

Newsletter



**TCS HEALTHCARE
TECHNOLOGIES**

The Clear Choice of Medical Management Professionals



CEO PERSPECTIVE

Moving Forward

By Rob Pock, Founder & CEO
TCS Healthcare Technologies

My wife Esther and I recently returned from Indonesia where we spent time helping some Indonesian friends with their Relief Agency. Esther was training a group of unwed, expectant mothers who live in the shelter home, while I taught at the bible college and spoke at three different venues. We were without news from the United States for two weeks. Upon our return we were immediately engulfed with the dialog surrounding the debate around Medicare and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). The big question



was, where is our country going and who is best equipped to lead us there?

Leaving a meeting with the TCS executive team, I realized we are asking the same type of questions. What do we do next and what strategy do we employ that will get us there? In an organization like ours these are questions we constantly ask ourselves. With the shock waves brought on by PPACA and the resulting emphasis on patient-centered medical home (PCMH) programs and accountable care organizations (ACOs), we are faced with options and opportunities we didn't have three years ago.

These new opportunities require **ACUITY** to be more collaborative and open, allowing for greater engagement of providers, patients, and employers, while at the same time maintaining security, data integrity and compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). It is no easy task and the ultimate direction taken by our development team needs to be well thought out and tailored for the next five years.

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CLINICAL INSIGHTS

The Rise of Text Messaging in Health Care

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

The advent of text messaging has changed the way we communicate both personally and professionally. No longer is communication restricted to face-to-face conversations, a phone call, a letter, or even an email. Over the past 20 years, the ability to communicate in 140 characters or less (160 characters for smartphones) has revolutionized the way people interact. You can debate whether this change has been "for the better or worse", but it definitely is a significant change in the way we communicate with one another.



Since 2008, the Case Management Society of America (CMSA), the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians, Inc. (ABQAURP), and TCS Healthcare Technologies have been co-sponsors of a bi-annual survey looking at how health information technology trends are

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UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Linda Killian, Technical Support Manager

November marks Linda Killian's 12th year with the TCS family. When she began her career in the technical support department, it only supported one product—which was Wisdom. Over the past twelve years the department has grown and the list of products they support has expanded considerably.



“A very important part of my role at TCS is keeping track of the software applications that each client has, and which version of the product they are on,” notes Killian. “Interacting with clients is one of the aspects of my job that I enjoy the most, I like keeping an ongoing connection with them and building rapport.”

“Linda has been our ‘face’ to the customer for 12 years. She provides excellent customer support and technical service, as well as acting as an advocate for clients. We constantly receive very positive comments about Linda from our clients,” notes Pat Stricker, RN, MEd, senior vice president at TCS.

When she isn't interacting with clients and providing top-notch support, Linda enjoys spending time with her family, swimming, cycling and watching movies. Happily married for 27-years, she has two daughters, one in college and the other a senior in high school.

“The thing I like most about being a part of the TCS family is seeing the life cycle of a product—starting in the development phase, moving to design, development, QA, and finally to production,” says Linda.

“The teamwork is tremendous at TCS and you get a real sense of family, there's none of the anonymity that you find in corporate America

and each day I really feel like I am making a contribution.” The TCS family is lucky to have Linda as a part of the team. ■

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The life's blood of our business has always been our client-partners. They direct our steps and provide us with the input we need to move forward. Running towards the opportunities created by changes imposed by PPACA with new products and enhanced features without having collaborated with our client-partners would be putting the cart before the horse.

In any discussion regarding product direction we would be remiss if we did not ask:

- What will our current partners require in the near future?
- What impact will the changes have on software upgrading?
- Will a change improve our partners operation and efficiency?
- Will a change improve care and outcomes for the patients served by our partners?
- Will a decision distract from TCS' core competency?

Personally, I take these questions home at night, as do many of the members of the TCS team. We take extra care in navigating our development options because so many of you depend on us as your partner. TCS has managed to stay in business these past twenty nine years because we have never lost focus of our most important assets—our partners and our employees. We invite you to let us know how we can improve as we move towards the future, and encourage you to communicate with the TCS team. ■



Follow us on LinkedIn to find out the latest news from TCS Healthcare Technologies, participate in discussions and hear about product updates!

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impacting case management. A big part of each of the three surveys has been examining how communication channels are changing between case managers and their patients.

The 2012 results will be analyzed over the next several months, but preliminary results reinforce several trends from past years in terms of the greater reliance on technology and emerging communication platforms to optimize the clinical and financial goals of case management.

One emerging trend that is blatantly obvious is the increase in the use of text messaging within case management programs. For example, the reported use of text messaging with clients has doubled from the 2010 survey and is predicted to double again by 2014:

- In 2010, 7% of the respondents reported using text messaging to communicate with their clients/patients;
- In 2012, 14% reported using text messaging; and
- In 2014, 29% predict they will be using text messaging.

These statistics come as no surprise when you consider that Short Messaging Service (SMS), more commonly referred to as text messaging, allows for the exchange of short messages and is used by over 4 billion people across the world. According to a report published by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), “The total number of SMS sent globally tripled between 2007 and 2010, from an estimated 1.8 trillion to a staggering 6.1 trillion. In other words, close to 200,000 text messages are sent every second.”

Protecting patients’ privacy and security is of paramount importance in the health care field. Due to the fact that the use of text messaging to communicate with patients is a relatively new medium, there are still some gray areas as to what is in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and what is not.

Adam Greene, former Senior Health Information Technology and Privacy Specialist and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), published an article addressing the use of SMS in the health care and suggests that, “HHS recognizes that there is still a great deal of ambiguity with respect to the privacy and security issues surrounding text messaging and the application of laws such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Rules.” Green goes on to say that, “For health care providers and those involved in mobile health technology, these recommendations mean that they need not completely foreclose the idea of using text messages to assist patients, and HHS supports novel technological initiatives to improve health, but organizations need to tread carefully until HHS conducts research into and publishes guidance on the privacy and security issues.”

Irrespective of Mr. Greene’s conservative approach, and perhaps justifiable concerns, for using text messaging as a communication link to help manage care, text messaging-based programs are flourishing throughout the private and public sectors addressing a variety of health and mental issues with positive results.

A case that exemplifies the benefits of using SMS to communicate with patients occurred in the Wounded Warrior program that utilizes the LifeWire® Corp. text messaging system to allow care managers to reach out to war veterans and follow up on their mental health. The Congressional Committee on Veterans Affairs received a testimonial stating, “Last weekend (the service member) used his phone to trigger a response. His response immediately (initiated a) text message to his clinician who was able to the call veteran and de-escalate a serious episode.” A life was saved as a result of this text messaging program. While insurance companies, federal and state agencies, and others are using mobile devices and applications to extend their reach to patients, they need to assure that they are secure and provide reasonable efforts to protect patient privacy. While there are various ways HIPAA compliance can be

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Vantage Health Plan Selects *ACUITY Advanced Care*™ to Support Patient-Centered Medical Home Model

Vantage Health Plan, Inc. (Vantage), a Louisiana-based Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) formed by physicians, has successfully implemented the *ACUITY* care management system to support their patient-centered medical home model.

ACUITY is a patient-centered care management software system that performs integrated utilization, case, and disease management.

After a comprehensive evaluation and selection process, Vantage chose *ACUITY* over many other care management software vendors for several reasons.

“As a Patient-Centered Medical Home, we are continually looking for ways to improve patient outcomes and staff efficiency,” said Dr. Gary Jones, medical director and CEO of Vantage. “We need a system that supports more structured and repeatable processes, thus lowering health care costs and improving the quality of life of our membership.”

Melissa Halley, Vantage’s director of medical management, concurs. “To enhance efficiencies during our utilization review process, we need a system that allows us to accurately review and document the authorization process from beginning to end, including the intake of requests, clinical documentation, medical review, and notification.

“All of these elements are performed by different operating groups within Vantage and we want to simplify the process flow and create ‘ease of use’ between the groups while maintaining alignment with corporate policies and procedures,” Halley notes.

According to Clyde Dearman, Vantage’s director of pharmacy, “*ACUITY* provides an all-encompassing care management capability that we did not have before. The software can be integrated with our EMR, claims, and pharmacy systems. We

can stratify the information to identify appropriate individuals for care management, find gaps in care, monitor performance, and report outcomes at the patient and program levels.”

“In addition to the clinical perspective, *ACUITY* is compatible with our current infrastructure and can be integrated with our current systems,” says Sam Rainer, Vantage’s director of information technology. “*ACUITY* is the best fit with the policies and procedures we already have in place. The extensive flexibility of *ACUITY* allows us to configure workflow processes and business rules to meet our requirements.”

According to TCS founder and CEO Rob Pock, the TCS clinical and technical staff worked closely with the Vantage implementation team to ensure a successful implementation. “We have a passion for care management,” he says, “which means working with our clients throughout the implementation process to provide training, configuration and interfaces that ensure the technology, processes and clinical content meet their needs.” ■

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achieved, LifeWire does it by de-identifying the SMS code during transmission, and then re-identifying the patient specific information in its database behind a secure firewall.

Looking toward the future, we can expect an increase in text messaging companies and more clearly defined regulations from HHS regarding the use of text messages to engage and interact with patients. Change is never easy; however, embracing these advances in health care technology and getting proactively involved in helping to define how they can be used without compromising patient privacy, will enable case managers to improve patient engagement and health outcomes. ■

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TCS Healthcare Technologies and CMSA to Host Complimentary Webinar on the Effect of Technology on the Practice of Care Management

TCS, the Case Management Society of America (CMSA), and the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians (ABQAURP) are hosting a two-part complimentary webinar that will highlight the major findings from the *2012 Health Information Technology Survey*. The first webinar is scheduled for December 6, 2012 at 12 p.m. EST. The primary goal of the survey is to better understand how various health IT applications are impacting the care management field.

“These surveys represent the largest research effort assessing the opportunities and challenges associated with IT innovations in the care management arena,” adds Rob Pock, TCS founder and CEO. If you are involved in the practice of case management or involved with health information technology, this is must attend event.”

Cheri Lattimer, RN, BSN, executive director of CMSA, explains that, “the hour-long session will examine how emerging information technology (IT) applications are impacting the practice of care management. It will also highlight several noteworthy trends by comparing the results of the 2012 survey with similar surveys that were completed in 2010 and 2008.” The 2012, 2010 and 2008 surveys were sponsored by CMSA, ABQAURP, and TCS.

The webinars will report on some of the key survey findings that will cover a full range of issues, including:

- Identifying how case managers are communicating with their patients
- Reporting how IT systems are supporting transitions of care and readmission prevention programs
- Showcasing user satisfaction ratings for key software applications
- Highlighting care management software application functions

- Discussing the future impact of health IT systems on the practice of case management.

“Although the practice of nursing and medicine has been transformed with the advent and adoption of electronics and computers, the use of health IT systems as tools to support care management is still evolving,” says Lattimer. “As a result, leveraging technology to improve medical management intervention strategies should remain a high priority in terms of both public health and reduced medical costs. CMSA is pleased to participate in this important study which focuses attention on these important public policy issues.”

“A core objective of the survey is to assess how health information systems are impacting case management software applications and related IT functions,” notes Pock. He adds, “The webinar also will examine how applications are being used by patients, providers, payors, care managers, and others to support emerging themes such as transitions of care and social media.”

The survey results will be released in an ongoing issue brief series, which will provide an in-depth analysis on the various topics, as well as a longitudinal comparison of findings. Registrants to the webinar will be notified when issue briefs are released, or you may request a copy by logging on to www.tcshealthcare.com. ■



PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

TCS' Care Management System Expands Data Analytic Capabilities

TCS Healthcare Technologies is pleased to announce a new and improved analytical engine powered by TCS' **ACUITY** Advanced Care™ and Tableau Software, a leading analytics partner that provides clients with the best technology possible.

"We are excited to be able to offer our customers an expanded data analytics solution to help gather insight and visualize data," says Rob Pock, TCS founder and CEO. "This service gives our **ACUITY** clients the ability to confirm compliance with business objectives and provide actionable information, intelligence and analytics for the entire organization."

ACUITY is an integrated care management software system for performing Utilization Management, Case Management, Disease Management, and Prevention/Wellness. The new Acuity Data Analytic dashboards include:

- Ability to track compliance with business objectives
- Interactive dashboards with drill-down features
- Ease of use for developers and end-users, as well as ease of deployment
- Scheduled or real-time refreshes
- Reporting on any data field in **ACUITY**
- Ability to export to PDF/Excel
- Viewable on web browsers or iPad
- Secure sharing of reports with clients

"TCS did an extensive search for an analytics partner," says Matthew Fahner, director of product development at TCS. "We wanted to make sure the dashboards would provide sophisticated analysis of key business objectives."

Gartner, Inc. positioned Tableau as a "Challenger" in its 2012 *Magic Quadrant for Business Intelligence Platforms* report. The report evaluated 21 different

software vendors and placed Tableau in the Challengers quadrant based on its ability to execute and the company's completeness of vision. The full report is available at no charge for a limited time from the Tableau website at <http://www.tableausoftware.com/gartner-2012>.

"Tableau's features, combined with **ACUITY**'s excellent data capabilities, have allowed TCS to develop powerful dashboard packages that provide our clients with actionable information they can use to proactively manage their business," says Fahner. ■



TCS CONTACT

John Sekerak, VP, Business Development
TCS Healthcare Technologies
11641 Blocker Drive, Suite 200
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 886-1700 ext. 211
jsekerak@tcshealthcare.com

WEBSITE

www.tcshealthcare.com

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Please send comments or questions to
Garry Carneal at gcarneal@tcshealthcare.com.

Contact