuity of care.**

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The GoldCare solution allows the shared electronic client record to be collectively maintained by the entire care team. From their GoldCare Workspace, each member can view, update and otherwise contribute to the record from their respective offices, or the point of care. Information is readily available to remote staff, service partners, and management staff, who can access GoldCare online from anywhere, using an internet browser,





Jessica and her twin brother Alex enjoy a fall afternoon.

computer, tablet, netbook, etc., to review and update relevant information rather than requesting or submitting information by paper.

Team members can also upload test results, x-rays and other clinical documentation to supplement the record, enabling each provider to incorporate that data into their clinical approach. As well, members can clearly see the activities and progress notes entered by the rest of the care team, allowing treatment and interventions from individual providers to be compatible with one another. This timely access to shared information means providers can immediately respond to changes in the child's health and ensure continuity of care.

By 2007, Jessica was one of the first children with complex needs to have a fully active Single Plan of Care supported by a shared record that was actively used by her team members. To date, several thousand children now have a shared electronic record, representing the collective efforts of hundreds of Network service providers and partners working together as an extended care team.

"In a perfect world not only does all of my team have access to the electronic record, but I have access to the electronic record," says Theresa. "We haven't reached that yet, but I know Michelle Biehler is diligently working with GoldCare on it. I know there are a few non-technical obstacles to that, such as privacy issues and access issues and that's the next hurdle to be overcome."

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Family access to the shared record has always been part of the plan of achieving integrated care. If the family is truly recognized as a member of the team, then easy

and timely access to the information contained in their child's shared record is critical. CTN is working with GoldCare to provide family access via a secure Family Portal. The dream is that not only will families be able to view information, but they will also be able to contribute information.

## GOLDCARE'S INNOVATIVE SOFTWARE SOLUTION

When asked to describe what GoldCare's enabling technology and CTN have meant for her family, Theresa recounts that in the first two years of Jessica's life there were five separate service providers who did not communicate with each other on any level. Visits often culminated in each provider recommending numerous activities and goals for Jessica, resulting in care that felt "disjointed and like one big, giant appointment."

"It felt like I wasn't Jessica's mom; I was her primary service provider and her service coordinator and I didn't want to do that. Through CTN and the use of the shared record, we started to experience coordinated care after her second birthday. I cried with relief. I was no longer responsible for bringing all these service professionals together. They came together and spoke to each other on a professional level,

using our vision for what we wanted for Jessica and what we felt she could accomplish. They came up with a plan to help us work together to help Jessica reach her goals."

*CTN is working with GoldCare to provide family access via a secure Family Portal.*



Theresa says this monumental shift in Jessica's care was an 'aha' moment not only for her, but also for the professionals sitting around the table.

Spanning the full continuum of a child's care, the shared client record follows transitions from preschool to elementary school to secondary school to adulthood. As new service providers become part of Jessica's team they are able to review what has been tried in the past, what was successful, what wasn't, and build on the work of colleagues across the children's service system.

Compliance with security and privacy regulations is a key component of the shared electronic client record. Ensuring that privacy is protected and that the Single Plan of Care approach complies with all Privacy Legislation is a requirement of all Network Partners prior to agreeing to use CTN's shared record. CTN underwent a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) prior to launch of the system to ensure that safeguards were in place and regulations were being met. CTN requires that all Network Partners sign an Information Sharing agreement that outlines the responsibilities each party has for security, maintaining confidentiality and data integrity.

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Regular auditing is conducted by CTN to ensure that team members are accessing only the information they are authorized to access. Security features in GoldCare also enable CTN to lock down certain aspects of the file to specific disciplines or to specific users based on the family's consent and directives. To gain the trust of families and Network partners, it was critical for GoldCare to understand how to work in a Network environment and to build the functionality into the software required to protect the child's personal health information across interactions with multiple providers.



According to Biehler, this is where the hosted GoldCare system has proven to be very effective.

“Because the Network is new in its approach, we needed something that could adapt with our evolving needs. GoldCare was selected for its adaptability to evolving Network processes and program requirements,” she says. “With over 40 partner agencies engaged in the record, many changes have been incorporated into the software over time in an attempt to meet the needs of various partners and changes in clinical practice. The ability for GoldCare’s customers to do more of their own enhancement work will prove to be a definite asset to CTN over the years.”

Because CTN in itself was a new entity, GoldCare’s early involvement in defining processes and improvements to the user experience were critical to ensuring partner engagement and participation.

## LIFE-CHANGING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Theresa is certain Jessica would not be accomplishing what she is today if she had continued to receive individualized service from professionals not communicating with each other and not working together as a team. She believes that someone who is receiving services from multiple professionals and requires complex medical care cannot successfully proceed without an integrated health approach.

This support, most of which is now coordinated at the school Jessica attends, has helped increase her vocabulary to almost 90 words. She can say her name and is working hard to stand and walk on her own.

Theresa recalls that Jessica was “in heaven” when she mastered walking the length of her school’s hall while wearing braces as two grade seven volunteers held her hands.

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**She can say her name and is working hard to stand and walk on her own.**

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She believes that the team’s use of the shared EHR to support the Single Plan of Care approach has enabled Jessica to reach her goals faster and expand her horizons.

“Team members need to be able to communicate effectively with each other and coordinate their services in order to make sure their goals are in line with each other and with the family,” Theresa states emphatically. “This requires technology like GoldCare to enable all the team members to connect and share and come together to help the child reach his or her full potential. To know that we will never again have to face a fragmented health care system in Jessica’s childhood is a miracle to us.”

*“GoldCare was selected for its adaptability to evolving Network processes and program requirements.”*

*Michelle Biehler*



The Children's Treatment Network (CTN) provides one point of contact for a single plan of care for children and youth in Simcoe and York with special physical, developmental, and communication needs. CTN coordinates all the services needed to help children with special needs take part in daily living, bringing together health care, recreation, education, social, and community services to develop a long-term plan of care that is adapted throughout all stages of a child's development.

For more information, visit [www.ctn-simcoeyork.ca](http://www.ctn-simcoeyork.ca).



GoldCare gives care providers versatile health care management software to efficiently manage and support the full continuum of community, residential and long-term care. Clinical, operational and administrative applications are fully integrated through an intuitive interface that provides staff with a consistent and up-to-date view of client information. This centralized access to information helps organizations to streamline workflow, reduce paperwork, increase data accuracy, and improve operational efficiencies. Our multidisciplinary and integrated approach to client management, plus a dedication to industry-advancing solutions are some of the reasons why GoldCare is used by hundreds of care sites across Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

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