

Opt out of the waiting game

With waiting times posing problems worldwide, the healthcare industry is turning to processes that could up efficiency. **Eceptionist's** Trey Havlick explains how the company's web-based software solutions are helping hospitals and research facilities improve their services.

Referrals play an integral part in the workflow of the healthcare system, but in many cases the process is inefficient. In the UK, a March 2011 study by the King's Fund revealed that there was too much disparity in standards. In particular, it highlighted that cancer patients face a lottery over how quickly their GP will send them to a specialist; the report showed a 35-fold variation in referral rates nationwide.

The system is just as flawed in Canada. According to the Fraser Institute, Canada's leading public policy think tank, patients seeking surgical treatment faced a median waiting time of 18.2 weeks in 2010 – the second-longest time ever recorded.

However, educated referrals and reduced waiting times are possible with new technologies. Eceptionist, a leading provider of industry software, develops solutions to help expedite the referral process and optimise services. "We started off at a trade show in the US and someone came along from the NHS," says Trey Havlick of Eceptionist. "They thought there were some efficiencies to be gained by using our robust scheduling capabilities and so we began our first installation in the UK. Our offerings later morphed into what would become our two most popular tools – our Triage and E-Referral Manager, and Telehealth Manager modules."

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Web-based management

Eceptionist's Triage and E-Referral Manager, a tool that organisations can use across multiple enterprises to efficiently manage patients, is able to handle special referrals, second opinions, resource matching and discharge planning.

The company's Telehealth Manager provides a web-based platform where scattered multidisciplinary teams can offer healthcare to people anywhere in the world.

The company also has three other modules. The Enterprise Schedule Manager supports tactical and strategic scheduling, the Organ Case Manager efficiently manages patient and organ-specific information to gain the highest possible transplant success rate, and the Wait List Manager aids waiting list and waiting time management at the service and procedural levels. Together, the Eceptionist modules support a seamless workflow from the point of referral to the waiting list to the actual appointment.

While the Eceptionist platform is an application that can work on a standalone basis, it has been designed to easily interface with other systems and hardware devices. Havlick says that interoperability is a key selling point. "It is a huge part of our business," he notes. "A



Medical teams worldwide serve more patients thanks to Telehealth Manager.

major part of our company is dedicated to integration. We support multiple versions of HL7, web services and other ways of integrating Eceptionist into existing and third-party systems."

Worldwide appeal

Why else are customers such as John Hopkins Medicine International, which provides global second opinion services, turning to Eceptionist? Havlick says its popularity stems from the company's expert knowledge. "A big part of our success is down to our truly global customer base," he explains. "When we come into a new account, we bring experience gained from the work we've done throughout the US to Europe and Canada. When we initiate our ideas and show potential customers what we've thought about and how the web-based referral process could work, they are always surprised about the depth of knowledge we have."

In addition, the company considers training to be fundamental. "We put a lot of emphasis on this," says Havlick. "We take time to train our customers properly and nine times out of ten they will take over and configure the solution to fit their own environment. Offering customers this option to customise the software through configuration has certainly contributed to our success."

The pressure on the healthcare industry to look at new and dynamic ways to boost efficiencies is mounting. Eceptionist is aware that it has to keep pace with the changes. The company is also focusing on tablet technology as it believes that consumer models such as the iPad will become ubiquitous in the hospital setting.

"We work hard to stay ahead of the current technology curve," concludes Havlick. "We hope to make the healthcare workflow process much more efficient and add service value for the patient." ■

Further information

Eceptionist
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