Belgium’s Landelijke Thuiszorg reduces the administration for caregivers thanks to DIGIPASS technology

Our Western society faces huge challenges. It has to give an answer to the changing demographic ratios. An increasing number of elderly people have to be taken care of. Landelijke Thuiszorg – which can be translated in English as “National Homecare” – plays along with this tendency. In Belgium, elderly people now have the possibility to live longer in the comfort and familiarity of their own house, thanks to home health care and help, offered by Landelijke Thuiszorg. VASCO’s DIGIPASS 865 was especially developed to assist caregivers in their day-to-day tasks. Together with the Center of Care Technology VASCO created the ‘eZorg Logboek’.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUSS

Even though Krista and the other caretakers want to give their undivided attention to their clients, the whole administrative chore is inevitable. Every month, a performance form has to be submitted, signed by every client who was granted care the past month. The performance forms are handled by the head office in order to calculate the caretakers’ wages and the clients’ invoices.

Gaby Trompet, Director Staff & Organization at Landelijke Thuiszorg, acknowledges the problem. “Because of the long-lasting process of the paper documents, the administrative handling sometimes takes weeks. This is of course much too long and therefore, we want to get rid of the time-consuming administration. The tempo and the ease of the information flow have to rise urgently.”

IN GOOD COMPANY

Paul Anrys is a dapper man of 90 years old. He still goes out shopping himself, drives the car and takes out his daughter’s dog for a walk twice a day. His wife passed away a couple of years ago and from then on, he has lived alone in their big house. This being-alone has been tough and therefore, he is always happy when caretaker Krista visits him twice a week. She does the laundry, prepares food, assists in keeping up the house and, particularly, she bears Paul company. Beside this, a garden service makes sure the garden is well-tended and a cleaning service keeps the house tidy.

Landelijke Thuiszorg’s caretakers write the details about their clients in a little notebook that is kept in the buffet’s drawer in the living room. Also Krista writes about Paul: whether he has taken the necessary pills or whether he has eaten well. Next to this, caretakers also tote a portfolio in which they stock up the documents that have to be signed by the client in order to recognize the performance. And this is only the start of the administrative fuss.
The question is, however, how Landelijke Thuizorg can effectuate this. The available means are indeed not proportional to the increasing amount of elderly people and the care they need. Landelijke Thuizorg faces the choice: either they invest more in administration thus cutting down on service, or they reduce and simplify the administrative part so that more time and money can be spent on service. “It goes without saying that we choose the last option,” says Gaby Trompet decidedly. “We do not want to lower the service. However, we are eager to find ways to tackle the unwieldy administration.”

**JOIN FORCES**

Groep KVLV – the umbrella organization Landelijke Thuiszorg is part of - , University of Antwerp’s Center of CareTechnology (CZT) and VASCO joined forces. Every party can rely on its knowledge in its particular area of competence. CZT bridges between the social service sector and technology and has already acquired years of experience. VASCO brings along its security technology from the banking sector.

“We postulated five requirements the solution had to meet,” explains Gaby Trompet, Director Staff & Organization at Landelijke Thuizorg. “First of all, we wanted to set up a digital system to streamline the performance registration and information flow from the head office to the caretakers and vice versa. It has to be kept in mind that caretakers are on the road most of their time and they seldom visit the head office. Secondly, a caretaker only has at his or her disposal what the client has at home. Often, elderly people do not own a computer with an internet connection. A third important matter is that the average caretaker is not an IT specialist. Finally, the security of the clients’ data has to ensured and the solution has to be affordable,” says Ms. Trompet.

**THE ‘eZORG LOGBOEK’**

The result of the joint cooperation is called eZorg Logboek: a VASCO DIGIPASS 865 completely tailored to the caretakers’ needs. The eZorg Logboek is specifically designed to authenticate people in a safe and convenient way. This means that it can be guaranteed that only the right person logs on to his or her account. Moreover, the information that is sent, is encrypted thanks to the DIGIPASS technology, which implies that data cannot be intercepted. Since it is all about clients’ confidential medical information, this is a point of special interest.

“Thanks to VASCO and the Center for Care Technology we found a good balance between cost price, user convenience and security,” explains Gaby Trompet enthusiastically. “VASCO brought along its knowledge from the banking sector. The DIGIPASS device establishes enough confidence, both from the customers’ and the government’s point of view. It is a fully fledged alternative to the obliged signing of the performance documents. Furthermore, the device is affordable: the capital outlay is 8 to 10 times less than the purchase of smart phones or tablet computers. We will evaluate the project after a 2 years testing phase and I truly hope we can expand the plan.”

The eZorg Logboek is multifunctional: the planning and performances can be shared via the device, but also briefly-worded data – e.g. information about medication or the input imposed by the authorities – can be stored on the DIGIPASS device.

The authentication requests are validated by VACMAN Controller, VASCO’s authentication platform on the server side. This platform guarantees that only the proper users get access to the application they want to log on to.

**HOW DOES IT WORK**

The whole system will be tested during 2 years. Krista decided to take part in the pilot project, together with ten other caretakers and 40 clients. In the longer term, 39 caretakers and 160 clients will have participated in the project.

When Krista leaves Paul after a day of work, he acknowledges her performance by inserting his electronic identity card in the DIGIPASS 865 device. When Krista arrives at home, she logs on to the eZorg Communication Platform and connects the device with a USB to her computer. All data are encrypted and sent to the platform.

In the future, also other people concerned will get access to the patients’ data in a quick and easy way. The purpose is that general practitioners, nurses, physiotherapists and the elderly people’s children can follow up the assistance plan.
Paul has high expectations of the change into the digital era. “We have to keep up with the times, don’t we,” he says. “Moreover, I think my children will be happy when they will have access to my documents on the platform in the near future. They will be able to follow up everything and that will give them peace of mind.”

“So far, we have been happy with the results and we are curious about the results given by the caretakers and clients at the end of the pilot project,” Gaby Trompet concludes. “We hope that the eZorg Logboek can be used without too much effort, so that they can devote themselves entirely to their clients’ assistance. Caring for people has been and will be our core business after all.”

Objective

Landelijke Thuiszorg sought for a way to reduce the administrative chore, so that caretakers could devote themselves entirely to their clients rather than busy themselves with the paperwork.

Challenge

The solution had to meet a couple of criteria. First of all, the information flow with paper documents had to be transformed into a digital system. Secondly, it has to be stand-alone: most clients do not own a computer with an Internet access. Thirdly, it has to be kept in mind that the average caretaker is not an IT specialist. The affordability and security were the fourth and fifth criteria.

Solution

Together with Landelijke Thuiszorg, Groep KVLV and the University of Antwerp’s Center for CareTechnology, VASCO has developed eZorg Logboek. Clients acknowledge the caretaker’s performance with their electronic identity card and DIGIPASS 865, which implies that the caretaker’s portfolio is not that heavy anymore. When the caretaker arrives at home, he or she can transfer the information from the eZorg Logboek to the eZorg Communication Platform, which can also be accessed by the general practitioner, the nurses and the elderly people’s children.

About Flanders Care

Flanders’ Care is a project of the Flemish Government with its mission being to measurably improve the offering of quality care through innovation and to stimulate responsible entrepreneurship in the care economy. Its objective is to develop and implement innovative breakthroughs in all forms of care. This makes it possible, among other projects, to meet the ever-changing needs of a population which is growing older.

About Centrum voor ZorgTechnologie (University of Antwerp)

Centrum voor ZorgTechnologie (Center for CareTechnology) bridges between the social service sector and the technology developers. The center joining different university faculties urges students, educated in different disciplines, to cooperate to solve concrete problems. Technological innovations have to make it possible to treat unsolved problems or to improve existing solutions.

About Landelijke Thuiszorg

Landelijke Thuiszorg came into being more than 50 years ago from the KVLV, the Flemish catholic women’s movement. The purpose of this service for family caring is to provide assistance and care to people who need it. Special attention is paid to the most fragile, less fortunate and underprivileged people. There is a differentiated offering: care for families and elderly people, maternity care and assistance for disabled people. More than 1,300 staff members take care of well over 7,300 clients.
VASCO is a leading supplier of strong authentication and e-signature solutions and services specializing in Internet Security applications and transactions. VASCO has positioned itself as global software company for Internet Security and designs, develops, markets and supports DIGIPASS®, CertiID™, VACMAN®, IDENTIKEY® and aXsGUARD® authentication products. VASCO’s prime markets are the financial sector, enterprise security, e-commerce and e-government.

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