PRESS RELEASE

Raleigh, N.C. – TeleHealth Services, the nation’s leading provider of interactive patient engagement solutions, launches iCare Navigator as the first enterprise-scale interactive patient engagement platform using an empathetic “virtual health coach” driven by artificial intelligence.

This transformative approach to patient engagement using avatars is designed to connect with patients in new ways and improve health, change behaviors, and ultimately reduce readmissions and healthcare costs. Patient engagement and education is integrated with Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) and other clinical systems to follow the patient through the entire continuum of care—from pre-admit to post-acute, and at home during recovery. The cloud-based services model, delivered through patient televisions, bedside tablets and mobile devices, also allows for unprecedented affordability and scalability of the platform.

With hundreds of millions of dollars invested in EMRs, the healthcare industry has focused on data-driven solutions but is still seeking new methods to engage patients with meaningful digital strategies that improve outcomes. Conventional patient engagement systems have typically focused on displaying information at the hospital bedside, but that alone is not authentic patient engagement, according to TeleHealth Services Vice President of Product Development Richard Bootes, a pioneer who helped shape hospital patient engagement over the past two decades.

“The inability to truly connect with the patient is why no company in our industry has fully penetrated the patient engagement market,” Bootes said. “Our goal in developing iCare Navigator was to create the first interactive patient care system that uses a combination of empathy, personal motivation, game theory, family involvement and artificial intelligence to help patients be more receptive to changing their health behavior.”

TeleHealth Services is working closely with several hospitals that are implementing pilot programs using this new technology. Together, with these hospitals, TeleHealth is measuring how patients are better motivated and engaged to participate in their health and wellness. This includes higher activation during their hospital stay and better engagement with families to support patients when they return home.

Evidence-Based Design to Ensure Results

The design concept for iCare Navigator was influenced by the evidence-based patient engagement research over the past decade led by Dr. Brian W. Jack, MD, Professor and Chair of the Department of Family Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine. Dr. Jack used an avatar-like coach to deliver his award-winning discharge methodology, called Project Re-Engineered Discharge (RED). This research has been widely recognized and honored. In 2013, Dr. Jack received the 2013 Peter F. Drucker Award for Non-Profit Innovation.

According to Bootes, iCare Navigator takes the proven concepts of Dr. Jack and applies them to the overall patient engagement from the first interaction.
“The avatar ‘humanized’ the Project RED clinical discharge processes, and can effectively do the same for other discharge processes,” Bootes said. “We are working closely with Dr. Jack to expand those concepts to the entire patient journey, build programs to address varying patient conditions and treatment goals, and measure success through robust data analytics.”

Dr. Jack is a strategic clinical advisor to TeleHealth Services. Project RED was designed to improve the health of patients and lower costs to hospitals by reducing readmissions through the RED model and better patient engagement and education. Project RED best practices have lowered the rate of readmissions in the month after discharge by 30 percent and are being used in every state across the nation and in more than 10 countries.

“Our research-led discharge process delivered by an avatar demonstrated reduced readmissions, improved patient experience scores and extremely high measurements for ease of use,” Dr. Jack said. “In fact, twice as many patients prefer interactions with the avatar than doctors and nurses who always seemed to be in a rush. We are eager to share and expand our research with TeleHealth Services as it brings this revolutionary platform, iCare Navigator, to the U.S. healthcare market.”

“iCare Navigator combines next-generation patient engagement technology with behavior modification practices to uniquely deliver improved outcomes to hospitals and enhance patient lives,” said Dan Nathan, president, TeleHealth Services. “We are excited and proud to be working with recognized industry leaders including healthcare research luminary Dr. Brian Jack. Through our collaboration, we are empowering hospitals, patients and the entire healthcare industry with a transformative system that will re-shape the future of the interactive patient engagement sector of the healthcare industry. As health systems struggle to do more with less, and with uncertainty in healthcare reform, it becomes critically necessary to focus on technology solutions that can engage patients and drive favorable outcomes.”

About Project RED
Project Re-Engineered Discharge is a research group, led by Dr. Brian W. Jack at Boston University Medical Center that develops and tests strategies to improve the hospital discharge process in a way that promotes patient safety and reduces re-hospitalization rates. Project RED is supported by research grants from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHBLI), the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, and the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. For more information, visit www.bu.edu/fammed/projectred.