

# Newsletter



## TCS HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGIES

The Clear Choice of Medical Management Professionals



### CEO PERSPECTIVE

## Lessons Learned from the Barrel Room: *The Mystery of Blending*

*Rob Pock, Founder & CEO, TCS Healthcare Technologies*

Sometimes the most profound truths are found in the simplest of life's tasks. Recently, while tending to the wine in my barrel room I had the opportunity to test and sample the three wines we made this past year; Petite Sirah, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. I extract from each barrel about 250 ml of each variety, perform various lab tests, and then my wife, Esther, and I begin the delightful task of updating our tasting notes.



*Rob Pock, Founder & CEO*

Each of the three wines is remarkably different and even at this young age they have the distinctive family characteristic of their varietal. After we update our tasting notes we experiment

with the remaining wine from our sample. We blend one with another in different proportions until we achieve a single blend that we like better than any of the separate varietals. We were amazed at the results.

Growing great fruit, fermentation and proper storage are all essential but blending truly is the winemaker's art. The art of blending talent, skills and personalities in the workplace to achieve superior results attests to the skill and artfulness of a great manager. In well over 30 years of managing and directing the efforts of my staffs, I have discovered the value of blending.

Each individual within the TCS family brings with them experience, skill, aptitudes and

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### CLINICAL INSIGHTS

## Staying Ahead of the Annual Trends

*Pat Stricker, RN, MEd, Senior Vice President, TCS Healthcare Technologies*

At this time of year, we see numerous articles and blogs discussing health care trends and predictions for the upcoming months. 2012 is no exception. These trends include a range of topics, but a big issue on most case managers' minds is how "medical management" and "technology" will work together to improve care management processes. Leveraging technology to support and enhance medical management solutions is essential to optimize clinical and financial outcomes for patients, providers and payers.



*Pat Stricker, RN, MEd*

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## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

# Acuity Application Boasts New Look

**T**CS' new Acuity 6.1 software suite, which includes updates to ACUITY, AcuStrat, AcuExchange and AcuPrint, supports compliance of the HIPAA 5010/278 transaction standards and the ICD-10-PCS/CM code sets mandated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) well ahead of the October 1, 2013, deadline.

**NEW**

Newly upgraded, the entire suite supports the new Crystal Reports Prompting Engine 2011 version. ACUITY, AcuStrat, AcuExchange and AcuPrint now include a re-engineered Crystal Reports Prompting Engine that provides seamless integration between applications and provides dynamic prompting to our end users. The new Crystal Reports Prompting Engine now includes the ability to change Crystal Reports Prompting Engine on the fly, while dynamically reading and changing your connection properties automatically and at the same time.

In addition to our new Crystal Reports Prompting Engine, Acuity 6.1 interface has been revitalized with many new visual and user preferences that will empower our customers.

### Acuity 6.1 includes:

- Updated GUI interface
- Simple one-click screen maximization
- New integrated spell checker
- New user preference options
- New screen manager toolbar allowing management of multiple patients at once

In addition to enhancing the ACUITY interface, TCS completely rebuilt AcuPrint from the ground up. In AcuPrint 6.1 we took the set it and forget it approach. AcuPrint 6.1 is a more powerful than ever

before, easy to use batch printing utility that can be scheduled to print letters or reports in mass to multiple printers simultaneously.

**ACUITY, AcuStrat, AcuExchange and AcuPrint now include a re-engineered Crystal Reports Prompting Engine that provides seamless integration between applications and provides dynamic prompting to our end users.**

### AcuPrint 6.1 now includes:

- Customizable grids/rearrange columns/auto filter per column/resizable screens
- Scheduling of batch printing jobs
- Historical record of all jobs printing
- Job notification on completion and failure
- Printing to multiple letters simultaneously to different printers

The Acuity Advanced Care product suite is compatible with Windows Server 2008, Windows Server 2008 R2, Windows 7, SQL Server 2008, and SQL Server 2008 R2. TCS Healthcare's Acuity Advanced Care products can be hosted locally by a client or remotely through a cloud configuration. The product suite includes ACUITY, AcuPort Advanced, AcuCare, AcuStrat and AcuExchange. ■

## CEO Perspective

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personalities that make them unique. At TCS, it is the management team's job to find the combination of individuals that produce optimal results. I am happy to say we have the best blend of individuals on the planet. The TCS team is a gold medal vintage. ■

## MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

# Moving Toward Health IT Systems: HIMSS Annual Leadership Survey

With all of the initiatives promoting health information technology (IT), it is helpful from time to time to get a barometric reading of how we are progressing. In addition to the TCS bi-annual survey on care management trends, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) publishes an annual survey that also sheds light on how the U.S. health care system is embracing IT systems and workflows.

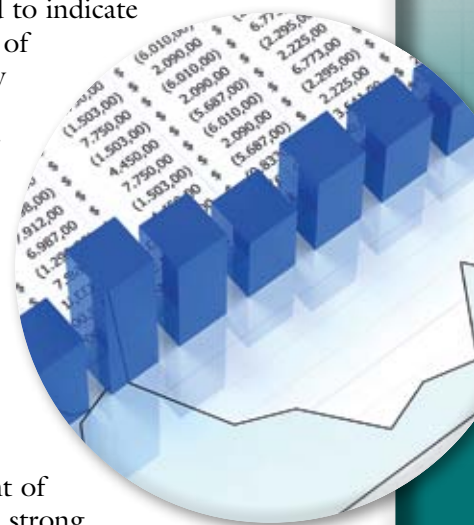
### Report Highlights

When asked to identify the single IT priority at this time, half of the 326 health care professionals who participated in the 22nd Annual HIMSS Leadership Survey said “meeting meaningful use criteria.” Two-thirds of respondents reported that their organization has already made additional IT investments to position themselves to qualify for the incentives associated with achieving meaningful use.

### As reported in the executive summary, other key findings include:

- **Implementation of Electronic Health Records.** Slightly more than half of respondents indicated they have a fully operational EHR in at least one facility in their organization.
- **HIE Participation.** Almost half of respondents (45 percent) reported that their organization participates in a health information exchange.
- **CPT-10/ICD-10 Migration.** Nearly half of the respondents reported that implementing CPT-10/ICD-10 was the top area of focus for financial IT systems at their organization.
- **Supporting Patient Care.** Respondents strongly believe that IT can have a positive impact on health care delivery. Approximately 40 percent of respondents reported that IT can have the most impact on patient care by improving clinical and quality outcomes.
- **Clinical Input.** Clinicians are active participants in the IT environments, playing a role in IT system evaluation/selection, acting as project champions and participating in the development of policies related to clinical information systems.
- **Security Vulnerability.** Health care IT professionals continued to indicate that an internal breach of security is their primary concern regarding the security of data at their organization.
- **CIO Leadership.** Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of senior IT executives reported that they sit on the executive committee at their organization. Additionally, 87 percent of respondents reported a strong level of integration between their organizations’ overall strategic plan and the IT strategic plan.
- **Cloud Computing.** One-quarter of respondents indicated that their primary focus in this area was their server environment, which also includes virtual services. Only a handful of respondents reported that cloud computing was their primary focus with regard to their organization’s infrastructure. ■

*For more information about HIMSS, go to [www.himss.org](http://www.himss.org).*



## Clinical Insights

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In reality, looking ahead one year at a time often is not enough to make accurate predictions. In fact, software developers need to look even further into the future to identify emerging trends and needs in order to anticipate and design future innovations. But that isn't always easy in this industry, because things change so quickly. "Key" predictions for this year may not turn out to be correct or they may be irrelevant in a year or two. There is no "crystal ball" that we can simply rely on with 100% certainty.

However, here are a few key observations, okay "predictions" if you will, that are impacting the U.S. health care system in general and case management in particular:

- **Promoting Patient-Centered Initiatives.**

The patient-centered model is "here to stay," at least for the foreseeable future. Accountable care organizations, patient-centered medical home, and guided care programs have shown cost reduction through reduced admissions, increased quality, and high satisfaction rates. These initiatives provide and rely on more direct physician involvement and leadership. This team collaboration means we need to develop better communication channels and transparency of information for all members of the care team.

- **Enhancing Patient Engagement Strategies.**

Since the patient, family members and caregivers are at the heart of the emerging patient-centered model, we also need to improve communications between them and the care team. Easy tools need to be developed that encourage patient education, engagement, and self-management. Millions of patients use the internet to review test results, schedule appointments, get health information, and email their physicians. This trend will continue to grow, so we have to find better ways to continually improve the experience.

- **Expanding Communication Channels.** The rise in social media interactions to support patient health is another communication trend that is rapidly expanding. It will not affect our elderly population in any great numbers now, since they don't routinely

use social media, but it will become increasingly more engrained in the way we communicate with younger patients and their families. Similarly, text messaging, email, online video chat, VOIP-based telephone systems, and other communication channels will increase our ability to stay connected with family, caregivers, providers and others.

- **Empowering Remote and Wireless Monitoring.**

We are seeing more care coordination being done at provider sites and in-home visits through wireless connections using laptops, tablets and smartphones. This is creating increased concerns for the IT departments regarding privacy and security. Remote home monitoring is less expensive to provide now and easier to set up and manage, so it is going to be used more in the coming years. The data from these devices needs to be seamlessly integrated into the medical management software, so care managers can be alerted immediately if potentially dangerous situations arise.

- **Expanding Care Coordination Interventions.**

We are already aware of other key care coordination processes that are essential, i.e., transition of care, medication reconciliation and management, and patient safety. Tracking and analysis of readmissions is another key area. Medical management systems need to include tools to easily manage, document, and report outcomes for these processes. Systems should currently have these capabilities, but they need to be improved upon, as we learn more about which care interventions drive the most successful outcomes.

- **Relying on Efficiency and Real-time Feedback Loops.**

Efficiency and cost reduction remains a key objective for all programs. Real-time dashboard reporting and data analytics are essential to determine actionable areas for improved quality and cost savings. Business process management is another essential component. Systems need to be easily configured, based on unique business logic, to drive automated, streamlined workflows that improve efficiency, increase productivity, and reduce costs.

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## IN THE NEWS

### Patients Only Receive Half of Preventive Health Services Available

A new study reports that patients in the United States only receive about half of the suggested preventive health screenings recommended by doctors. Screenings for colorectal cancer, breast cancer, and hypertension were found to be the services most frequently overlooked. Visit [www.upi.com](http://www.upi.com) for details.

### U.S. Wants Effective Alzheimer's Treatment by 2025

The Obama administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are developing a plan to prevent and treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025. The idea is geared towards addressing both the medical and social implications of Alzheimer's and other dementia-causing diseases, which are estimated to affect around 5.4 million Americans. According to HHS, "While the ultimate goals are to develop effective prevention and treatment modalities by 2025, ongoing research and clinical inquiry can inform our ability to delay onset of Alzheimer's disease, minimize its symptoms, and delay its progression." See <http://aspe.hhs.gov> for more information.

### Red Cross Fined Nearly \$9.6 Million for Blood Safety Issue

Inspectors from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) found violations in American Red Cross records from April 2010 to October 2010. Sixteen of the organization's facilities were found to be non-compliant with blood-safety rules. The Red Cross is the largest supplier of donated blood in the United States. No evidence was found that our nation's blood supply was compromised in anyway, said Mary Malarkey, head of compliance at the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. For more information, visit [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com).

### Research Finds Vitamin D Has No Clear Benefits for Patients with COPD

A recent study conducted by the Annals of Internal Medicine indicates that vitamin D has no clearly definable benefits for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Contrary to previous belief that vitamin D reduced the frequency of COPD exacerbations; the study that monitored 182 patients with a history of recent exacerbations found that high-doses did not reduce the occurrence of the exacerbations. Go to [www.annals.org](http://www.annals.org). ■

## Clinical Insights

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- **Creating Practical Technologies with Elegant Designs.** With Steve Job's recent passing, we are reminded of the importance of merging technology with elegant designs. Job's vision for combining iPhones with thousands of health applications that can be easily downloaded from iTunes, or integrating the myriad of EMR/EHR apps that can now run on iPads, signal much more of what is to come. Technology that is ready out of the box, practical and functional!

These are just some of the trends that software developers, case managers and others should keep

in mind when developing strategies for future enhancements and implementing care management programs. Therefore, it is important that you provide your thoughts and perspectives to your technology vendors regarding what you feel is needed. This will help us both move forward together to stay ahead of the trends and create innovative IT and medical management enhancements.

Health care is an ever-changing industry, therefore, IT applications and clinical processes need to keep pace. By looking forward, we can do a better job with our tasks today and anticipate what is coming tomorrow. ■

*Originally published on CMSA's website.*

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

# 2011 Employee of the Year: Stephanie Bartlett

**T**CS Healthcare's 2011 Employee of the Year, Stephanie Bartlett, RN, feels that every TCS employee is worthy of this designation. "I was truly surprised and honored to be TCS' employee of the year," she says. "But everyone here is wonderful at their job and a pleasure to work with, so I feel this honor belongs to all of us!"



*Stephanie Bartlett, RN*

In her seventh year as a clinical applications consultant with TCS, Bartlett is a perfect fit with her background in IT and nursing. Her unique perspective allows her to provide explanations to clients about the TCS product suite and technology in a way they can understand. In addition to serving as the one who "bridges the gap," Bartlett also handles implementations, clinical configurations,

work flows, care programs and client training.

"Stephanie was a key contributor this past year and really proved to be a team player. She willingly accepted new challenges in the areas of training, prospective client demonstrations, prospective client sales visits and excelled with each new opportunity," says Nancy Wallace, director of client services at TCS Healthcare. "She also played a valuable role in some exciting new clinical development enhancements, which will be unveiled later this year. I am fortunate and thrilled to have Stephanie as part of the client services team."



*The TCS Team*

A seventh-generation Florida native, she usually visits the TCS offices in Auburn, CA, once or twice a year. She does travel to see clients around the country and conducts on-site user training.

Married for 30 years, Bartlett says her "husband has been very supportive" of her long hours. When she is not working, the Bartletts are consumed with renovating their house, which she refers to as a 'concrete mausoleum.' It is one of the only all-concrete houses in the state of Florida and the renovation project has proved to be a labor of love.

"TCS is a very close knit team, and we're very well informed about what's going on with the company," says Bartlett. "We provide a lot of staff-level input as far as what direction we're going to take. That involvement allows TCS to be innovative because we are continually growing—we don't just make a product and sit back and wait for the world to knock at our door; we're very proactive about getting out there and determining our next steps." ■

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