



Case Study

An Agile Approach to a PPE Supply Chain



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies

About OACAS

For more than 100 years, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) has been enhancing and promoting the welfare and well-being of children, youth, and families in Ontario.

When the Government of Ontario declared a pandemic emergency on March 17, 2020, Lyndon Smith, the Director of OACAS Shared Services knew things were going to change very quickly.

Adapting in real time

As the pandemic situation worsened and provincial supplies of hand sanitizer, face masks, gloves, and other critical personal protective equipment (PPE) dwindled, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services needed to act fast.

"The Assistant Deputy Minister called us on Friday, April 3rd," Smith recalls. "We needed to create a PPE procurement, logistics and supply chain system for 50 children's aid societies and Indigenous child well-being societies as fast as possible, so our frontline workers could stay safe."

The mandate included a central function that could procure and manage bulk purchases of PPE and ship it, as required, to locations across the province. This meant coordinating existing and new suppliers in a turbulent market, while planning for scalability.

The team also had to set up the order processing and management, warehousing, inventory control, inbound and outbound orders, shipping and project communications and governance.

Experience counts in 3PL

Smith's experienced team knew how to streamline procurement processes using its Agile methodology but needed a 3PL partner that could quickly organize the end-to-end logistics.

Having previously worked with SCI it was Smith's first call. "The ministry called on a Friday; we spoke to SCI on the Saturday and had their plan by Sunday. On Monday, we had approval to go and two days later we got our first order," Smith remembers.

SCI was the go-to 3PL partner because of its deep experience in healthcare logistics, as well as capabilities for picking and packing small orders quickly and accurately. “I knew SCI had the team to get this done.”

Built to scale

SCI immediately set up three warehouses and worked with Smith’s team to implement the inventory and order management and tracking. “We did in six days what would have taken six months in normal times,” Smith observes. “I knew if we did a good job, it would scale fast.”

Within weeks, the original group of 50 participating agencies exploded to more than 1,100.

Millions of products delivered

In just under 11 months, the program had shipped more than 20 million pieces of PPE including five million face masks, 12 million pairs of gloves, and 255,000 bottles of hand sanitizer.

The program, which started with a handful of items, now manages more than 55 SKUs and continues to handle hundreds of weekly orders.

The initial mandate of a few months has now been extended into 2021 and the team is adding additional technology. “We see opportunities to better understand how we can integrate more resilience and long-term planning into our logistics and supply chain system,” Smith says.

The team’s efforts were recognized publicly by the Associate Minister for Children and Women’s Issues, but Smith’s team takes pride in its daily contribution. “The thing we’re proudest of is the impact we had during the pandemic emergency. Our sector does important work: frontline workers in social services and child welfare need our PPE supplies so they can help the most vulnerable people in our province. It feels good to be part of that.”



“The thing we’re proudest of is the impact we had during the pandemic emergency, to be able to support our frontline workers so they could help the most vulnerable people in the province.”

- Lyndon Smith, Director of OACAS Shared Services

“I’m proud of the responsive and adaptable approach the SCI team took to this challenge. It’s gratifying to be part of a solution that gets essential PPE supplies to the organizations that need them.”

- Chris Galindo, President & CEO, SCI Group Inc.

To learn more about how we can help you accelerate and scale your logistics and supply chain, visit www.sci.ca or call 1-866-773-7735.