

Welcome to:

Distance Learning for Home and Community-Based Services Gets Results

Hello my name is Richard Lindhorst, Vice President of CareStar and head of CareStar Learning initiatives.

The following presentation is CareStar's entry to the poster session presented at **The National Association of State Units on Aging, or NASUA**, conference in 2007.

It will show you how distance learning is being used to create courses that meet the training and educational needs of providers, consumers, case managers, and support staffs. You will also be presented with statistics on our program and course usage, as well as satisfaction survey results.

I hope you enjoy this session. If you are a manager, instructor or technology coordinator, I promise you will learn something that can benefit your program.

Our company, CareStar, offers a wide-range of solutions for Home and Community-Based programs including management services, information systems and learning.

CareStar Management Services provide Case Management, Provider Management, Quality Assurance and Improvement.

CareStar Information Systems offer customized software that is used to manage home and community-based programs.

CareStar Learning delivers highly customized learning solutions for any organization involved with Home and Community-Based programs in the U.S. These solutions include podcasts, emails, distance learning and classroom-based courses.

CareStar Learning is designed to build and improve academic excellence, assist professional development and provide valuable information. You can find more information on our website. I'll give you the address and other important information at the end of the presentation.

In this year's poster session, our focus is on Distance Learning. Let me start by answering a couple of basic questions:

What is Distance Learning?

Distance learning, sometimes called e-learning, is a structured learning activity. In many cases the internet, intranet or telephone are used to deliver instruction, research, assessment and communication through software and online systems.

Because of this, education in Home and Community-Based Services is no longer confined to special seminars and classrooms.

There are now many technologies that offer greater flexibility in when, where and how education can be distributed. These technologies are useful tools that can help prepare every student to meet the challenges ahead.

Can you benefit from Distance Learning?

Yes! Everyone can benefit from Distance Learning. This includes managers, support staffs, providers and government personnel just to name a few.

Learning new things with new technology can help us all advance towards a common goal...better care for consumers and their families.

What are the Distance Learning Technologies?

Overall there are two delivery types: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous means "real time." This allows the teacher and the student to interact with each other in a live two-way forum.

Asynchronous means that delivery does not take place in "real time." It may be a video or podcast that was recorded recently or some time ago. But that doesn't mean that you can't communicate with the instructor. You can still get input on you computer through feedback forms that can be sent via e-mail.

Both of these delivery types are implemented in the different learning technologies, which are listed in this chart.

Technology	Delivery Systems	Delivery Types
Print Focused		
Textbooks Study guides Workbooks	Mail & Fax	Asynchronous
Telephonic Focused		
Teleseminars	Land Line Cell Phones	Synchronous Asynchronous
Learning Management Software Focused		
<u>Audio-centered</u> Audio recordings (MP3) (podcasts)	MP3 Players CD Players	Asynchronous

Compact Disc (CD-ROM)		
<u>Text-centered</u> Documents with images	Internet or Intranet	Asynchronous
<u>Video-centered</u> Broadcast media files (Webcasts) Web conferencing (Webinars) Video conferencing	Internet Internet Internet	Asynchronous Synchronous Synchronous
DVD's	DVD Players	Asynchronous

Print

Despite all the new emerging web based technologies, print is the foundation of distance education and the basis from which all other delivery systems have evolved.

People use it through textbooks, study guides and workbooks. These materials are usually mailed or faxed to students.

At CareStar, we found that around 10% of our students prefer to have courses mailed to them in print-form. Although we expect this number to decrease in the future, we believe there will always be a place for the printed word in distance learning.

Telephone

A teleseminar requires a person to dial in to a “bridgeline” to access a pre-recorded or live seminar at a scheduled time. When the call is connected the person listens to the host, and will sometimes have the chance to respond and ask questions. The audience size can range anywhere from a few callers to over a thousand.

Learning Management Systems

Internet or intranet Learning Management Systems automatically administrate training events while reporting and tracking them. These systems make it easy for anyone, even those without technical expertise, to be educated in an engaging online learning environment anytime, anyplace and at any pace.

Learning Management Systems usually include:

- Centralized, automated administration
- Auto enrollment and self-manageable student profiles and activity
- Manager enrollment and approval
- Course Catalogues
- Certification
- Integration with other technologies
- Compliance and performance tracking and management systems
- Tools to group people into demographic or organizational units
- Assessment and testing of student pre and post test results
- Display of scores and transcripts

- Coursework and roster grading and processing
- Ad Hoc reports
- Message centers and email capability
- Security
- Ability to charge bills to appropriate credit cards and cost centers

At CareStar we use multiple Learning Management Systems to deliver different forms of media. We are currently using audio-centered, text-image-centered and video-centered systems. Let me explain more about them:

Audio-centered

Audio recordings, often in the form of podcasts, are usually published to the internet as mp3 files. Podcasts are digital audio broadcasts of a lecture or instruction. These are designed to be downloaded for listening on a personal computer or an mp3 player such as an ipod.

Downloading audio courses gives students the ability to listen while exercising, driving to work or lying in bed. The disadvantage is that students don't readily have video or hard copy resources to reinforce the lesson.

Text-image-centered

When you add images to printed material and post it on the internet you have a text-image-centered system. In this format, basic courses are usually prepared in Microsoft Word or a similar program.

Some fear that adding multiple images to text pages will slow their students' computers to a significant crawl. However, at CareStar we found that their computers have no major issues with multiple graphics.

Video-centered:

Webcasts- Video recordings are often published to the internet as webcasts that utilize streaming media files. These files allow students to watch videos in real time so they don't have to download large files.

Web Conferencing- Web conferencing is used to conduct live meetings and presentations over the Internet, allowing host and audience interaction. Webinars, on the other hand, allow people to watch a seminar the same as they would watch a concert online. These are 'live' in the sense that they follow an agenda, with a starting and ending time, and sometimes allow the audience the chance to ask questions.

Webinars- We use webinars to display our software at CareStar. It has proven to be very effective in showcasing our programs while allowing the customer to ask questions.

Video conferencing- Video conferencing uses audio and video communication to bring people at different sites together for a meeting. This can be as simple as a conversation between two people in private offices (point-to-point) or it can involve several sites (multi-point) with more than one person at each site. Video conferencing also allows users to share documents, display each other's screens and draw on interactive whiteboards.

After choosing our distance learning technology, software and systems, we built a team of key players to make it all happen.

The Administrator

The administrator must be a multi-skilled individual who understands everything from textbooks and students to web media and bandwidth. This is important because he or she is required to plan, direct, manage and control the program to achieve successful results. The administrator must also work closely with technical and support service personnel to ensure that the resources are used efficiently.

The Faculty Member

Teachers and trainers are the foundation of any educational system. These faculty members have the responsibility to create courses and exams that meet the needs of the students.

In distance education, special challenges confront these professionals. For example, the instructor must:

- Understand students and their needs without the advantage of face-to-face contact.
- Adapt his or her teaching style to successfully deliver the information online
- Have a basic understanding of the different technologies and delivery systems they are using

The Support Team

Support teams keep the distance learning operations on track and on time. They are the worker bees that assist students with technical issues and problems, make sure mail outs are processed and post courses. Team members also work closely with faculty and the administrator to produce progress reports.

Now let me talk about the most important person of all: The Student

In distance learning, students should be focused on gaining knowledge and earning continuing education units known as CEU's. In most cases, distance learning students are educated individually, which means they must be self-motivated and able to concentrate well. For many of these students, working alone isn't a challenge but a welcome opportunity to work quietly and on their own schedules.

This year we have two groups of students:

1. CareStar staff and management

2. Providers of Care and Services in Ohio

CareStar staff and management

At CareStar we recognize the importance of our people, who are the foundation of our company. We support them with proper training and continuing education, which is vital to our organization's growth.

Currently, we have approximately 400 employees working in multiple states spread out over 90 counties. These employees have different roles and a variety of training needs based on their positions, which are:

Managers
Case managers
Provider Managers
Administrators
Support Staff
Quality Assurance Specialists
Home Modification Specialists
And more!

Communicating with such a diverse group is very challenging, so we felt that distance learning would be an excellent addition to our traditional education program.

At CareStar, education is the priority in corporate support. We believe educational excellence is crucial to success, as it fuels our services in home and community-based programs. With an educated workforce everyone can work towards the same goal together.

A few of the programs initiated or supported by CareStar include:

The Josephine Walters/CareStar Scholarship Fund
The CareStar School
CareStar Distance Learning

The **Josephine Walters/CareStar Scholarship Fund** was established in 1992 as a non-profit fund. It helps needy health care students stay in school by providing financial assistance for tuition.

In 2006, the **CareStar School** was registered in Ohio by the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools. CareStar is also certified to offer classroom courses to healthcare providers in the Ohio Home Care program.

CareStar Distance Learning was launched in 2007. It offers continuing education and training that is delivered through specialized learning management software. The goal of Distance Learning is to advance professional development and communication in home and community based-services. We accomplish this by providing education courses that measure learning outcomes.

Providers of Care and Services in Ohio

The second group is "Providers of Care." In Ohio, like many states, Medicaid relies on a wide variety of organizations and individuals from the Ohio Home Care Program. These people, called providers, are called on to provide consumers with services that keep them healthy and safe in their homes and communities. This program is administered by **The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)** which administers the **Ohio Home Care Program** through the **Bureau of Home and Community Services (BHCS)**.

There are currently close to 6000 providers offering a wide range of services in Ohio. These dedicated individuals are an essential part of the Ohio Home Care program. They include:

- Non-Agency Personal Care Aides
- Non-Agency Licensed Prac.Nurses
- Non-Agency Registered Nurses
- Home Health Agency Members
- Supplemental Transportation Providers
- And others!

Due to a new Ohio Home Care Program law, it is a requirement for providers to earn enough continuing education credits to remain active. If providers become inactive, they lose the right to serve an estimated 12,000 consumers in the program.

The Law States that providers must:

"Complete eight hours of in-service continuing education annually that must occur on or before the anniversary date of their enrollment as a Medicaid personal care aide provider."

Due to this law, CareStar made the decision to build a distance learning site that allows providers to earn continuing education credits, or CEU's, in a way that is simple, time-saving and cost-effective.

This program is specifically designed for Personal Care Aides to earn CEU's online by completing the appropriate courses.

The Continuing education topics include, but are not limited to, consumer health and safety, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), patient rights, emergency preparedness, communication skills, aging sensitivity, developmental stages, nutrition, transfer techniques, disease-specific trainings and mental health issues.

Almost 30 total courses are served within the categories of Consumer Health and Welfare, Communication Skills, Disease Specific Training, Emergency Preparedness, Mental Health and Illness Related Care, Aging Sensitivity, Nutrition, Developmental Stages, Transfer Techniques and Consumer Rights.

Consumer Health & Welfare - Skin Integrity Wounds and Pressure Ulcers
Consumer Health & Welfare - Food Safety in the Home
Consumer Health & Welfare - Abuse & Neglect
Consumer Health & Welfare - Dehydration Awareness
Consumer Health & Welfare - Dehydration
Consumer Health & Welfare - Fire Prevention
Consumer Health & Welfare - Hand Hygiene
Consumer Health & Welfare - Passive Range of Motion
Consumer Health & Welfare – Seizures
Consumer Health & Welfare - Observing Signs of Illness & Injury
Consumer Health & Wellness - Consumers with Swallowing Problems
Consumer Health & Welfare - Universal Precautions

Communication Skills - Dealing with a Difficult Consumer
Communication Skills - Documentation Basics

Disease Specific Training – Influenza
Disease Specific Training - Flu Prevention
Disease Specific Training - Diseases of the Respiratory System
Disease Specific Training - Diseases of the Urinary System
Disease Specific Training - Understanding Diabetes

Emergency Preparedness -Fire Safety
Emergency Preparedness - Special Needs and Emergencies

Mental Health and Illness and related care

Aging Sensitivity
Nutrition- Nutrition and the Food Pyramid
Developmental Stages-Normal Human Development
Transfer Techniques - Fall Prevention

Consumer Rights - Provider Rights

Once a company has technology, staff and students, it needs to create a system.

CareStar set up a plan to process, develop and control the entire distance learning system. This plan is essential because the instructor and students typically don't know each other and there is minimal face-to-face contact.

Decide on four critical steps in accomplishing your goals:

Design

1. Determine the need for instruction- What are your reasons for choosing distance learning education? Are there past experiences you can use in planning?
2. Analyze the audience- To better understand students and their needs you must consider their ages, comfort with technology, past experiences, interests and educational levels.
3. Establish instructional goals and objectives- Based on your audience analysis, establish instructional goals and objectives. Your instructional goals are your expected results, while objectives are the steps you will take to achieve them.

Development

1. Create outline of content- Based on your answers in the "Design" step, create an outline of the content to be covered in your agenda.
2. Review existing materials- Next, review your existing materials. Be sure not to automatically use certain information just because it is readily available or is effective in a traditional classroom setting.
3. Organize and develop content- Create engaging new material that is relevant to your students and their education.
4. Select/develop materials and delivery methods- The development of material and delivery methods often require print, data, voice and video technologies combined with face-to-face communication between developers. The challenge here is to modify your forms of delivery based on student needs, content requirements, and technical limitations.

Evaluation

1. Review goals and objectives - Evaluate your system to determine if established goals and objectives are being accomplished. You may want to pre-test on a small scale before students can access your courses, but a real test can't be performed until you fully launch your distance learning system.
2. Develop evaluation strategy- Before launching the system, decide how and when you will evaluate the effectiveness of the courses.
3. Collect and analyze data- Following the launch of system collect evaluation data. Careful analysis of these results should identify any gaps or weaknesses in your instructional process, along with its strengths and successes. The results of this evaluation analysis will provide a "springboard" to develop the revision plan.

Revision

Develop and implement revision plan- There is room for improvement in even the most carefully developed distance delivered course, and the need for revision in yours should be expected. In fact, courses that have been significantly revised are typically more successful than those that are considered flawless the first time through.

Revision plans are usually a direct result of the evaluation process along with feedback from colleagues and content specialists. The best source of revision ideas may be the instructor's own reflection on course strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, revision should be planned as soon as possible after course completion.

Often, course revisions will be minor, such as breaking a large and unwieldy instructional unit into more manageable components, increasing assignment feedback, or improving student-to-student interaction. On other occasions, major revisions will be needed. Significant course changes should be tested prior to future course use.

You can test revision ideas on small groups of students, content specialists, and colleagues. However, because each person's preferences, strengths and weaknesses are different, there is no amount of revision that can satisfy everyone perfectly. You should also take this into consideration during your revision process.

LMS Systems

There are many Learning Management Systems to choose from, so you will want to shop around for the system that best fits your needs. CareStar chose the Ziiva Prosperity Learning Management System because it gives us hosting, licensure, administration, support and delivery. More importantly, it provides an excellent platform to launch the video, audio and text-centered formats we use to educate students. We are very pleased with our choice.

Now let's focus on results!

Six months after we launched our school we took a hard look at the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning. Let me tell you what they were:

These are the advantages:

Advantage	Example
Convenience Distance learning technology can provide convenient locations for both students and	Many of the technologies, such as the internet, videotape and telephone, are easily accessed at home.

instructors.	Others, such as desktop videoconferencing, can be distributed from a single point (such as a university) to multiple remote sites (such as schools).
<p>Flexibility</p> <p>Many forms of distance learning provide students the option to participate whenever they wish, on an individualized basis.</p>	Some students may want to review a course in the middle of the night. Another student may wish to listen to a podcast while driving to work.
<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>Not only is distance learning convenient, it is also effective.</p>	Several research studies have found that distance learning is equally or more effective than traditional instruction. However, this is only true when appropriate course methods and technology are used, when there is student-to-student interaction, and when there is timely teacher-to-student feedback.
<p>Affordability</p> <p>Many forms of distance learning involve little or no additional cost to the student.</p>	Almost all homes have access to a telephone, enabling audioconferencing. A recent survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation's CARAVAN poll involving 2,000 respondents discovered that three-in-four American adults (76%) own a computer, and two-thirds (67%) own a mobile phone.
<p>Multi-sensory</p> <p>One of the benefits of distance learning is that there is a wide variety of materials that can meet everyone's learning preference.</p>	Some students learn from visual stimuli, such as video, and others learn best by listening or interacting with a computer program. If distance learning courses are well designed, they will likely offer students a wide range of choices. This can provide them with the best possible combination of interaction and media.
<p>Interactivity</p> <p>Contrary to popular opinion, distance learning courses can offer increased interaction with students.</p>	Reserved students who are too shy to ask questions in class will often "open up" when provided the opportunity to interact via e-mail or other individualized means. Through the increased interactions, teachers can better meet the needs of these individuals.
<p>Equity</p> <p>Educational inequity is a major issue in this and other countries.</p>	Some rural homecare agencies have little contact with educational trends, qualified teachers and technology. Distance learning offers great potential for better communication in states like Ohio, where 70% of the state is rural.

While thinking about the advantage and disadvantage of distance learning, one may wonder if there are really any disadvantages. Yes, there are.

These are the Disadvantages:

Disadvantage	Example
<p>Costly and complex technology</p> <p>Although distance education offers many opportunities, there are accompanying costs that are inevitable. Live video communication for example, requires careful planning of the equipment and facilities. Funds are also required to pay the individuals who create, manage, support and research the distance learning system. For online learning, a student must own a computer or have access to one (usually with internet capability)..</p>	<p>CareStar made significant investments in people, trainers, software and technology to launch the online school.</p>
<p>Advance planning</p> <p>Distance learning instructors and students are sometimes required to make sacrifices to get things done in time.</p>	<p>Planning takes time, and time is money. We chose CareStar state-certified trainers to develop our courses for providers in need of CEU's. Combined they had over 50 years experience developing and teaching courses to home health aides and homecare companions.</p> <p>Although we had professional help, it still took a lot of preparation to write and edit the many courses and then test them on students.</p>

With your own company, you can compare the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning to those of traditional learning and decide which is right for you.

We also took a look at our costs. Was there a cost benefit?

This is not an easy "Yes" or "No" answer.

There are more factors that go into the cost of distance education, but that doesn't necessarily mean it is more expensive than traditional education. A simple financial analysis is not enough, as there are many other variables to consider such as the increased value of students to their employers and other stakeholders.

Unfortunately, we can't give you a simple answer because your company's needs are probably not identical to ours. However, we can tell you how we did it and you can take any ideas you like.

The way we approached this project was to ask ourselves three basic questions. You can ask yourself the same:

1. What are the education needs of your students?
2. How much money can you afford to spend?
3. How much return-on-investment is acceptable?

Step One: What are the education needs of your students?

What are your training needs?

What are your goals in developing the system?

Do you want to increase student progress tracking and reporting?

Are your needs mainly administrative?

Will you deliver your training online, in a classroom, through a CD-ROM or DVD or will you use a combination of all three?

Are your students located within one site, in multiple locations or all over the globe?

Will the system only be used by internal employees, or will external customers, clients and partners also use it?

Do you want a system that you can personally customize or are you content with a one-size-fits-all approach?

Do you want to include live learning events over the Internet, or will you focus on self-paced learning? Do you envision students collaborating?

One more important point to consider: Is your organization committed to learning the system? Make sure that key players in your company are committed to the idea that continued success is tied to growth in knowledge, learning and development. This commitment is critical to the success of your learning programs.

Step Two: How much money can you afford to spend?

How much money can you realistically spend on a learning management system? What is your current training budget? How much will you be able to spend within the next five years?

Step Three: How much return-on-investment is acceptable?

Return on investment is not an exact science, especially in the area of training. How much is increased employee knowledge and skill worth, exactly? It's difficult to measure.

For example, a recent study of 1,500 enterprises found that the return on training investment was 24%. It found that an increase in training of 10 hours per year per employee was associated with a 0.6% increase in productivity.

When do you declare that your new Learning Management System is a success? Is it a success when it's up and running smoothly, or when X number of learners have used the system, or when your financials improve due to increased employee knowledge?

Here are some key indicators that can help measure the payoff to your company:

Increased knowledge
Decreased administrative costs
Greater access to company-wide knowledge
Increased student productivity and/or interest
Decreased travel time for students (if you implement computer-based or online training)
Financial return-on-investment

It's important to know what you're measuring. Successful return-on-investment calculators separate true data from data that's affected by factors like work environment and level of management support.

Instead of analyzing every criteria and factor involved, pick a few-- travel time and printing costs, for example. This saves valuable evaluation time and money while yielding the key data you seek.

We hope you found this poster session interesting.

Learning never stops and technology is always changing, so you need to keep up with current education trends. Let me encourage you to sign up for our monthly newsletter. It is packed with information about Distance Learning for Home and Community-Based Programs and other information about CareStar.

Our next newsletter will include access to this presentation in three forms:

1. PowerPoint presentation complete with images and voice-overs
2. Podcast (audio)
3. PDF text document

Visit our website at www.carestar.com and sign up. It's free, easy and full of valuable information, and it allows you to unsubscribe at any time.

Again, thank you for viewing our poster session. I hope you found it useful.

Please feel free to [contact me](#) if you have any question or comments.

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