

What is your vision about future trends in telemedical solutions?

With the rapid changes surrounding healthcare in 2014, including the rising demand for improved patient care and doctor experiences, as well as the continued move toward electronic records, healthcare IT is starting to show different technology trends. Geared toward providing exceptional experiences, supporting improved outcomes, lowering operational costs and enhancing patient satisfaction, these trends are helping to shape the future of healthcare IT.

Definitely the main trend in healthcare nowadays is telemedicine. According to The American Telemedicine Association “Telemedicine is the use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications to improve patients’ health status”. The term telemedicine encompasses a wide range of telecommunications and information technologies and many clinical applications. The different parts of telemedicine include emails, videoconferencing, transmission of images, e-health (including patient portals), remote monitoring of vital signs, continuing medical education, nursing call centers, etc.

I think future trends in telemedical solutions must involve use of cloud computing, patient-centered tools, wireless telemedicine (real-time access to accurate patient data, different mobile computing solutions such as various applications for laptops, smartphones and tablets), health and wellness programs and of course social networking.

With the increase in availability of mobile technologies and intelligent medical devices, telemedicine has grown to include not only tele-consultations and tele-surgeries but also health record exchange, videoconferencing and home monitoring. Cloud computing and the related ease of services deployment and data storage is an enabler for telemedicine. Using cloud technologies in healthcare can help and improve the storing of massive amounts of data. Cloud computing can help Healthcare organizations by saving the costs of storing hardware locally.

More and more vendors are focusing on home-based healthcare solutions that give patients more control over their own care. On top of being more convenient for patients, these tools and products can reduce costs and provide physicians with patient information more quickly and

efficiently. Telehealth solutions can improve the patient-doctor relationship, reduce the time spent waiting for actionable healthcare data and improve the physician's workflow.

The availability of pervasive communications, ubiquitous computing and Web-based mobile applications is giving telemedicine a huge boost and together this combination of technologies becomes a key enabler for wireless telemedicine, encouraging the use of high-bandwidth applications. By providing portability and mobility, wireless telemedicine can allow the individual citizen to take greater care and responsibility for their own health.

Other very important trend of telehealth includes health and wellness programs, in order to encourage an active care plan after hospitalization. Health and wellness programs, including diet and exercise routines and consultations with life and wellness coaches, are being implemented to improve post-discharge care. Keeping patients healthy after receiving procedures helps reduce complications and avoid costly readmissions.

Healthcare experts see social media as an ideal means of compelling people to take up and maintain healthier lifestyles. Facebook and other social networks are being recognized for their potential in helping people maintain healthier lifestyles. Keeping people accountable to family and friends can be much more effective than mandates from physicians.

In the fast-growing telehealth and telemedicine fields, new and valuable trends and telehealth technology solutions will continue to emerge and be adopted. Making use, or at least being aware of these trends will keep providers and practitioners competitive as the market advances.

Sources of information:

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