

Caregiver, Inc. Launches Innovative In-House Behavioral Supports Program for IDD Clients

Incorporating internal delivery of Behavioral Supports services yields increased quality of compassionate, consistent care



Behavioral Supports like staff training, behavior plans, and monitoring assure individual clients get the customized help they need to lead their best lives.

When Mark Lashley became CEO of Caregiver, Inc. in 2017, he prioritized innovation in all aspects of Caregiver’s services and processes, gathering his leadership team to ask: “What if Caregiver could improve outcomes and quality of life for our intellectually and developmentally disabled (IDD) clients and heal an historically-fragmented service delivery approach?”

One answer took shape as Caregiver’s new internal Behavioral Supports Program. Behavioral Supports are ancillary services like staff training, behavior plans, and monitoring that assure individual clients get the customized help they need to lead their best lives. The company is confident that their new program will counteract fragmented, inconsistent outside contractor services by providing Caregiver-staff-delivered personalized treatment plans designed and managed by internal teams for their own IDD clients.

Caregiver’s new model is a dramatic departure from the IDD industry norm. Heretofore, IDD behavioral supports services in Texas usually followed the industry-wide model

of contracting with outside companies to design, deliver, and manage client behavioral support plans. While often efficient, Caregiver realized that not all contractors are created equally. A combination of disparate companies with rotating staff relinquished consistency and submitted Caregiver clients to less-than-optimum experiences.

Seeking an innovative solution, the executive team – led by Alex Sturges, VP of Operations Strategy – set out to determine the best path forward to bring Behavioral Supports in-house and shatter the IDD industry’s systemic mold of contracted care with its reputation of varying uniformity and impersonal tone.

As well, the team believed that in-house delivery of behavioral services could have a positive effect companywide, anticipating better client outcomes and increased employee engagement and job satisfaction within a streamlined, accountable, effective service delivery team structure.

Further, with an internal Behavioral Supports team, the company could operate more cost-effectively AND deliver a higher quality of care.

“We decided that the industry norm was no longer good enough for our clients,” said Sturges. “We’re in this business to help people, and if there’s an opportunity to do better, then we must explore the options to raise the standard of care.”

Sturges would orchestrate the effort.

INCREASING POSITIVE IMPACT



Joining Caregiver in early 2017 after departing the finance world in search of a company with mission and heart, Alex Sturges, left, quickly found a home for his expertise and desire to help others. When he and Lashley met to determine what the company

did well and where they could improve, they discovered that Behavioral Supports was one area where they could increase the positive impact in the lives of their clients through improved consistency and quality of care.

“Caregiver’s Behavioral Supports Program is vital to those who receive program services,” Sturges continued. “We know that the investment of time and resources will significantly affect the lives of our clients in very positive ways.” Caregiver was ready to go, but they needed the right person to lead the day-to-day implementation and

management. Sturges tapped Caregiver team member Angie Huber, PhD, as the company’s new Director of Behavioral Services.

SHOWING HOW MUCH WE CARE



Dr. Huber (left), a resident of Beaumont, Texas, has been a Caregiver employee for eight years; she previously was Program Director of Intermediate Care Facilities in Lufkin/Beaumont. After earning her PhD in clinical psychology from Walden University, she has been providing behavioral intervention and counseling services for individuals for well over a decade, with

significant experience working with IDD individuals. She had an expert background, management experience and a passion for the IDD population; Caregiver executives knew she was ideally positioned to take the company to the next level and lead the behavioral team into the future.

“Our clients and their families and guardians will even more directly experience how much we care about them,” said Dr. Huber. “As well, our direct support staff professionals gain immediate better understanding of their individual clients’ histories and goals for the future. We anticipate increased job satisfaction and positivity, so this should also help reduce staff turnover.”

Within Caregiver’s Behavioral Supports Program, each client is assigned a geographically-specific clinician to assess the client’s needs and situation. That clinician prepares a plan of action and designs how that plan will be evaluated. Caregiver Behavioral Supports team members review and assess progress on a continual basis and adjust as necessary as each individual works toward his or her goals. “We’ve had a tremendous response so far,” added Dr. Huber. “Our clients’ guardians are seeing that Caregiver is investing resources where we can truly make an impact, helping to support the best life possible for each individual.”

While the new Behavioral Supports Program services are currently available only in Texas, Caregiver is exploring expanded roll out of this model to all its affiliates and regions in Tennessee, Indiana and Ohio. At present, around 30 percent of Caregiver’s 2,500 Texas-based clients need and are receiving behavioral supports services. According to the company, clients’ previous plans offered an average of four to five hours per year. With Caregiver’s in-house, hands-on delivery model, the

team finds that individuals can benefit greatly from the increased attention of up to 20 hours of behavioral support annually. These levels translate to a greater interest by referral sources, guardians and families in what Caregiver offers. The company is now accepting

new enrollments for Texas families looking to transfer to this level of care. Guardians may contact the company for more information online at www.cg-idd.com or by calling 800-299-5161.

ABOUT CAREGIVER, INC.

[Caregiver, Inc.](#), is a privately-held company with over 3500 employees within the headquarters support group and branded affiliate organizations in four states. The affiliates provide intermediate, home and community care services to nearly 2800 individuals who qualify as developmentally or intellectually disabled or are impacted by related conditions. Caregiver, Inc. was formed in 2015 and now includes these affiliates: [Unified Care Group](#), [Southern Concepts](#), [River Gardens](#), [Daybreak Community Services Inc.](#), [St. Giles Living Centers](#), [DSA of Indiana](#), [HHC of Ohio](#), and [Omni Support Services of Tennessee](#). All have similar service offerings and strong reputations in their local communities. Caregiver services include supported home living, family protective services, case coordination, nursing services, respite services, day habilitation, psychology services, dental treatment, specialized therapies, adaptive aids, minor home modifications, and supported employment. Caregiver president and CEO is Mark Lashley. Company headquarters are at 4100 International Plaza, Suite 800, Fort Worth, Texas 76109.

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*Alex Sturges, Vice-President,
Operations Strategy at Caregiver, Inc.*