

LEHIGH VALLEY BUSINESS

HEALTH CARE UPDATE



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ADAPT TO MORE PATIENTS
WITH HIGH DEDUCTIBLES
AND POOR COVERAGE

+
THE SHORTAGE OF
PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS

HEALTH NETWORK CEOs
ON TECHNOLOGY-INSPIRED
CHANGE

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EXCLUSIVE

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY PUTS FOCUS ON PATIENTS, CEOs SAY

By **JENNIFER GLOSE**
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Nationally, the health care system is still adjusting to its changing landscape as a result of the 2010 Affordable Care Act – which brought on the most significant changes to the industry in 50 years.

Thanks to the ever-evolving and innovative technological advances in health care, hospitals and health networks of the Greater Lehigh Valley have been able to make necessary improvements and implementations to achieve the common goal of “fee for value,” versus what used to be the norm: the “fee for service” model.

Some hospitals and health networks in the region have moved to an electronic medical records system and others are dabbling in telemedicine and mobile apps – helping to get to the unified plateau of better care, better health and better cost.

Recognizing the rapid, everyday advances in health care technology, Lehigh Valley Business asked the leaders of the region’s hospitals and health networks about the effect that these

revolutions will have on the health care industry’s future. They were asked this question:

How will technology change health care in the next several years?

ANDREW HARRIS
President and CEO
Blue Mountain Health System, Lehighton

The use of health information technologies and electronic medical records is providing access to health care data to patients and already contributing to improvements in quality of care.



Harris

For example, more and more patients are accessing their health information via a patient portal to our health system. This helps them to become more active participants in their overall health, both with the health system and their health care providers.

Also, electronic medical records and CPOE, computerized physician order entry, have been attributed to a decrease in medication error

rates and improving patient safety, and we only expect those rates to get better.

JOHN ZIDANSEK
CEO
Easton Hospital, Easton

Telemedicine will continue to be one of the biggest changes in technology over the next several years. Many hospitals already work together via telemedicine to share expertise related to certain specialties, leading to faster treatment and access to services for patients.



Zidanssek

However, telemedicine is also expanding into a consumer-focused service where patients can directly reach health care professionals quickly, requiring different forms of scheduling appointments for primary care visits or handling nonemergent needs that don’t require a visit to the ER.

We expect that health systems will begin

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to offer appointments around the clock through telemedicine so patients don't always have to make time to visit the doctor's office. A person feeling ill after an overnight shift or a mom who has a sick infant on a Saturday night will be able to jump on a computer or mobile device, input some information and see or hear a physician within minutes via teleconference, making care more convenient and accessible for patients.

JEAN KEELER

President and CEO
Grand View Health, Sellersville

Over the next several years, I believe health care will focus heavily on using information technology to enhance health and wellness in ways we can't imagine. There will be a greater need to develop processes to facilitate patient access to the care they need quickly, efficiently and in the most cost-effective way.

The result could be additional online provider visits, telemedicine that is more expansive, increased home care, providers visiting businesses or group appointments. Another resulting factor could be more

Jean Keeler, president and CEO of Grand View Health, says there will be a shift from inpatient to outpatient care and home-based care will increase through virtual appointments with care providers.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



home devices with the goal of monitoring health activity, such as transmitting information to a health portal, providing recommendations, measuring nutrition, sending medication reminders to improve compliance, tracking exercise and other identifiable data currently being tested.

The future of health care will include a shift from inpatient to outpatient care, and home-based care will increase through virtual appointments with care providers. Online services will expand to assist with

care delivery to meet the needs of patients with access and geographic limitations.

JEFF SNYDER

President and CEO
Pocono Health System/Pocono Medical Center, East Stroudsburg

Pocono Medical Center evaluates our electronic health record regularly to determine if it meets the needs of our patients and clinicians. We focus on the impact it has on

quality, patient experience, usability and performance – to be able to continue to drive practice that delivers excellent outcomes.

While we have had success, we know that future integration is critical for allowing data and information to be virtually available at any point in time and place for patients as they use our services. Having a fully integrated system that includes everything from clinical functions to patient accounting to medication administration, regardless of which setting the patient is in, will be paramount.

For example, our network would allow patients to visit any one of our services (ED [emergency department], practices, hospital) and their medical records would be readily available to all of our medical providers. This benefit is huge as it keeps the focus entirely on the patient and their needs.

This integrated system will create a consistent structure that will provide information that can also be utilized to improve the health of our local community and those that we provide service to. This technology will only strengthen our ability to integrate in a seamless and consistent methodology, while achieving our strategic initiatives that support our mission and vision. ■



Snyder

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