



Executive perspectives on interoperability in home health and hospice

HOME HEALTH / HOSPICE / PALLIATIVE CARE / PRIVATE DUTY



Executive summary

Interoperability is more than integrated software, the movement of data, or requesting patient information electronically. It's also having the ability to communicate care updates and data back to your referral sources and other providers with whom those patients have encounters. It's about connecting the care teams around your patients in a seamless and frictionless manner.

As we navigate a new era of interoperability, providers must be invested in solutions that help them send and receive numerous types of data between systems and which make the data more accessible to a large variety of care team members.

In this whitepaper, we surveyed several home health and hospice executives on interoperability and the technology needed to advance interoperable capabilities.

Get to know our executive survey panel



Angela Richards

RN, Director of Project Management,
Andwell Health Partners



Deb Wesley

RN, BN, MSN, MHA, CEO,
Addison County Home Health
& Hospice



Renee McInnes

RN, MBA, CEO,
NVNA and Hospice



Beau Sorensen

COO,
First Choice Home
Health & Hospice



Leslie Kaczmarczyk

MSN, RN, COS-C,
Clinical Information Process Nurse Specialist,
Christiana Care Health Services, Inc.

What is interoperability?

According to [HIMSS](#), interoperability is the ability of different information systems, devices or applications to connect, in a coordinated manner, within and across organizational boundaries to access, exchange, and cooperatively use data amongst stakeholders, with the goal of optimizing the health of individuals and populations.

True interoperability can have a tremendous impact — patient outcomes improve, healthcare costs are reduced, provider financial outcomes are more secure, and the caregiver and patient experiences become more connected — all core to the original intent of the HITECH Act.

The current state of interoperability

While post-acute care (PAC) providers have made advancements toward the technical definition of interoperability, they're lacking when it comes to the ability for medical and non-medical care team members to put data to good use. Here are the numbers:

99%

of referral sources said they would likely send more referrals to PAC providers who were more capable of receiving orders electronically. But only 39% of PAC providers say their organizations have advanced or matured their interoperability capabilities in the past 12 months, leaving 61% of the industry stagnant.

96%

of referral sources said they would likely send more referrals to PAC providers with strong patient engagement capabilities. Meanwhile, PACs are still using outdated mechanisms, such as phone calls and emails, most of the time to exchange data and information with their medical and non-medical care team members.



Interoperability is one of the most important ways to improve the patient experience through care transitions and ongoing treatment relationships.

Nick Knowlton

Board chair for CommonWell Health Alliance and vice president of strategic initiatives for ResMed

How can interoperability streamline documentation and communication processes — ultimately reducing administrative burdens?

Technology and electronic data sharing can help everyone work more efficiently to provide better care to their patient populations. Gone are the days when manual entry of patient or medication data into an EHR from a fax is acceptable. PAC providers must be able to engage electronically for the greater good of their own operations as well as their referral sources.



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The goal of interoperability to me is not simply having an app that is within a product that takes you to another product. It also isn't a process where documents 'flow' into the EHR with no structure or intent. Data needs to be available and flowing within the record to allow it to be useful for the clinical team to provide the care needed to our patients without the fragmentation and limitations we currently are experiencing with interoperability.

Angela Richards

RN, Director of Project Management, Andwell Health Partners



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There is so much time lost searching for documents, requesting documents, downloading — even then we are not sure we have everything. This increases risk for error and poor outcomes for patients.

Deb Wesley

RN, BN, MSN, MHA, CEO, Addison County Home Health & Hospice



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[Technology] can get the information to a single source of truth for our clinicians, reducing the potential for errors and missing information because you didn't look in the right area.

Beau Sorensen

COO, First Choice Home Health & Hospice

In what ways does interoperability enable better coordination and information sharing among multidisciplinary care teams?

Under value-based care agreements, what happens to the patient within the four walls of the healthcare facility or office, and *especially* during intervals between care encounters, now have a direct impact on the reimbursement rates these organizations receive. Being able to exchange data is a fundamental premise of successful value-based care models, because without accurate and timely electronic data, the risk of costly complications dramatically increases.



The ease of documenting and being able to quickly look at all the disciplines' notes reduces redundancy, saves time and supports true collaboration and case management. Sharing critical information can reduce utilization and improve outcomes.

Renee McInnes

RN, MBA, CEO, NVNA and Hospice



Reducing silos in health care, allowing the team to review all care being provided to a patient, will reduce redundant care and provide a comprehensive view of a patient. Timely, accurate and complete information will improve safe patient care, help reduce costs, and improve communications among health care providers.

Leslie Kaczmarczyk

MSN, BS, RN, COS-C, Clinical Information Process Nurse Specialist, Christiana Care Health Services, Inc.

What role does interoperability play in ensuring that clinical staff have access to real-time patient data and insights?

Integrated features should be built to simplify the intake process and keep organizations connected during every admission. Access to nationwide interoperability initiatives — like CommonWell Health Alliance and Carequality, and now emerging into a new age of relevance, [QHINs](#) — relieves patients of the responsibility of managing and sharing medical information from multiple providers, and allows providers to make more informed care decisions.



To be truly interoperable, the software should manage the data and allow the clinician to do what is most important — spending time with direct patient care and coordination of that care.

Angela Richards

RN, Director of Project Management,
Andwell Health Partners



It gives them the ability to see what is happening amongst all providers, not just the one that clinical staff are currently working for — giving them a fuller, more robust picture of the patient.

Beau Sorensen

COO, First Choice
Home Health & Hospice

How can interoperable systems and devices help automate routine tasks, such as medication management and vital sign monitoring?

Medication import solutions — like SureScripts — can simplify the transition process for staff by delivering timely access to important clinical information available in the EHR. Instead of relying on manual methods of updating the patient record, data can be attached electronically in real time throughout the care journey, keeping everyone updated on the patient's status and improving outcomes.



Medication reconciliation and management is the largest time-taker of clinicians, and the area of the highest risk and error. We get lost in the meds when we should be focusing on the patient — often unable to get past the long list of meds that are incorrect, duplicate, or wrong, causing multiple calls and visits to ensure accuracy.

Deb Wesley

RN, BN, MSN, MHA, CEO, Addison County Home Health & Hospice



Improving medication management would be the ultimate. So much time is spent on reconciling patient medications in the different care settings. It can change frequently from all the different providers and can be a challenge to ensure that everyone is aware of all the medications a patient is taking or has taken in the recent past. Electronic vital sign management using a device that can integrate using WIFI and Bluetooth would allow the capture of vitals from any patient care setting to see trends.

Leslie Kaczmarczyk

MSN, BS, RN, COS-C, Clinical Information Process Nurse Specialist, Christiana Care Health Services, Inc.

What are the potential challenges and considerations in implementing interoperability and how can organizations overcome these obstacles?

Relying on outdated patient and care team member engagement mechanisms to exchange important data and documentation with both medical and non-medical care team members is perhaps the biggest area that PAC providers need to address. The challenges these mechanisms create are significant and must be considered part of an organization's overall interoperability strategy.

Only **39%**

of PAC providers say their organizations have advanced their interoperability capabilities over the past 12 months. The most commonly cited reasons for the lack of progress include the lack of progress their EHR system has made, lack of resources and time to invest in interoperability, and lack of available resources. These barriers are similar to those that were reported in 2021, which included cost and time and difficulties interfacing disparate systems.



Systems have to be willing to allow interfaces with other systems, take down the barriers between competing systems and ensure that patient data is present and available. Organizations need to stay current with the EHR, optimize what is available and be open to change.

Deb Wesley

RN, BN, MSN, MHA, CEO, Addison County Home Health & Hospice



Cost of integrations, lack of standardization, knowledge and training, and lack of unique patient identifiers. Some actions that organizations can take are streamlining processes to ensure standardizations, collaboration with healthcare team and technology vendors, embracing the use of technology and the use of AI.

Leslie Kaczmarczyk

MSN, BS, RN, COS-C, Clinical Information Process Nurse Specialist, Christiana Care Health Services, Inc.

A leader in interoperability

MatrixCare offers many solutions, one of which is purpose-built for enabling care team collaboration and patient-caregiver engagement. These solutions are based on the same interoperability principles, but focus on securely exchanging data with other care team members — including physicians, non-medical caregivers and care team members, family caregivers, and patients.

To thrive in today's growing value-based care world, PACs must align with modern, interoperable EHR systems that meet the demands of both referral sources and patients.

As the multiyear winner of the Best in KLAS award for Long-Term Care Software and Home Health and Hospice EMR, MatrixCare is trusted by thousands of facility-based and home-based care organizations to improve provider efficiencies and promote a better quality of life for the people they serve.

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About MatrixCare

MatrixCare provides software solutions in out-of-hospital care settings. As the multiyear winner of the Best in KLAS award for Long-Term Care Software and Home Health and Hospice EMR, MatrixCare is trusted by thousands of facility-based and home-based care organizations to improve provider efficiencies and promote a better quality of life for the people they serve. As an industry leader in interoperability, MatrixCare helps providers connect and collaborate across the care continuum to optimize outcomes and successfully manage risk in out-of-hospital care delivery.

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