

# Strategies for Simplifying Healthcare Technology

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Photography by Daniel Smyth

Karla Schnell and Andy Park of Centric Consulting Cincinnati recently met with Bryan Remke, Robert Wiehe and Jay Brown of UC Health to talk about the challenges facing clinical operations in healthcare and how technology can solve those problems.

**LEAD Magazine:** What are the top technological challenges in the healthcare industry?

**Bryan Remke**, Director, Information Systems at UC Health: Our biggest challenge is provider satisfaction. There are so many aspects involved with technology, which is a great thing, but can also be seen as a hindrance to providers. The challenge is being able to streamline an efficient system.

**Karla Schnell**, National Healthcare Practice Clinical Lead at Centric Consulting: It's important to understand the mindset and needs of the clinicians who are providing the care so we can translate processes and give them technology that makes a difference.

**LM:** How can those challenges be streamlined through the use of technology?

**Robert Wiehe**, Vice President of Supply Chain at UC Health: Any time you enter someone else's expertise you have to let them know you understand their process, then help them understand how the technology lay-



ers under their process and enhances the outcome.

**BR:** We are working on engaging the patient-provider relationship through the UC Health Telehealth Network. Telehealth extends UC Health's expert care to providers and patients across the region through real-time patient video visits, specialist video consultations with other providers in the region and more.

**KS:** When considering the cost of managing patients in hospital vs. providing care in the home electronically, it is often more cost effective as well as desirable for the patients' quality of life for the care to come to them. Bringing a lifetime of patient data to a provider's fingertips gives them the full picture to make the best treatment plans for their patients.

**LM:** How do healthcare organizations use technology to remain compliant?

**KS:** Technology can be a real asset

to expedite updates in the rapidly changing world of healthcare compliance. Regulatory updates are constantly coming out so it can be challenging to implement the changes quickly. Technology allows for real-time information that can be quickly acted upon.

**LM:** In what ways can healthcare providers use technology to enhance the quality of patient care?

**BR:** UC Health has changed interaction with patients through My UC Health, where patients have access to their medical chart. This has added tremendous value to the patients as well as the providers. We have also implemented the My UC Health Bedside Tablet program to West Chester Hospital patients. The program allows patients access to view detailed information about their own medical care, access the internet, and make notes for their providers.

**KS:** Technology is allowing us to provide focused patient education more

quickly which allows people to take control and responsibility for their own health and wellbeing while having open dialogue with their providers. The automation provides a great deal of data to the patient as well as the care team so we need to be thoughtful regarding the best way to utilize that data for the best possible outcomes.

**LM:** How is return on investment (ROI) measured?

**Robert Wiehe:** You have quality, outcome, customer service, internal processes and the financial aspect.

best care for the largest number of people.

**LM:** How can healthcare networks differentiate themselves?

**BR:** UC Health was awarded Stage 7 status by HIMSS Analytics® for our adoption of a paperless medical record at University of Cincinnati Medical Center and 167 of UC Health's ambulatory practices also received Stage 7 Ambulatory Awards.

**Jay Brown,** Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer at UC Health: UC Health is honored to be recognized for our significant adop-

**KS:** The Centric Consulting model is based on keeping our clients for life and helping them solve critical problems. We have national and international experience but more importantly we have a strong local presence and we work to be part of our community and to give back. We build the relationships so that we can be partners for the long term. We have all of the tools and capabilities under our roof – clinical and operational strategy, portal, testing, mobility, analytics and process improvement. We don't leave the field until the client is completely satisfied.



We're looking at every opportunity to leverage the system internally, and patient outcome is always the main goal.

**KS:** ROI is not just about dollars and cents, but also in key performance indicators such as outcomes, patient engagement, return visits, compliance with treatment plans, etc. We have to look at the big picture in healthcare and how we provide the

tion of electronic health records by achieving HIMSS Analytics Stage 7 in both our acute and ambulatory care settings. This accomplishment is due to our commitment to improved patient outcomes through the expanded use of information technology.

**LM:** What qualities make a consulting firm uniquely suited to address the challenges that healthcare industries are facing today?

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