



COUNTY SERVICE CENTER GROUP

INAUGURAL ISSUE

MISSION STATEMENT:

The County Service Center Group is committed to maintaining a membership organization which promotes continuous learning and the exchange of information and ideas between California County Medi-Cal/Food Stamp Service Centers. We partner in an ongoing effort to improve work processes and deliver quality service in a professional, timely and efficient manner.

MEMBER PARTICIPATION:

Thank you to our focus group participants: Paul Bellerjeau, Claudine Wildman, Leo O'Farrell, Roy Redlich and Tara Smith who gave their time, enthusiasm, input and support of the CSCG mission.

We welcome member participation. Feel free to share your ideas, author a column, or refer a new member. Contact CSCG group administrator, Margaret Condie at: margaretcondie@Intelegy.com

Welcome and congratulations! You are among the elite. You have transformed your county's decentralized on-going case management departments into *lean mean service center machines*. Collectively you invested over 45,000 man hours planning, implementing, training and launching your service centers. The results of your efforts speak for themselves: Today five service centers are operational, answering over 42,000 calls per month and processing more than 100,000 tasks per month. On average, 14% of these calls are being answered through IVR or menuing technologies. Customer satisfaction has increased. RRR's and QR7's, along with other important eligibility tasks, are being completed on time. Many things were done right:

- You are using technology to make your service delivery more efficient, accurate and timely
- You have worked together to create a service center with everyone as part of the solution
- You have re-organized and created processes for phone EW's, case maintenance EW's and clerical staff to share the workload
- You have created a platform for future service center applications throughout Human Services
- You have created additional career and leadership opportunities for your employees

What was learned in the process -

- Buy in at the staff level is critical to success
- Using the best technology possible makes a difference
- Task management for EW's is critical to work flow and accountability
- Work flow and the operations manual is 'the way' we do our business
- Call review reduces talk time

These two lists are certainly incomplete. There have been many more achievements, successes and lessons learned. One conclusion we can state today with confidence -- and with data to back it up -- is that the decision to provide services to your clients through a service center application was the right one. In order to promote continuous learning we must communicate and share. This newsletter will support that objective. (see upcoming news) *Thank you and Congratulations!*

-Vail Dutto

CEO InTelegy Corporation

ACCOUNTABILITY BREEDS RESPONSIBILITY

STATISTICS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:

“The average time to abandon once in the agent queue is 65 seconds. North Americans are the most impatient—abandoning calls within 37 seconds—while Asian-Pacific customers are the most patient, waiting an average of 72 seconds before abandoning the call” *source www.incoming.com*

Abandonment rates are driven mainly by your callers’ tolerance levels. There are many reasons people hang up—categorized here into “seven factors of caller tolerance”:

1. Degree of motivation: how important the call is to the customer
2. Availability of substitutes—can they get the answer somewhere else i.e. your website or FAQs
3. Competition’s service level
4. Level of expectations—do they have to wait a long time every time they call or did they get right through the last time they contacted you
5. Time available
6. Who is paying for the call
7. Human behavior

Sonoma County’s Economic Assistance Service Center (EASC), launched March 2007, provides services to 50,000 clients. Overnight, client experience changed from hold times and voice mail only access to immediate access to highly trained phone based eligibility workers able to deliver immediate service. The essence of the Service Center concept is that work is ‘pooled’- not assigned to a specific worker. Phone based eligibility workers are equipped to handle calls from any client and are assigned tasks that can be completed within 3 hours. Non-phone eligibility workers are assigned tasks that may take several days or weeks that, once completed, are returned to a pooled status. On the surface this paints a picture of a lack of accountability for these critical case maintenance activities. However, concurrent with the launch of their Service Center, Sonoma County launched a Task Management Tool (TMT) software application which tracks assigned tasks.

Sonoma County was the first service center to develop this critical tool. With a development time of just 6 weeks, TMT is programmed in Visual Basic and Info View. The clerical team manages the distribution of work using predefined rules, assigning the tasks to specific eligibility workers on an equitable basis. Once the task is completed, the worker enters a completed date into the TMT. When a client calls inquiring about the status of their case, any phone worker can quickly determine who was assigned the task and if it has been completed. This translates to complete visibility as to who is **responsible** and **accountable**. The results have been amazing! Since the launch of the Service Center, 21,000 tasks have been logged and assigned. Over 77% of these tasks have been completed along with 10,000+ backlogged tasks. Sonoma County attributes this success to the Task Management Tool. TMT is clearly a mission critical component of the EASC operations.

-Mary Jo Kulp

InTelegy Senior Consultant

PURPOSE OF CSCG:

The purpose of the County Service Center Group is to link service center administrators and managers from different counties in order to exchange information about successful work processes and to discuss processes that require change in order to develop new strategies in a collaborative effort and secure solutions to shared work and personnel related issues.

UPCOMING NEWS.....

We promote continuous learning in the service center environment. To facilitate learning InTelegy will host a series of communication events for **CSCG** members. Mark your calendar for the following:

–**September 19th** - conference call - “Queue Management and Service Center Reports”

–**October 10-12th**. CWDA Conference: Join your fellow **CSCG** members and guests on the 11th at the 1st annual InTelegy sponsored **CSCG** reception.

–**January 2008** - **CSCG** blog: receive real time answers from members.

Learn how Santa Cruz County has instituted call monitoring in their service center and what impact call monitoring has had on customer service.

Next Issue: October 1, 2007: Call Review