

# Newsletter



**TCS HEALTHCARE  
TECHNOLOGIES**

The Clear Choice of Medical Management Professionals



## CEO Column: TCS a Perfect Fit with ACOs

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

One of the hot topics in today's healthcare trade press and blogs is the Accountable Care Organization (ACO). ACOs are essentially a model for healthcare reform. Under the recent Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, ACOs are listed as a model for cost-cutting and improved care under the Medicare Program. At press time, the new ACO regulations are due to be published by the federal government at any moment.



*Rob Pock,  
Founder and  
CEO*

### What Are ACOs?

ACOs are intended to deliver quality healthcare services more efficiently and improve the patient experience through a Medicare "shared savings program." The buzz about ACOs is significant in many circles and several pilot programs are being established, despite the lack of an

existing business model. ACOs will initially be organized as regionally-based healthcare delivery systems that integrate primary care, multi-specialty group practices and/or hospitals to carry-out several traditional health plan functions.

ACOs are going to hold a strong position in today's healthcare landscape because they will be responsible for monitoring the overall health status of their assigned patients, as well as providing care. ACOs will be incentivized to keep people out of the hospital and thus encourage more selective use of quality treatments. Under the new plan, ACOs and participating providers receive a portion of the savings. ACOs will likely be responsible for providing

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## The Bipartisan Approach to Case Management

*(Reprinted from the CMSA Monthly Newsletter,  
November 2010)*

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



*Pat Stricker,  
RN, MEd*

With the political whirlwinds stemming from the 2010 election results, I am reminded that much of the healthcare system is driven by the ebbs and flows of the legislative and regulatory process. The number of pundits that have emerged on cable news channels, blogs, and other media outlets letting us know what is right and wrong about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010

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## Client Close Up: Driscoll Children's Health Plan

**D**riscoll Children's Health Plan, a Corpus Christi, TX-based licensed HMO that provides quality care for children up to age 18, successfully implemented TCS' Acuity Advanced Care™ platform recently for its Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). CHIP provides low-cost health insurance for children whose parents' income is too high to

qualify for Medicaid, but cannot afford other insurance.

"Implementation of the ACUITY software system has allowed us to integrate our utilization management, case management, disease management and quality management services," says Heather Johnson, RN, Director of Health Services at Driscoll Children's Health Plan.

According to Ernest Buck, MD, the Medical Director for Driscoll Children's Health Plan, "TCS' software permits the Health Plan to significantly decrease the processing time when a referral request is received and then returned with a decision to the physician's office, thus providing timelier scheduling of surgeries and other procedures. Also, as Medical Director, I am able to function more effectively off-site, because I can review a complete record and all of the related attachments via the application."

Ms. Johnson elaborates further that "Driscoll Children's Health Plan's need for a member-centric care coordination system is achieved through the new ACUITY software application by supporting:

- Interdisciplinary teamwork
- Connections to community partners
- Automated workflows
- A Provider portal with auto-authorization capabilities
- Flexibility of configurations
- Identification and stratification of population data
- Flexible user-defined reporting tools
- Central and remote access
- Connectivity to broad-based clinically integrated systems
- Robust communication tools
- Centralized records
- Inter-operability with third-parties
- An interface with InterQual's CareEnhance Review Manager Enterprise (CERMe)
- An interface with Milliman Care guidelines for care plans

According to Miguel Perez, Chief Information Officer for Driscoll Children's Health Plan, "We are very pleased with the accessibility and experience of TCS' technical support team, who assisted us with meeting our short implementation timeframe."

"From my perspective, it is very rewarding to support the mission of Driscoll Children's Health Plan and see how TCS' ACUITY has made a positive contribution," observes Rob Pock, TCS CEO and Founder. "In addition to our dynamic technology platform, TCS' experienced staff helps solve problems and coordinate key implementation activities. Client satisfaction remains a key TCS value, and we strive to share best practices with our clients throughout each engagement. Many TCS clients have been working with us for over a decade." ■

*For more information about Driscoll Children's Hospital, please contact Shane Casady at (361) 694-6523, or Shane.Casady@dchstx.org.*



## The Survey Results Are In TCS Remains “Best in Class” Software Application

TCS’ software and consulting services performed well in a number of performance categories, including customer satisfaction levels and product functionality, in the recent 2010 Health Information Technology (HIT) Survey co-sponsored by TCS, the Case Management Society of America (CMSA), and the American Board of Quality Assurance and Utilization Review Physicians (ABQAUAP).

A core objective of the biennial survey is to assess and analyze general trends related to HIT systems, as well as the specific capabilities within those applications. Care management software is one area of focus in the research.

### TCS Software Top Performer

Acuity Advance Care™ TCS users who responded to the survey reported a higher level of functionality than users of other software. TCS users also showed the system’s ability to: (1) automatically generate care plans for patients, (2) stratify health data, and (3) use data to schedule or execute follow-up tasks significantly higher than industry averages. In addition, TCS respondents tout the use of the Case Management Adherence Guidelines (CMAG) and the tracking and scheduling of follow-up tasks as notable features of their HIT systems that are less frequently reported by respondents of other systems.

Furthermore, TCS rates #1 in customer satisfaction among medical management system vendors, according to the survey results. The company received a high level of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” ratings compared to its competitors.

### Recap General Survey Findings

In terms of the global findings in the survey, a notable trend between the 2008 and 2010 studies indicates many offices have moved to a completely

paperless environment for health records—now more providers scan medical records, documents, and communications into their medical management system, while 47% of 2010 survey respondents say their organization provides a website with health information available to the public—a drastic increase from just 14% in 2008.

However, little positive change has been made in information transparency between organizations—there was a decline between 2008 and 2010 in the number of participants whose clinical data can be shared with other providers, such as specialists. While some progress has been made in the quality and functionality of medical management systems, it has indeed been slow. ■

*To request a copy of the full survey results, visit TCS’ website at [www.tcshealthcare.com](http://www.tcshealthcare.com) and click on the survey link.*

## Product Review: AcuTab™

### Helping Users Customize Their ACUITY Experience

TCS Healthcare Technologies has released AcuTab, a new product to enhance its signature medical management application, Acuity Advanced Care™ (ACUITY). AcuTab is a new add-on that allows users to view, sort and manipulate data from other systems and applications, directly within the ACUITY system.

By including the ability to view and sort data from outside ACUITY, AcuTab transforms ACUITY to an all-in-one system through which users can view information about their patients using the existing user-friendly interface. Key features of AcuTab include:

- The ability to generate tabs within ACUITY that bring important data to the forefront
- Presenting information in a format that promotes more efficient workflows and transparency
- Creating customized “browse” windows that can auto-filter information in many different ways, including:

*See Product Review, page 7*

## Employee Spotlight: Jennifer Cross

### The Science and Art of Programming

Jennifer Cross, a seven-year veteran of TCS Healthcare Technologies, represents the new wave of programmers entering the health IT field today. In college, she brought together her interests in math, graphic design and “computer sciences” to prepare herself for the Programmer Analyst position at TCS.

A self-described “tinkerer” who enjoys problem-solving and figuring things out, Jenny says the best part of her job is designing programs and writing code for TCS products. She notes that creating ‘best in class’ software applications for TCS and its clients is not just about the science of computation, but also the art of designing and writing the code. “I try to make it as clean and efficient as possible,” she adds. Jenny works in many different languages, but most of her recent projects for TCS have been in C#, a

popular programming language that supports both Acuity Advanced Care™ and many of its related applications.

Jenny has a stellar reputation at TCS. She takes a collaborative approach to working on projects, and is known for being a team player. Jenny also is very responsive to client needs with a quick turn-around.

When not working, Jenny spends time with the two men in her life, her husband Matt, and her two-year-old son, Zachary. They live in Pollock Pines, CA, which is equidistant between TCS headquarters in Auburn, CA, and Lake Tahoe. In her spare time, she loves to snowboard, cook and design websites. ■



*Jennifer Cross and her son Zachary*

## Technology Focus: TCS Announces Strategic Partnership with Connectria

TCS Healthcare Technologies recently announced a partnership with Connectria Hosting, an industry-leading global provider of cloud- managed and complex hosting services. TCS selected Connectria



to expand the hosting options TCS customers can use to access their medical management

software applications, including TCS’ flagship medical management solution, Acuity Advanced Care™.

“Connectria will provide day-to-day hosting and disaster recovery support for ACUITY along with several other TCS applications,” says Rob Pock, TCS Founder and CEO. “Connectria will offer TCS clients a customized approach to hosting ACUITY, which allows users to manage patients from anyplace and anywhere through a secure Internet connection.”

In addition to ACUITY, TCS also is supporting Acuity AnyWare™ through Connectria’s cloud-hosting solution. TCS’ Acuity AnyWare product is a

web-enabled case management software application specifically designed for independent professionals or small organizations and sponsored by the Case Management Society of America (CMSA).

Connectria President and CEO Rich Waidmann says, “Given the growing interest in Connectria’s hosting solutions and the emergence of cloud computing offerings in healthcare, the strategic alliance with TCS is well-timed. For TCS customers who want the benefits of cloud computing, but do not want to run their virtual machines on a shared cloud infrastructure, Connectria is supporting ACUITY through its private cloud computing solutions. TCS clients can use Connectria to help configure and host any TCS application on dedicated or shared servers to create a secure and high-speed data connection anywhere in the world.” ■

*For more information on Connectria’s dynamic cloud hosting solutions, please contact Scott Azzolina at (267) 523-5723, at [info@connectria.com](mailto:info@connectria.com), or visit Connectria’s website at [www.connectria.com](http://www.connectria.com).*

## The Bipartisan Approach

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(PPACA) and its supporting regulations is simply amazing.

Fortunately, the practice of case management appears to be above the fray. I have not heard any politician openly criticize the contribution case management can make to the healthcare debate or implementation process. In PPACA itself, there are over 50 references to terms such as “case management” and “care coordination,” and over 250 references to “prevention” and “wellness.”

Several provisions in PPACA support the development and expansion of case management programs through additional funding. Of course, many of the details will be worked out by specific federal and state agencies in charge of implementing the new law.

With a few exceptions, another area that has received little criticism is the expanded use of health information technology (IT) platforms such as electronic health records (EHRs). Again, there are dozens of references in PPACA supporting the use of EHRs and similar types of platforms.

I have been fortunate to spend much of my professional career helping companies launch care management software applications. Simply put, magical things happen when health plans, hospital systems, providers and other care management organizations integrate clinical workflows into health IT systems. It's even more magical when those systems are integrated with each other. This type of forward movement is what healthcare reform is all about.

As the 112th Congress convenes, I hope public policymakers keep in mind that the expansion of case management is good medicine for an ailing healthcare system—no matter what your political stripes may be. ■

## CEO Column

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a “continuum of care” by becoming a vehicle for paying teams of healthcare providers to treat the “whole” patient, rather than requiring patients to pay for care one service at a time.

### How do ACOs relate to TCS?

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency in charge of the ACO program, will likely require ACOs to integrate key clinical and operational processes. This likely will include data reporting, case management programs, and quality assurance monitoring. As a result, TCS' suite of products and services are perfectly positioned to help ACOs meet and exceed most of the federal requirements once they are finalized.

TCS is a leading provider of software and clinical solutions that support and improve population health management strategies for health plans, insurers, providers, third-party administrators, medical management companies, and others. Its solutions are a perfect fit to support ACOs.

For example, Acuity Advanced Care™, TCS' flagship software application, is a comprehensive and integrated care management software system supporting case management, disease management, prevention/wellness, and utilization management programs and interventions. TCS also offers an array of other solutions that will be useful for ACOs, including evidence-based care programs that include clinical assessments and outcome-based care plans, as well as a population stratification and automation tool that turns patient healthcare information into automated, actionable events.

Needless to say, TCS products are an excellent choice for fledgling ACOs and other groups looking for a simple, comprehensive, user-friendly medical management solution. After 25 years in the business, TCS has both the experience of an established industry leader and the vision of a forward-thinking, innovative company. ■

*To learn more about TCS and why it is one of the top medical management system companies in the country, give us a call.*

## MEDICAL MANAGEMENT NEWS

### 15 Free Healthcare iPhone Apps

Research done by [www.fiercehealthcare.com](http://www.fiercehealthcare.com) to find the best free healthcare iPhone applications yielded some surprisingly useful results. In a slideshow posted on their website, 15 apps with a variety of uses are detailed. Some programs are straightforward, like the *WebMD Mobile* application, which allows users to check and verify symptoms of illnesses or research pharmaceuticals, and provides visual aids for basic medical treatments like CPR.



Other apps are more meticulous, such as the *Epocrates RX* app, which provides a constantly-updated digital drug database for medical professionals, or *Diabetes Log*, which allows diabetic patients to track key information. *iTriage*, allows users to enter and track symptoms in a database, chat with a healthcare professional about their condition, and decode medical bills, allowing the patient to take a greater role in the treatment and services he or she receives. To view the slideshow, visit [www.fiercehealthcare.com](http://www.fiercehealthcare.com). ■

### Social Media Increases Use of Online Health Programs

A recent study by the University of Michigan Medical School found that social media is an effective way to boost and sustain membership and participation in web-based health programs.

By observing a 16-week Internet walking program, the study found that adding an online community base or forum to the

program resulted in less “attrition”—declining participation in the program. Dr. Caroline Richardson, one of the researchers, noted that participants who used an online forum to help motivate themselves and others ended up completing the program 79 percent of the time, versus just 66 percent of those without access to an online community function. “Brick by brick, we have been building a model of how to change health behaviors using online tools,” Richardson said. Researchers such as Dr. Richardson are predicting a growing integration between interactive social media and health programs.

To view the article, visit [www.healthcareitnews.com](http://www.healthcareitnews.com). The full report was published in the December 2010 issue of *Journal of Medical Internet Research*. ■

### England Moving Away from a Centralized Health IT System

In a move to save approximately \$1.1 billion, England has decided to scrap its current universal health IT program in exchange for “a more locally-led plural system of procurement,” according to Health Minister Simon Burns. In a statement, Burns said allowing hospitals to modify and improve existing IT applications will allow England more freedom and innovation in the Health IT field, designed to cut costs by allowing development on the local level.

Not all programs will be immediately ended, however. England will honor all contracts currently in place with health IT providers, but will transition to completely local oversight by 2012. To read the full article, visit [www.e-health-insider.com](http://www.e-health-insider.com). ■

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## MEDICAL MANAGEMENT NEWS CONT'D.

### Cooperation by Insurers Needed, Fed Chief Says

In a recent speech before insurance providers, U.S. Medicare Chief Donald Berwick stressed the need for cooperation with the White House from insurance agencies who had initially resisted the overhaul of the American healthcare system. Speaking to insurance executives in Washington, D.C., Berwick discussed how insurers could help

improve the state of healthcare in America by focusing on primary care, and by collaboration with doctors and providers. "You don't get the level of improvement we need by simply trying harder the same way. You try a new way. If you want new results, you need a new system," Berwick said.

For the full story, log onto [www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com). ■

### Product Review: AcuTab™

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- Member-specific information
  - Population-based information
  - Other customized views based on identified data sources
- Incorporating various types of data from external sources, including:
- Claims
  - Lab data
  - Predictive modeling
  - Stratification information
  - Financial
- Saving time and resources by eliminating the need to train staff on other applications just to view data

In addition to combining with other third-party systems, AcuTab partners with other TCS applications. AcuPort Advanced™ imports data to be viewed by users within ACUTY using AcuTab. AcuStrat™ can then perform stratification against that same data and perform automated actions based on business rules. AcuPort Advanced™ is a middleware software (Extraction, Transformation, & Loading) solution that imports disparate information from multiple sources into one useful system, while AcuStrat™ is a population stratification

and automation tool that turns patient healthcare information into automated actionable events. ■

For more information on any of TCS' products, or to set up a web demonstration, please contact John Sekerak at [jsekerak@tcshealthcare.com](mailto:jsekerak@tcshealthcare.com).

#### PRIMARY 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](mailto:jsekerak@tcshealthcare.com)

WEBSITE: [www.tcshealthcare.com](http://www.tcshealthcare.com)

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EDITOR: Garry Carneal

Please send comments or questions to  
[gcarneal@tcshealthcare.com](mailto:gcarneal@tcshealthcare.com)

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