

# New Wireless Strategies Set to Drive Down Health Care Costs

The face of medical care in the United States is rapidly changing, and, for health care providers, achieving profitability now depends on managing costs - as opposed to the insurance-driven cost pass through model of days past. Policy changes penalizing health care providers who do not manage costs have been implemented. As a result, health care organizations are seeking ways to reduce physical hospital visits made by patients. A reduction in non-emergent, non-critical hospital visits would result in less costs being borne by the health care provider - costs that are steadily eroding their profitability. Reducing the cost of patient care by keeping patients that can be cared for remotely out of hospitals is a very attractive idea, and ConnectedHealth, a provider of health monitoring connectivity solutions, believes that wireless monitoring holds great potential as a patient care solution that will help to drive down costs and improve profit margins for health care providers.

Health care providers agree and are already beginning to deploy remote monitoring and management systems in order to reduce hospital visits. In fact, the wireless home health market is expected to grow to \$4.4 billion by 2013.

Remote monitoring also has multiple benefits for the patient, allowing them to more easily comply with their caregiver's instructions without the added effort of traveling to the health care facility. What if routine procedures such as glucose or blood pressure monitoring could be carried out from the comfort of home? Seamlessly connecting patients with caregivers has the potential of greatly benefiting all parties and, as such, it seems clear that the remote monitoring movement is set to gain widespread adoption. 'Unnecessary' hospital visits are the highest manageable costs faced by health care providers - and providers are very motivated to implement wireless patient monitoring.

With the benefits being clear, the question remains: why isn't this idea taking off? Three hurdles - lack of connectivity standards, interoperability issues and the availability of wireless monitoring devices - have stalled widespread adoption.

The eHealth Platform from ConnectedHealth addresses these barriers to adoption. It integrates into a health care provider's existing patient management systems and enables wireless patient monitoring - at a cost of 25 percent less than existing wireless health solutions. ConnectedHealth is the first to leverage standard connectivity technology to provide support for third-party devices (i.e., scales, glucose and blood pressure monitors).

Over the past two years, adoption has been trending upwards due to:

- Adoption of industry standards (Continua).
- Coalescing wireless standards with medical device technology.
- Standardization of PHRs and EHRs.

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Health care providers have demonstrated demand for wireless monitoring solutions to provide care for patients as an alternative to hospital visits in some cases. Many began trials with proprietary, first generation solutions. These solutions used dedicated gateway hardware and proprietary communications approaches. While viable, these solutions proved to be expensive and difficult to scale.

With its eHealth Platform, ConnectedHealth has addressed the demand from health care providers for lower cost eHealth solutions that can scale by leveraging newly created standard communications standards (Continua), utilizing third party measurement devices and using standard, third party health gateway hardware (i.e., Android phones).

Wireless monitoring is poised to be a potent prescription for the ills plaguing health care providers – giving them the ability to curb costs while also keeping patients healthier.

For more information, visit: <http://www.connhealth.com> [1].

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[1] <http://www.connhealth.com>