

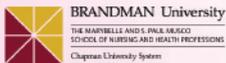
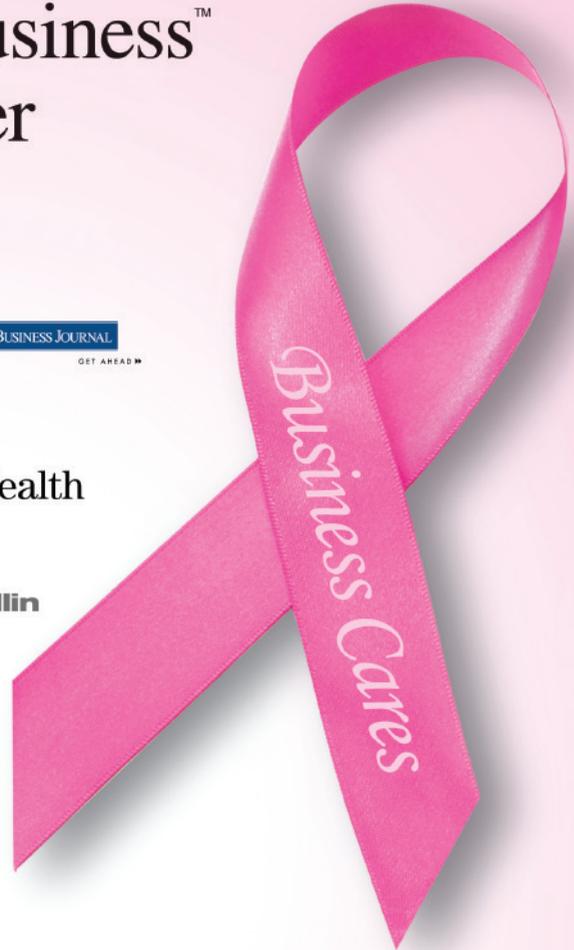
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MAIL TO:



A Virtual Integrated Health System Approach

By **BRADLEY SCHMIDT**

INTegrated Health Systems (IHS), such as Kaiser-Permanente, are the obvious goal of healthcare. The coordination of care, under one IT umbrella system, allows for birth-to-death care with a single point of medical contact for better clinical supervision and improved efficiency. Yet, IHSs aren't necessarily scalable, can cost billions to implement and are not available in all areas. Central Los Angeles County, with its 5,000,000+ population size, has few IHS options yet is home to patients that most need coordinated care. How then, will access to integrated care be delivered to the community in need when there is a void of health systems physically located in the community? I contend, a virtual integrated health system, in conjunction with leading local MD's and IPA's, are the answer.

Pioneering a Virtual Health Platform

Virtual integrated health is something Inglewood Imaging Center pioneered in LA County developing some of the first radiology-to-EMR (electronic medical records) partnerships in the USA to better connect patients, MD's, treating facilities and IPA's by partnering with independent EMR vendors frequently used in the community. EMR's, rapidly adopted by MD's in the USA following the implementation of the 2009 American Recovery and

Reinvestment Act, provide incentive payments to eligible professionals, hospitals, and critical access hospitals (CAHs) as they adopt, upgrade or demonstrate meaningful use of certified EMR technology.

IIC realized EMR's could hold the key as the future of healthcare coordination outside the conventional IHS ecosystem model particularly for leading independent physician associations (IPAs). Yet there was a key challenge, of the 658 EMR vendors certified since virtually none of them "spoke" to each other. Therefore, Inglewood Imaging developed some strategic early partnerships with EMR vendors to develop secure interface connections that allow fluency between the fragmented IT platforms.

Benefits to MD, Insurance and Patient

One of the immediate benefits noticed in a virtual IHS environment was how streamlined care became for the very busy ordering MD. In the past, final results were faxed, collated, scanned, attached, and uploaded into a medical chart. IIC's virtual approach routes reports electronically, allowing all administrative work to be automated and enabling MD's to receive our results inside their EMR inbox in as little as 30 minutes. Reports are never lost. Each report also allows access to our "cloud image" web viewer which enables MD's to view images for better coordination.

Cost containment for IPAs and insurance payors are another benefit to a virtual approach as an estimated \$30 billion is wasted annually due to inappropriate exam utilization and duplication of radiology studies necessitated by lost images or reports. Quality scorecards, vitally important in today's care, can also be measured that allow a balance of cost and quality not previously available. Health Information Exchange (HIE), once universally adopted in LA County, can also easily receive a copy of our virtual record to ensure a continuity of care countywide should a patient appear unexpectedly at the office of another care provider.

The final benefit to virtual health is connecting the patient through a patient health record in collaboration with their primary care physician. All "meaningful use" EMR's are required to have a patient portal to instantly access a patient's results, track healthcare costs, locate a MD and schedule appointment, allowing a patient more power to manage their personal health records and share information with his primary care physician.

Looking Through a Radiology Lens

Since cancer imaging is a priority for Inglewood Imaging, collaborating virtually with all the independent MD's, cancer centers, hospitals and treating oncologists is tremendously important. Our medical oncologists receive EMR results via a

secure interface. Surgeons receive images through our PACS-cloud hyper-link portal if surgery is required. Radiation oncologists receive images that can be imported into their targeted cancer treatment planning software to better pinpoint radiotherapy and IPAs can supervise care through a primary care physician to ensure appropriate protocol and communication is maintained.

Summary

Health Systems understand change is necessary, which is why innovative new programs such as Anthem's Vivity, accountable care program, integrating seven different fragmented health systems, might be very promising. Yet very often novel programs don't reach the patient population that needs the care most.

Ultimately I believe there will be a closer collaboration between the "virtual" and "integrated" health systems, with someone like IIC operating in a similar role to Southwest Airlines, connecting advanced care back to a larger network as needed. Until this happens we are excited to be delivering transformative care through a virtual network to provide state-of-the-art assistance to the 1,100 MD's and 70 insurance plans we are honored to serve.

Bradley Schmidt is Founder/CEO of Inglewood Imaging Center, LLC was LABJ's Medical Group CEO of the Year 2014.

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