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Artificial Intelligence Helping Jefferson County Caseworkers Manage Paperwork

Child welfare caseworkers spend more time with clients

DUBLIN, OH—January 8, 2019—Jefferson County Department of Social Services (DSS) is investing in new technology that uses artificial intelligence to help child welfare caseworkers focus less time on paperwork and more time doing high-value work with children and families.

Recent increases in child protection investigations and an unexpected spike in foster care placements this year led the agency to find a tool to help caseworkers handle the increased demand for services. The uptick is likely tied to increased substance abuse issues in the community including alcohol, opioids and crystal meth.

"It's been a continuous struggle for staff to keep up with the paperwork requirements. They are spending more time on their paperwork and less time with families. We know the real work—the successful work—is the work that's done directly with the families," said Teresa Gaffney, commissioner, Jefferson County DSS.

The agency will arm 60 child welfare staff in child protective services, preventative services, foster care and adoption with the product [Traverse®](#) to collect, view and share case content from anywhere at any time.

The technology will help caseworkers manage the volume of content in case files so they can spend more time with children and families.

Caseworkers will use the web-based application in the office to scan and upload documents and a companion mobile app to easily take photos and complete forms during home visits.

All the data and content collected both in the office and in the field is automatically analyzed by Traverse using artificial intelligence to surface data that often becomes dark, hidden, or virtually impossible to retrieve. Traverse extracts critical information about the major topics, related events and people connected to the case to help caseworkers make informed, confident decisions about safety.

"It's not uncommon for cases to go from one worker to another. Having that real snapshot of what the issues might be in the case will be a real benefit," Gaffney said.

The ability to focus on high-value work will also help reduce caseworkers' stress, which contributes to high turnover. About 20% child welfare caseworkers at Jefferson County DSS turn over each year.

"Employees want work/life balance and that's hard to do with this job. I hope to alleviate some of the stress of trying to keep up with paperwork with this solution," Gaffney said.

About Northwoods

Northwoods develops customized, high-tech software solutions for adult & aging, child support, child welfare and economic assistance. We help state and county human services agencies do more with less and get the results they need. Nearly 45,000 caseworkers across the country use our solutions to manage, collect, view and share content and data more efficiently. As a result, agencies improve service delivery, maximize productivity, make informed decisions and achieve better outcomes. Northwoods is headquartered in Dublin, Ohio.

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