

Health Management TECHNOLOGY

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Web-based Applications

By Andrew Hurd, chairman and CEO, Carefx

Healthcare organizations (HCOs) have talked up portals for years, although much of the discussion has centered on clinical and patient portals. Now, however, a growing number of HCOs have begun to focus on how to provide authentic services to clinicians, patients and consumers, and facilitate health-information exchange within local communities via portal-based systems.

HCOs are looking for solutions that provide their clinicians and physicians with unified access to a patient's complete medical history, drawn from multiple encounters with multiple clinicians within the community, no matter where the data is stored, its format or native application. Providers want to maximize their technology investment by connecting to existing data sources and

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applications, integrating
information from episodes
of care, and displaying
unified information,

including clinician's notes, images and other data, in a role-based portal.

HCOs need to extend their vision beyond electronic medical-record implementation to create an IT environment where interoperability, service and usability can flourish. Community-based information exchanges (CIEs) can provide a foundation for enhancing patient care, safety and quality by delivering innovative solutions and functionality. CIEs can provide savings through referral-management solutions, a portal-based tool built on the CIE foundation that creates a streamlined, patient-

centric and accountable process for tracking referrals.

In the years ahead, organizations will reach beyond CIEs to blend cornerstone applications such as patient access, revenue cycle and clinical applications into a seamlessly integrated whole, incorporating clinical care, management and research. Infrastructure-platform services, such as virtualization, database, network, storage, security and integration, will be augmented by application-development services for data representation, semantics and managed data redundancy. As a result, clinicians will experience a new array of services – from work flow, process management and linking of content to processes, to semantic interfacing, inter-enterprise interoperability and collaboration.

Expect HCOs' IT shopping lists to change considerably in 2010. They will increasingly seek out interfaces, APIs and Web-service layers to support portal and composite-application development, data integration, work flow and business-process management and reporting. HCOs are also likely to get more involved in composite-application development through the assembly of application assets, such as service-oriented architecture, packaged and custom applications, Web services and software as a service.

