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PROMISING PRACTICES



Behavioral health provider uses innovative IT solution to connect its multiple locations

[Kennebec Behavioral Health](#) (KBH) operates twenty sites, clinics, community-based hubs, and housing operations that serve persons across eight counties in the state of Maine. Managing such a vast catchment area presents challenges not only with day-to-day operations and logistics across sites, but also with positive engagement and relationships among staff. To help address these broad challenges, KBH began investing in technology solutions to integrate its network of employees and services. These solutions have now become some of the primary tools used to further the organization's mission.

One such innovative technology solution was specifically developed to address the challenges of staff engagement and unity. Because of its multiple locations, KBH staff members didn't often get a chance to meet and get to know their colleagues working at other sites. To promote interaction across counties, the IT team developed KBH's own online news and social intranet site called KBH Connect.

Originally created exclusively for staff engagement, the benefit of using KBH Connect for human resource (HR) material and other organization wide communications was quickly realized. The site now consists of dozens of linked pages that chronicle daily program activities; offer tech tips for organizational equipment; and provide updates on staff news, awards, and recognitions. All 400 KBH employees can contribute to KBH Connect from any of the organization's locations, and their profile picture appears when they post.

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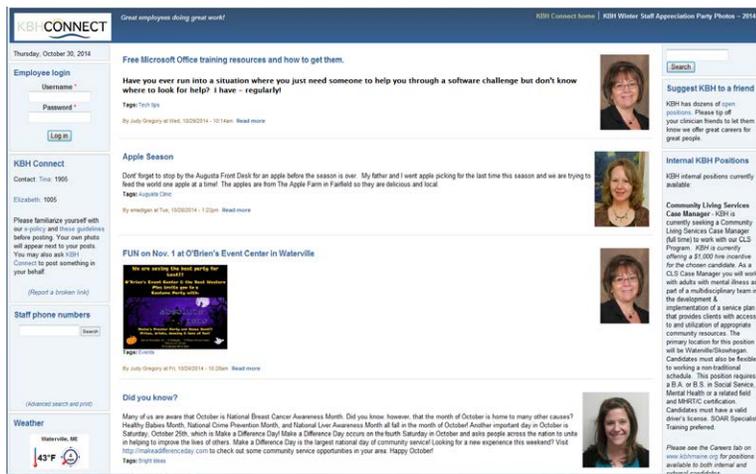
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Screenshot of the KBH Connect interface

KBH Connect features include:

- A dynamic news and social post section.
- Helpful resources for clients such as links to area food pantries and the Health Insurance Marketplace.
- A one-stop location for HR documents related to health insurance, finance, and employment policies.
- Links to organizational resources such as annual reports, program brochures, and organization websites.
- A searchable employee phonebook that presents each employee's phone number, location, and program.

The IT staff created KBH Connect by using a free third-party blogging software, [Drupal](#)TM. Drupal is described on its webpage as, "An open source software maintained and developed by a community of over 1,000,000 users and developers." The IT staff members placed the coding behind KBH's firewall so that only employees can access the content. They then added modules and themes offered by Drupal to customize the functionality and appearance of the site. Companies implementing a similar solution may also consider [WordPress](#), another blogging software with comparable options.

Before KBH Connect was implemented, it was difficult for KBH staff to find up-to-date organizational information and current forms, and it was a challenge to provide information to all staff members in a way that was conversational and informal, and supported a positive atmosphere. Its creation has resulted in an improved service delivery system, a better-informed community, and well-educated staff members. It has also helped support an environment of camaraderie that allows staff members to get to know one another and share and congratulate achievements. For example, KBH Connect was recently used to recognize a home- and community-based staff member who saved the life of a choking baby during a home visit.

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KBH Connect is only one piece of the technology innovations implemented by KBH. Other solutions include a custom electronic health record, a productivity dashboard, and training modules. In earning a three-year accreditation from [CARF](#) in 2013, KBH's innovative uses of technology were cited collectively as an exemplary practice. For further information about KBH Connect or other technology solutions, contact Tina Chapman, KBH's development and communications director, at tchapman@kbhmaine.org or (207) 873-2136.

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