Saviance
T e c h n o l o g i e s

Strategize. Innovate. Empower.

Building Wellness Communities for Chronic Diseases

The Growing Crisis of Chronic Diseases in the US

In the US today, an estimated number of people who are suffering from at least one chronic disease is about 133 million. In other words, nearly half the population of the US is under the toll of chronic diseases, such as hypertension, heart disease and diabetes. More alarming is the fact that this figure is much higher than just a decade ago, and by 2030, this number is expected to reach 170 million. Here are some startling facts:

- 79 million of Americans are affected by cardiovascular diseases which are responsible for 40 percent of all deaths.
- The number of people suffering from arthritis is expected to grow to 67 million by 2030 which is 20 million more than today.
- The number of people with diabetes has been more than doubled over the past 15 years
- About 1 in 12 Americans (about 25 million) has asthma, and the numbers are increasing every year
- The percent of the population that is obese is rising for both adults and children

Chronic conditions can decrease the length and quality of life, especially when not appropriately managed. There are ways that can help providers take preventive measures to prevent these diseases and create healthy communities.

Systematic hospital-based primary healthcare reforms can benefit both chronically ill patients and providers. These comprehensive healthcare models enhance patient-physician encounters, improve clinical outcomes and reduce administrative costs. An effective tool in this is information technology which includes Chronic Disease Management System (CDMS) and Electronic Medical Records (EMRs).

This whitepaper summarizes how high touch and high tech have the power to engage patients through vibrant communities created for specific chronic diseases.

Prevention of Chronic Diseases and Emphasis on Preventive Care

It is well said that prevention is better than cure. The US healthcare system is set-up around diagnosis and treatment approach rather than wellness and prevention measures. There is nothing wrong in saying that the system is rather a "sick care" system than a "healthcare" system. As a result, many patients do not receive a consistent level of primary and preventive care.

Healthcare providers can play a critical role in wellness and prevention activities which includes educating patients on health behaviors, providing information on preventive care like immunizations, early screening to diagnose diseases and finding out risk factors at early stages so that the patients can receive early treatment and disease management therapies. Many researchers suggest that clinical prevention services and comprehensive primary healthcare programs reduce disease, disability and death.

Causes of chronic diseases
The critical modifiable risk factors for chronic disease are poor diet, unhealthy lifestyle, inadequate physical activity and tobacco use. These can result into a variety of problems, including raised blood pressure, raised glucose levels, abnormal blood lipids and obesity. Non-modifiable factors are physical and psychological make-up of an individual, such as age and intergenerational (IG) influences, give high signs for chronic diseases. These are some of the health determinants that affect individuals negatively and underpin chronic diseases.

Need for implementing wellness initiatives
According to various researches, it is predicted that 388 million people will die worldwide from chronic disease in the next 10 years. Chronic diseases are proving to be expensive but, if a country is successful in reducing even 10% of mortality rate from heart disease and cancer, it could save the US $10.4 trillion annually.

There is a dire need of implementing wellness initiatives at both, home and at the workplace. There can be no quick fixes until people change their behaviours. Attempts to improve wellness at the workplace in developed countries have been brought into practice to focus on associated risk factors which underpin chronic diseases. Each factor reduces productivity and can lead to serious and expensive health problems.

The Need for Building Wellness Community for Better Prevention

With ObamaCare or the Affordable Care Act coming into existence, the focus of the providers, physicians and hospitals has been shifted to wellness and prevention of chronic ailments. This will not only improve the health of Americans, but will also help to reduce health care costs and improve quality of care. By concentrating on the causes of chronic disease, the Affordable Care Act advocates all the healthcare organizations to shift focus from sickness and disease to wellness and prevention measures.
Under this Act, the federal government can withhold Medicare payments from those hospitals where there are too many cases reported of patients who have returned within

30 days after discharge for chronic conditions. This is propelling healthcare providers to pay attention to their patients post discharge and encouraging them to take patients activation measures and engage patients in their own health.

In an attempt to reduce growing Medicare costs, the Affordable Care Act encourages doctors and hospitals to form groups called accountable care organizations, or ACOs. The idea is to get doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, and other providers to work together to treat chronically ill patients and engage them in their own healthcare. These ACOs reduce redundant procedures and emphasize preventive care and chronic-disease management.

Role of Technology in Healthcare/Engaging Patients and Prevention

Information systems have become paramount for healthcare settings. They offer huge benefits in healthcare, including high quality of healthcare, better patient safety, more efficient information processing and lower administrative costs. The two most important computerized tools are Chronic Disease Management Systems (CDMSs) and EHR systems. CDMSs enable healthcare providers to manage patients with one or more chronic conditions and provide preventive care to them. These tools not only improve care quality but also help to engage patients efficiently.

The more engaged and informed the patients are, the better care decisions they will make and keep themselves healthy. Patient engagement is a two-way effort both from providers and from patients which is made possible by key health information technologies or Health IT.

To successfully engage patients in their own health, healthcare organizations are leveraging the power of Health IT tools as patient activation measures:

1. **Health IT Tools for Patient Identification and Tracking-** In order to engage patients, it is important to have an effective and error free patient identification system for ensuring patient safety and to prevent dangerous medical errors. Healthcare organizations can use this system to identify and study their patient population, make correct information available for administration of any medicine, specimen collection, surgical procedures and any other patient care activity throughout the hospital stay. Electronic health records and patient registries can assist providers in these ongoing efforts.

2. **Health IT Tools for Patient and Provider Interaction and Communication-** Enabling interaction and establishing secure communication help to build a healthy relationship between patients and providers. This helps to build patient loyalty and preserves continuity of care. In addition, increased interaction allows for the sharing of timely health information and engaging patients effectively. This helps to keep patients healthy and lower healthcare costs. Online health communities, secure messaging, e-visits and social media can support such interactions.

3. **Health IT Tools for Patients' Access to Personal Information and Self-Service Capabilities-** Patient self-service technologies allow patients to view and monitor their personal medical information, complete routine processes quickly, efficiently and securely, and access educational information online from their personal computers. Successful self-service solutions drive patient engagement by providing choice, privacy, and improved patient information accuracy. Patient portals and personal health records have the potential to help connect patients with their personal information.

4. **Health IT Tools for Patient Self-Care Activities-** Patient self-care technologies can assist patients in their wellness activities and disease-monitoring tasks by collecting and tracking relevant patient health data overtime. Telemedicine and mobile health are the two most important ways to link providers and patients effectively and they have revolutionized the healthcare industry.

Providers are bringing care out of the hospital and into the community

The awareness on personal wellness has transformed the concept of healthcare. Community wellness portals are playing an active role in advocating to people to get more health conscious and enabling them to be engaged in their own healthcare activities and manage their chronic diseases on their own.

In today's digital world, wellness information is not restrained to caregivers or physicians. Many healthcare providers are starting outpatient portal solution for hospitals to help patients to meet the demand for wellness therapies and relevant education material to manage their own healthcare. To encourage healthier behavior across nation, the wellness communities propagate and promote various wellness programs that are often tailored to serve a specific requirement of a community or area.

Patients' surveys show that the manner in which physicians and care providers communicate information to their patients leaves a significant mark on them. They are more likely to get involved in their healthcare, understand their treatment options, modify their behavior and adhere to follow-up instructions, if this is done in the right way. Personalization of care, continuum of care services after discharge from hospitals and access to information and patient education are some key components to enhance patients' health care experience.

Saviance Enhancing Collaboration across Healthcare

Saviance has come up with robust patient community software which is designed to give providers, insurers, employers & caregivers the power to create active patient communities, shape ideas, generate interest and strengthen their brand image. iHealthConnect is a comprehensive mobile integrated, cloud based Patient Wellness Software that involves a multi-pronged approach. It focuses on wellness of patients, prevention and self-management of chronic diseases, longitudinal health and influencing patient adherence to care plans. This tool includes a comprehensive range of

activities that enable both patients as well as providers to have a seamless intercommunication which is essential for self-sustaining and success of a community. This solution enables patients to share videos, stories of survival, discuss different treatments, refer doctors, integrate their social media presence and achieve much more.

****

Saviance is a US Healthcare IT Service provider focusing on Patient Engagement with Innovative Products and Solutions like Patient Intake Tablet, iHealthConnect Wellness Portal, Mobile Applications, Actionable Analytics and ICD-10 Testing Services. Incorporated in 1999 in New Jersey, with over 15 years of excellent industry track record, Saviance offers services & solutions that enable enterprises to achieve critical objectives.

Saviance is a Gold Category Corporate Member with Healthcare Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS), member of mHealth Alliance and Corporate member of NJ-HITEC. We are awarded by INC. 5000 as one of the fastest growing privately held companies in North America. Saviance is also ranked among the Fast 50 Asian American Businesses in the United States by USPAACC (US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce) and selected as a 2014 "Top Business" recipient byDiversityBusiness.com. A certified Minority Business Enterprise recognized by NMSDC, Saviance is also partner with leading global brands such as Microsoft, Amazon Web Services, Apple, Samsung and Red Hat.

Visit us: www.facebook.com/SavianceTechnologies

Follow Us: www.twitter.com/SavianceT

Website: www.saviance.com