

Newsletter



The Clear Choice of Medical Management Professionals



CEO COLUMN

Riding the Case Management Wave...Patience is Key

Rob Pock, Founder and CEO, TCS Healthcare Technologies

I've been surfing since I was 15 years old, and ten of those years were spent on the North Shore of Kauai. One thing I've learned is, "when in doubt, don't go out." This sport requires a great deal of patience, and to catch your wave you must spend considerable time in the lineup studying the rhythm of the ocean and the other surfers. Moving too quickly can result in a wipeout, but when it's your time to go you must be totally committed. As in surfing, the medical management (MM) industry requires patience and study, and often can lead to a wild ride.



Among other influences, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) adopted last year includes dozens of references to case management, chronic disease management and other medical management programs in the statutory language. As a result, we can expect literally wave upon wave of new regulation to be proposed and implemented over the next several years to operationalize these new programs (see page 5).

It's reassuring to know that TCS is ready to "catch the wave" no matter how turbulent the ocean becomes. This is for many reasons, including the fact

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The Quest for Case Management Interoperability

Pat Stricker, RN, MEd, Senior Vice President, Clinical Services, TCS Healthcare Technologies

One of the recent buzz words that we hear about these days is the concept of health IT "interoperability." For years, the federal government has been pushing for the broader implementation of electronic medical records to promote efficiency and better clinical outcomes.



Pat Stricker, RN, MEd

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

ACUITY 6.0 (ICD-10 Version)

In 2011, TCS Healthcare Technologies (TCS) will release an update to its medical management software, Acuity Advanced Care (ACUITY), which supports utilization, case, disease, and prevention/wellness management services. The focus of the ACUITY 6.0 release is to comply with the ICD-10 regulatory changes, as well as the HIPAA 5010 transaction standards mandated by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This release is being provided well ahead of the October 1, 2013, deadline for implementing ICD-10 so TCS clients can schedule appropriately, with consideration of other system upgrade plans.

ACUITY 6.0 has been modified to meet the new 5010 transaction standards and to accommodate the use of both the ICD-9 and/or ICD-10 code sets. The ACUITY user has the ability to select either ICD-9 or ICD-10 codes in the code fields. However, the user's choice can be limited by the ACUITY system administrator who may only allow users to access the ICD-9 codes one day, then ICD-10 the next day (e.g. cutover day). When interfacing records, with these codes, between ACUITY and another system, the administrator has the ability to determine which code set (or both) is interfaced.

Acuity 6.0 also includes client enhancement requests designed to make the ACUITY system more user-friendly, according to TCS Product Manager Matt Fahner. "TCS is always listening to our clients," Fahner says. "Whether we're just starting the implementation process with you, or you've been our client for years, TCS wants your feedback, and we use that feedback to enhance our comprehensive suite of products." He also notes that maintaining TCS products is "never a static process. We're always doing research, looking for the next trends in medical management."

In addition to the regulatory changes and the client-requested enhancements, ACUITY is also keeping pace with the technology advancements. The 6.0 release will function with SQL Server 2008, Windows Server 2008, Windows XP and 7, SAP Crystal Reports XI, Citrix® and Remote Desktop Services™, McKesson's CareEnhance Review Manager® and Milliman's CareGuidelines® and CareWebQI®. ■

For more information about the Acuity Advanced Care system, visit www.tcshealthcare.com or email info@tcshealthcare.com.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Nancy Wallace

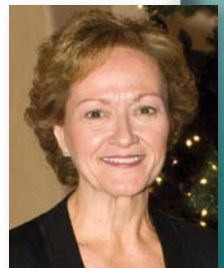
Nancy Wallace is the "ultimate professional," according to Pat Stricker, TCS Senior Vice President. "She has excellent decision-making and interpersonal communication skills, and TCS is lucky to have her." Add to these qualities Nancy's years of leadership experience in the medical management field, and it's clear why TCS promoted her to Director of Client Services early this year.

Nancy's background ranges from disease management, care management, and utilization management to telephonic nurse triage, education, quality accreditation, quality improvement, compliance and risk management. She has served as operations manager for numerous call centers, and worked with Stricker in a previous position. "That's why she was the first person I thought of when I had an open position for a nurse," Stricker says.

Nancy started her career with TCS in 2009 as a Senior Implementation Consultant, overseeing six new implementations since then and establishing herself as hardworking and a valuable asset to the company. A true team player, Nancy loves how her coworkers and the atmosphere at TCS foster creativity and innovation. "I really enjoy working in an environment that provides a diversity of roles and enables each of us to get involved in a variety of areas."

In her new position as Director of Client Services, Nancy acts as the go-to person for client relations, a role she relishes. "It's a joy working with TCS' clients, and I love when they suggest new enhancements for our products," she says. "We take into account their suggestions, and use that information to better our products. It's truly rewarding to forge a partnership with clients to position them to make significant improvements in workflow processes and operational productivity through automation with ACUITY."

When she's not busy helping clients, Nancy enjoys traveling. Her last trip took place on an Alaskan cruise, and she's planning a trip to the South Pacific later this year. She also enjoys spending time with her two adult children, and has a passion for ballroom dancing. ■



Nancy Wallace

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

AvMed Health Plans Launches Acuity Advanced Care™

AvMed Health Plans, one of Florida's oldest and largest not-for-profit health plans, announces that the organization has successfully implemented a new care management software system using TCS Healthcare Technologies' Acuity Advanced Care™ (ACUITY). AvMed and TCS staff created a collaborative environment during the implementation process that became a key ingredient to the successful launch of ACUITY.



acuity advanced care®
medical management software

"The implementation was complex, but AvMed is very satisfied with the result," notes AvMed's Corporate Director of Project Management, Marcela Phillips. "I have nothing but praise for the entire team," she adds. "TCS' flexible and knowledgeable staff offered good suggestions for improving workflows, automation and efficiencies, and was, quite simply, everything you'd expect from a partner. They were with us every step of the way, ready to help and solve any issue."

Karen Ross, RN, AvMed's Director of Medical Management, says the ACUITY medical management platform affords AvMed the opportunity to utilize technology and electronic workflows to more efficiently and effectively monitor, track and manage medical care. "Prior to ACUITY's implementation, a number of routine tasks and processes could take up to ten minutes per transaction," she notes, "but by leveraging and employing ACUITY's functionality, we have been able to reduce select transaction 'times' in some cases to under a minute. Because of this, our team members can focus on more meaningful medical management strategies and interventions."

AvMed Director of Core Systems Isabel Montes, who has a distinguished career in IT working with many software applications, says, "TCS is one of the best partners I have ever worked with. They go the

extra mile to be available, and to understand and resolve issues."

Lee Mesnekoff, AvMed's Information System (IS) Project Lead, believes the TCS staff was very responsive and helped AvMed address a multitude of clinical and IS needs during the implementation process. Mesnekoff says, "As a result, AvMed was able to replace and streamline over 20 different applications and processes with ACUITY, including various electronic interfaces, automated workflows, task management, and setting up parallel servers to increase the speed and accuracy of AvMed's medical management transactions. This in turn gives our clinicians more time to spend with patients and providers. In addition, AvMed's new care management system is fast and efficient despite being used by about 300 users in five locations."

"TCS has been working closely with clients like AvMed for over 25 years," says TCS' CEO and Founder Rob Pock. "By working with AvMed every step of the way, TCS empowered AvMed to configure ACUITY to fit their unique needs and take its care management program to the next level to better serve special-need populations in Florida." ■

For more information about TCS, call (530) 886-1700 ext. 211 or go to www.tcshealthcare.com. For more information about AvMed, call (305) 671-7306 or visit www.avmed.org.

INDUSTRY EVENTS

JUNE 14-17, 2011

Case Management Society of America (CMSA), Annual Conference and Expo, San Antonio, TX. Come by the TCS exhibit at booth #1612 to chat with TCS staff. This annual event takes place at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Highlights include seminars, educational opportunities and networking to celebrate the contributions of case managers to the healthcare industry. For details, visit www.cmsa.org.

MEDICAL MANAGEMENT NEWS

Facebook: The New Go-To Health Website?

A recent study suggests a growing number of people are using social media as a resource for health information. A study by the National Research Corporation of 23,000 Americans

found that 41 percent use social media sites, such as Facebook, for this purpose. Of these, 94 percent said they

turned to social media to find health videos, lifestyle and exercise diet tips as well as information about diseases, prescription drugs and health statistics.

Health organizations are recognizing this trend by setting up social networking pages, the survey reports, allowing patients and users to directly interact with health information providers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Facebook page has 80,000 fans, WebMD has 53,000, and the American Cancer Society has 226,000 followers. The CDC page, for example, includes tips on smoking cessation and WebMD's has information about exercise for children and adults. ■

To view the full article about the survey published in the Dayton Business Journal, visit www.bizjournals.com/dayton.

Health IT Central to Healthcare Recovery

A new report published by the Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative touts the use of health IT in helping to provide accountable and affordable care in America. Increasing the adoption rates of such technologies as electronic health records (EHRs) can and must

be used to increase workflows and efficiencies and lead to better overall care, according to the report.

Further, the Collaborative stresses that health IT can be used to enable access to EHRs, both for patients who can gain a better understanding of their own personal health, and for providers who can improve care coordination through electronic portals. ■

For more information, visit the Government Health IT website at <http://govhealthit.com/>.

Patients React Positively to EHRs

A recent study by Sage Healthcare Division found that 81 percent of patients had a favorable reaction when their attending physician entered information about them into an electronic health record (EHR). "What we learned is patients like to see their verbatim information entered into the record as they said it—not as the

doctor interpreted it," said Betty Otter-Nickerson, president of Sage Healthcare Division.

In addition, the majority of both patients and providers (78 and 62 percent, respectively) believe that EHRs can be used to greatly improve patient care, but the study also revealed that 81 percent of patients and 62 percent of physicians express deep concerns over privacy and safety issues. ■

For the full story, visit www.fierceemr.com.



facebook

CEO Column

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that we have over 25 years of medical management software experience, and we understand how emerging trends could have an impact on the industry.

In addition, we are constantly enhancing Acuity Advanced Care™, our signature medical management system, to keep ahead of the curve. In fact, the 2010 *Health IT Survey* rated ACUITY's ability to perform the following significantly higher than industry averages:

- Automatically generate care plans for patients;
- Stratify health data;
- Use data to schedule or execute follow-up tasks; and
- Use of Case Management Adherence Guidelines (CMAG).

These health IT qualities were less frequently reported by users of competing medical management systems.

Our core philosophy is to stay focused on medical management. Through our understanding of best practices, technological advancements and our creative problem-solving abilities, we provide our clients with the tools that allow them to serve their customers and patients efficiently and effectively.

And that isn't all. TCS' past successes have emboldened us to keep catching wave after wave and not wipe out. To learn more about how TCS plans to stay an

Key Terms Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

- 10 references "Case Management"
- 22 references "Care Management"
- 6 references "Disease Management"
- 3 references "Utilization Management"
- 7 references "Chronic Disease Management"
- 20 references "Care Coordination"
- 1 reference "Triage"
- 93 references "Wellness"
- 239 references "Prevention"
- 4 references "Population Health"
- 62 references "Readmission"

industry leader, visit our website, shoot us an email, or just give us a call. We'd love to hear from you.

By the way, give me a ring if you want to go surfing sometime. ■

The screenshot shows the TCS Healthcare Technologies website. At the top left is the TCS Healthcare Technologies logo. To its right is the 'Care Management Solutions' section with a list of services: Case Management, Utilization Management, Disease Management, Outcomes Reporting, Prevention & Wellness Programs, and Population Management & Stratification. A phone number 'Call Us: 1-800-238-7190' is displayed. Below this is a navigation bar with links: Home, Products, Services, About Us, Our Partners, Press Releases, Events, Newsletter, and Contact Us. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'TCS Newsletter' with a thumbnail for the '2011 Winter (HTML | PDF)' issue and a 'Subscribe to Newsletter' button; 'TCS Healthcare Technologies' with a paragraph describing the company as a leading provider of software and clinical solutions for population health management; and 'Press Releases' with a list of recent news items, including 'Apr 27th, 2011 AvMed Health Plans Successfully Implements TCS Healthcare Technologies' Acuity Advanced Care™ System' and 'Jan 4th, 2011 Driscoll Children's Health Plan Successfully Implements TCS Healthcare Technologies' ACUITY Advanced Care™ System'. A central banner reads: 'Welcome to TCS' new website. Our goal is to provide you with more information about TCS events, products and services. Please stay in touch!'.

TCS has launched its new website!
The new design is more user-friendly, offers visitors timely news and information, and hosts more content than ever before. Stay tuned to www.TCSHealthcare.com for updates.

Quest for Case Management

from page 1

With so many diverse and disparate IT systems deployed in healthcare today, the need to connect those systems is paramount. That is why the notion of “interoperability” is key to making sure that all healthcare stakeholders are getting the right information in a timely basis when treating a patient.

Although usually thought of as a technical term, the definition of “interoperability” shares some of the same attributes with the underlying mission of case management. The technical term is defined by Wikipedia as “the ability of diverse systems and organizations to work together (inter-operate). The term is often used in a technical systems engineering sense, or alternatively in a broad sense, taking into account social, political, and organizational factors that impact system to system performance.”

The clinical definition for “interoperability” is also implied in the Case Management Society of America’s definition of case management—“a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual and family’s comprehensive health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost-effective outcomes.”

The context of “interoperability” sounds familiar in both areas of practice, doesn’t it? They are both focused on making sure all stakeholders have quick, easy access to pertinent data from all systems and collaborators, so everyone can work together to seamlessly coordinate care. I think of a case manager as a “human health data exchange,” specifically as a “connector” of healthcare information and intervention strategies that in turn empowers treating providers to bridge gaps in care. But case managers are not just “technical robots.” Their clinical knowledge and experience are key to providing individualized quality care coordination for a patient across the continuum of care. No computer system, regardless of how good it is or how integrated it is with other systems, will be able to replace a case manager, but it can certainly help the case manager maximize their efficiency.

In terms of managing chronically ill or targeted populations, case managers are in the best position to identify, implement and revise healthcare strategies. However, we are now reaching a point where case managers sometimes can have access to too much information about a patient. In such cases, we need to make sure that information is stratified and prioritized in way that really helps, not hinders, the review of data.

Ultimately, the quest for the right “interoperable” system in healthcare is tied to effectively integrating the right technology applications with the skillsets of a case manager—but in such a way that pertinent information is available, avoiding information overload. ■

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