Emerging Professionals:
Where We’ve Been and Where We’re Going

Accelerating Change: Ideas on Making It Work

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Accelerating Change in e-Health is currently the topic of the town and the e-Health 2013 Conference May 26 – 29 in Ottawa. With so many health information system infrastructures on their way to blooming in our sector, it amazes one to observe the accelerating pace with which new systems, trends, workflows and networks will soon emerge. It is no surprise that our industry has taken the electronic route, but the rapid pace at which it is travelling is incredible! For many providers, this will translate as a complete change in their daily workflows. For others, this may transcribe as a complete paradigm shift in responsibilities within their professions. Read on for insight on the subject from several Emerging Professionals.

Some simple tools to build understanding are:
• visual flowcharts,
• whiteboard diagrams and summarizing tables.

These can sometimes be the difference between a clear understanding of an issue, and complete confusion. In turn, it can be the difference between consensus towards change and complete opposition. Time spent towards clear communication and understanding is sometimes underrated, when, in fact, it should be considered the foundation of implementing change. Appreciate and respect every opinion, ask questions, take time to explain and draw pictures! Together these techniques will accelerate change in your environment.

Out-of-the-box Approach is Way to Go

Greg is an experienced consultant and project manager with extensive experience with clinical information systems in acute and ambulatory settings.

It is tough to question the proposition that current and emerging e-Health initiatives will bring and facilitate change within the industry – positively impacting those coordinating and providing care for the consumers of services. In recent periods, varying local, regional and provincial projects have demonstrated the capacity to couple technical solutions with re-engineered processes and produce positive change across the continuum of care (covering multiple sectors). From a personal perspective, it has been interesting to see how some have fostered project successes using what they have around them, while in other cases, and where more applicable, some projects have attained elements of the overall solution leveraging partnerships within the vendor community.

Over the past year or so, I have had the opportunity to work on a number of e-Health projects of varying size and scope. In some instances project outcomes were focused on the acute care setting while other project outcomes focused on national solutions. However, in all cases the project teams and project leadership utilized a combination of tools and techniques from prescribed project management methodologies to manage each initiative. Given the pace of change, coupled with project drivers, it is the teams that have been able to use methodologies in unique or customized (out-of-the-box) ways that have produced the required results. Project teams must continue to innovate as it relates to processes focused on stakeholder engagement, communication and the overall implementation model.
Interoperability: Key to Enable Justifiable Patient Care Improvement

Adnan is a Senior Consultant at the Deloitte National Health Technology and Public Sector Consulting practice with expertise in Technology Project Management, Systems Integration, Enterprise Data Management, and Enterprise Technology Strategy.

Perhaps the largest emerging change in e-Health will be the advent and adoption of technology to enable interoperability. The e-Health industry is saturated with multiple technology solutions offered by various vendors. It has created an environment where providers and organizations are essentially using the best available solution that suits their budget, patient care needs and clinical workflow. More than often, these solutions become engrained and well adopted by the client such that procuring a new technology product with better capabilities is not a feasible and cost-effective option, primarily due to the inherited change. The result is a heterogeneous technology environment without the means of EHR solutions being able to communicate with each other. The impact is the notion of one patient, one record or lack thereof, such that a patient may most likely not be recognized by two hospitals in the same city or across the street because they each use different disparate systems. Hence, in an effort to provide optimal and consolidated patient care, jurisdictions are increasingly focusing their attention to enable data sharing as opposed to standardizing technology solutions. This is achieved by leveraging health technology standards (i.e., HL7, terminologies) and enterprise scale middleware solutions and communication protocols acting as the bridge. Interestingly, the result of implementing this solution introduces another emerging change in resulting from Big Data. By consolidating data across jurisdictions, the capability to perform broad scale analysis on various patient care indicators and clinical metrics creates an immense opportunity to drive efficiency and quality well beyond the boundaries of a single hospital or region. The transparency in data will expose variability, introduce opportunities for increased performance, improve decision making, and improve the next generation of products and services. Interoperability will play a key role to enable justifiable improvement in patient care.

Seamless Access to Patient Info at Point of Care

Alison, RN, MN, is the Clinical Informatics Specialist at Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences. In 2011 she was the recognized as the Emerging Leader in Health Informatics at the Canadian Health Informatics Awards Gala.

When I started my career as a home care nurse I was overwhelmed with the burden of paperwork and administrative tasks that I was performing on a day-to-day basis. I felt that time I could be spending with patients was being directed at other activities. Home care nurses now use GPS to track their route and calculate mileage, they use automated technology to verify their client visits and many are using tablet computers or handheld devices to document client care and send reports to referring providers. Through my work in the mental health sector in Ontario I am seeing the capacity for non-acute care facilities to lead the way in achieving Stage 6 and hopefully Stage 7 on the HIMSS EMRAM model.

It is important for us all to realize the potential for e-Health to lead to improvements in patient care through seamless access to patient information at the point of care – not just in acute care – but anywhere that a patient touches the system. I look forward to the future and seeing what great work we can all achieve by using e-Health to accelerate changes to the healthcare system.

Hiccups, But Light at the End of Tunnel

Tazeen has played a vital role at the University Health Network (UHN) where she supported a number of IT projects. She just recently joined the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) as a Project Manager responsible for provincial initiatives.

I feel that accelerating change in health service management and delivery is one of the most important and exciting initiatives that the province is undergoing at this time. Having worked at UHN for about eight years, I was involved on a number of key initiatives that transformed “ancient” paper-based processes into seamless and efficient ways of delivering to patients. It was always daunting to walk into a room to discuss how we intended on changing the environment to ensure efficiencies. Were their hiccups along the way? Absolutely! As I learned more, I understood with every change management initiative, there were always people who were opposed to change, and then there were some who embraced it, despite not knowing what they were getting into. But with each project, and each experience, we became convinced that we were on the right path to ensure the highest level of delivery and we finally began to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

I now find myself at CAMH. Similar to 8.5 years ago when I first started at UHN, CAMH embodies the concept of accelerating change through the entire organization as it is committed to the widespread realignment and evolution of our clinical practices.