



THE HOME CARE AGENCY GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY

2016



BETTER TECHNOLOGY,
BETTER OUTCOMES.

☰ Daily Health Check

Your Blood Pre

84
bpm

HR

96
%

S

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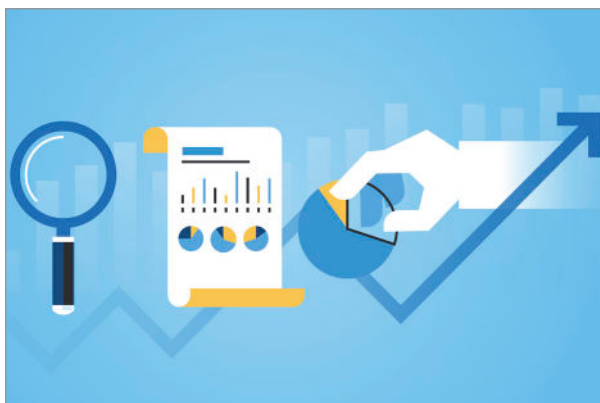
INTRODUCTION

As a result of the Baby Boomer generation born in the late 1940s to early 1960s, the senior population is now growing at an alarming rate; according to population projections roughly 10,000 people will turn 65 every day for the next 14 years (Pew Research Center, 2010). Citizens in this demographic are not only starting to retire, but they already have higher rates of chronic disease and disability than members of the previous generation at the same age (JAMA Internal Medicine, 2013). This is putting an immense amount of strain on our health system, and more specifically our health care establishments and resources, as a result.

In order to help relieve some of the strain, health authorities are leaning on the home care sector to help reduce health care spending and to keep Baby Boomers out of the hospital. The projections for home health care demand over the next decade have hit an all-time high. One market research report states that the home health care sector is expected to reach USD 349.8 Billion by 2020, up from USD 227.5 Billion in 2015 (marketsandmarkets, 2015). This presents home care agencies with an incredible opportunity to grow and become more profitable. However, with the major shift from a traditional Fee-for-Service model of care to a Bundled Payment (aka Capitation) model, the industry is being hit with even more growing pains.

So the question is, how can home care agencies take advantage of this massive opportunity for growth in a time when resources are limited and the industry is undergoing major change? The answer is heavily reliant on better technology.

Technology has become mandatory for efficient agency operations. It provides easier access to information, streamlined workflows, point-of-care transparency, and ultimately improved client outcomes – all while operating in an environment where regulations constantly change your business. Technology will be what differentiates agencies in the future. This guide takes a look at what providers need to consider when investing in the software required to keep up with change.



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Industry Shift: Traditional Fee-for-Service to Bundled Payment Model

Shifting to a new model has a number of implications on the health care industry. Some notable changes include the **increase in compliance requirements**, and **higher demand for better use of health data**. The Bundled Payment model calls for higher quality, and more coordinated care across providers and health care settings. Payments will no longer be made for the number of services delivered by one provider, but rather for the performance and quality of the care delivered by a number of providers. Based on this new

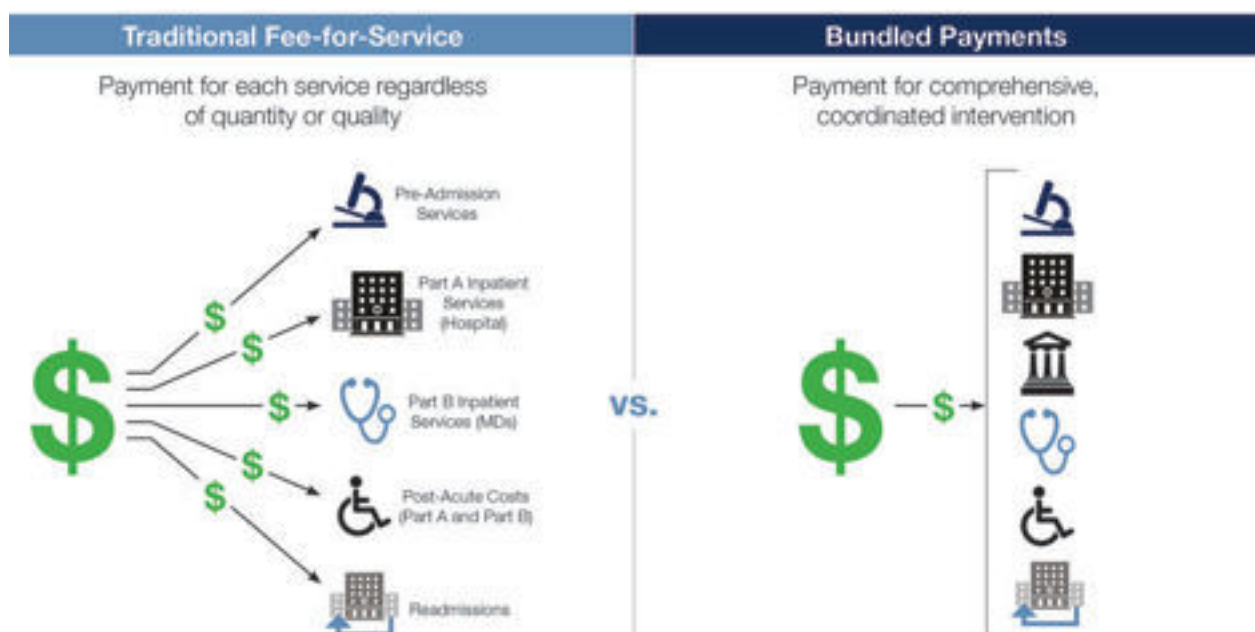
payment model and data regulations set by government authorities, every health care professional and health care establishment will need to have access to, and be able to securely share, patient data in order to remain accountable for the cost of care provided to patients.

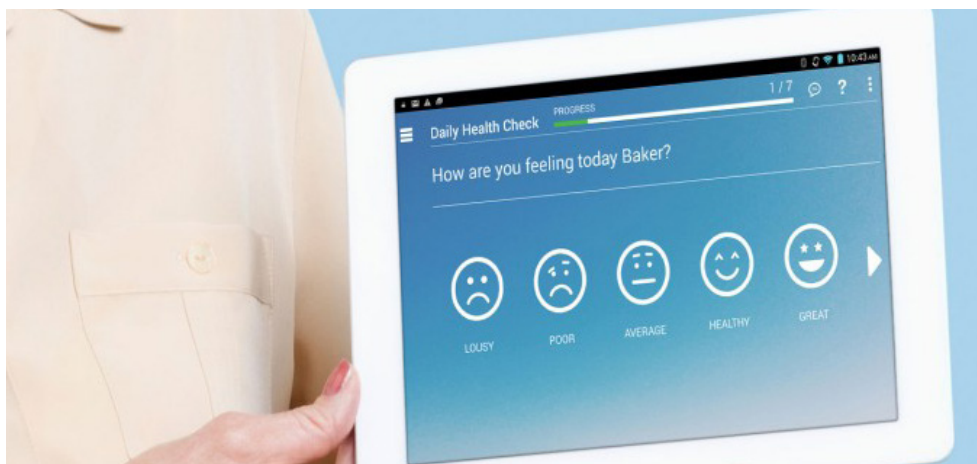
To make matters even more difficult, there are also a myriad of ever-changing Labor and Employment and complex reimbursement rules to consider. This means that on top of changing business

What is the Bundled Payment Model?

Bundled payment, also known as **episode-based payment**, **episode payment**, **episode-of-care payment**, **case rate**, **evidence-based case rate**, **global bundled payment**, **global payment**, **outcome based reimbursement**, is defined as the reimbursement of health care providers "on the basis of expected costs for clinically-defined episodes of care." It has been described as "a middle ground" between fee-for-service reimbursement (in which providers are paid for each service rendered to a patient) and capitation (in which providers are paid a "lump sum" per patient regardless of how many services the patient receives).

- Wikipedia





“65% of industry leaders decided to increase their IT budgets, with majority of the funds going towards the adoption of paperless processes.”

processes, home care organizations also need to ensure their procedures are in line with these rules and requirements, or they risk losing payment. That's not to mention the recent reduction in the number of skilled health practitioners, and the tightened margins between reimbursement and operational costs for care providers; it's a stressful process. However, in such a fast-paced industry, it's important for providers to embrace change or else they risk missing out on growth, productivity and improved outcomes. Agencies with over 100+ field staff have realized that with the help of technology and software solutions, there are easier ways to manage workflows and regulations, while also creating efficiencies.

Why Home Health Care Agencies Require Technology to Succeed

Traditional concepts, such as paper processes, storage systems and outdated software can create a massive roadblock for agencies trying to survive in this new environment. Technology is revolutionizing home health care. Keeping up with ever-changing health tech trends is a challenge on its own, but it's necessary in order for your agency to strengthen and grow.

According to the 2014 HIMSS Leadership Survey, 65 percent of respondents have decided to increase their IT budgets, with majority of the funds going towards the adoption of paperless processes. Investing in technology for your home care agency may seem costly and time consuming, but harnessing technology can benefit you in a number of ways:

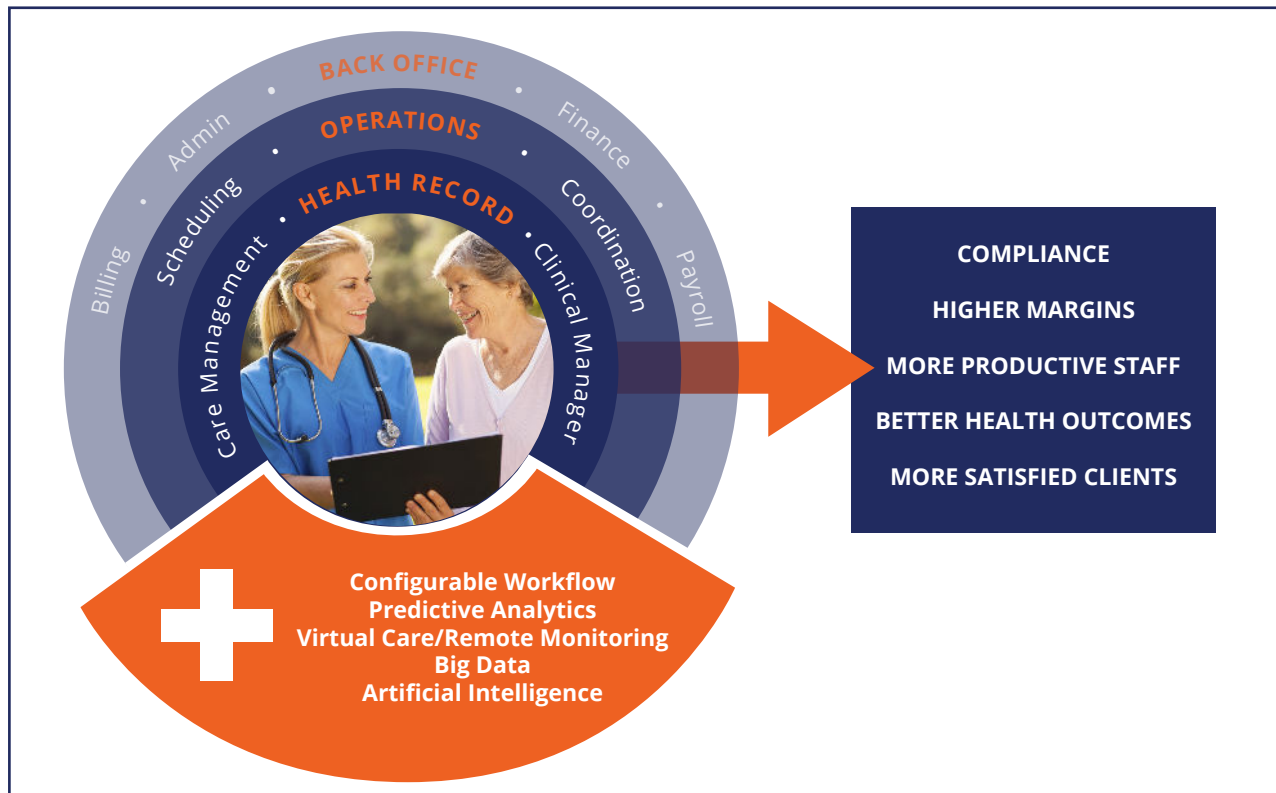
Streamline Workflows

It is estimated that care workers spend only 30 percent of their work day providing direct client care, while the remainder is spent on a variety of processes that are symptomatic of inefficient processes (Health Financial Management Association, 2008). Technology has the power to eliminate these processes. It was reported that implementing home health care software resulted in an 87% reduction in billing and referral processing times, as well as a 90% paper reduction (AlayaCare ROI Case Study, 2015).

Reduce Costs

Implementing home care technology offers a promising pathway to reduce the cost for ever-growing health care expenditures. Using a cloud-based software, you only pay

A View of What Home Health Care Agencies Could Look Like:



for the resources you need. Cost is generally based on demand and more convenient payment models are becoming available such as pay-as-you-go plans. Staff and hardware costs are dramatically reduced and agencies have the ability to maintain easy access to information without breaking the bank.

Increased Visibility and Access to Data

Cloud-based software allows agencies and employees to sync their clinical documents and care plans, while simultaneously receiving important updates in real time. Authorized employees have the ability to share EHRs in various locations, providing more timely access to important information anywhere, anytime.

Improved Client Experience/Satisfaction

Home care patients are demanding convenient, high-quality care, and technology offers it. While technology can never replace the authenticity of face-to-face visits, the combination of tools such as

Remote Patient Monitoring in addition to in-person visits can significantly aid in clinical decisions, improve patient satisfaction, and increase their overall access to care.



The Cost of Paper

- *The average worker in an office uses 10,000 sheets of paper annually.*
- *Of all documents filed, on average 7.5 percent get lost, while 3 percent of the remainder are misfiled.*
- *The average organization spends roughly \$20 in labour to file each paper document, \$120 in labour searching for each misfiled document, and \$220 in re-creation of a document.*

- (PwC)

Steps to Buying a Software Solution

By now you should be convinced that home health care software is the answer to majority of your roadblocks for growth. Let's take a look at some of steps you can take to implement a software solution:

Assess Your Current State

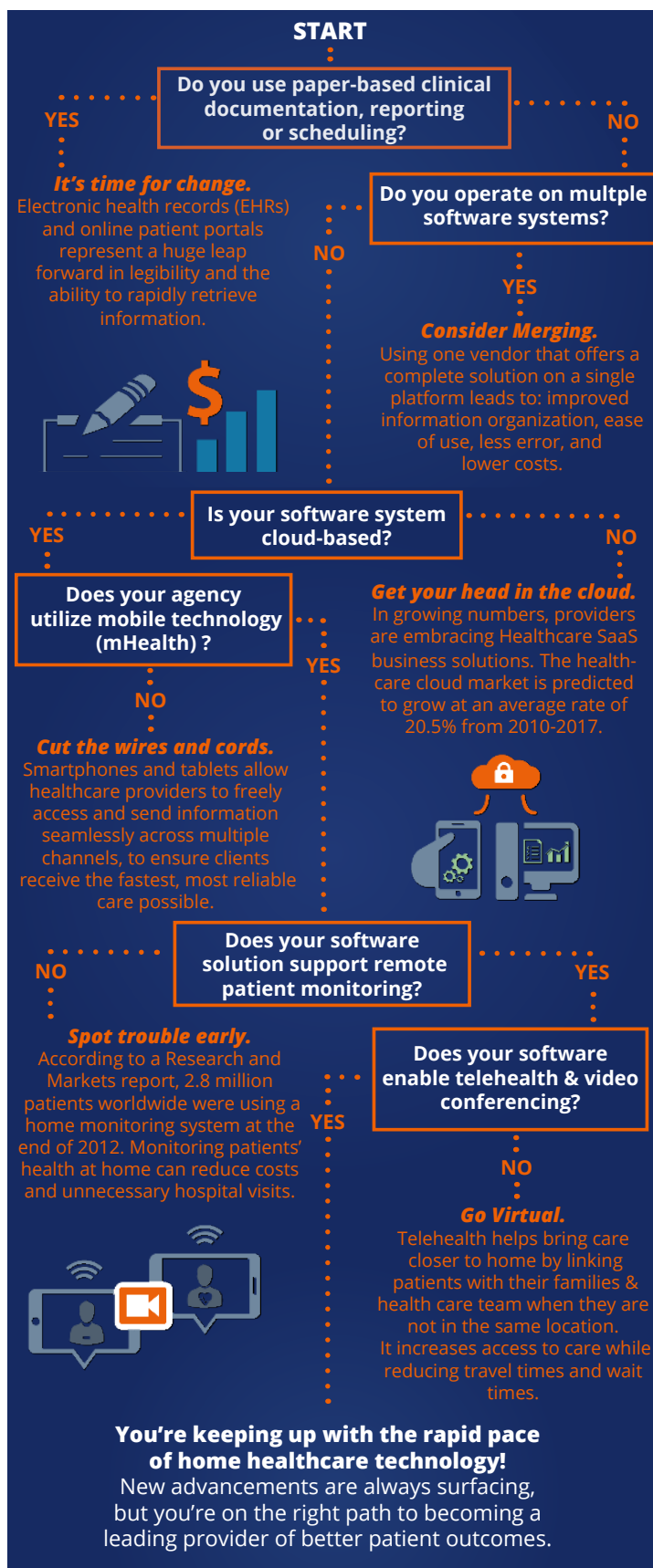
Fully understanding what your current state is will truly determine if you're ready to implement a software solution:

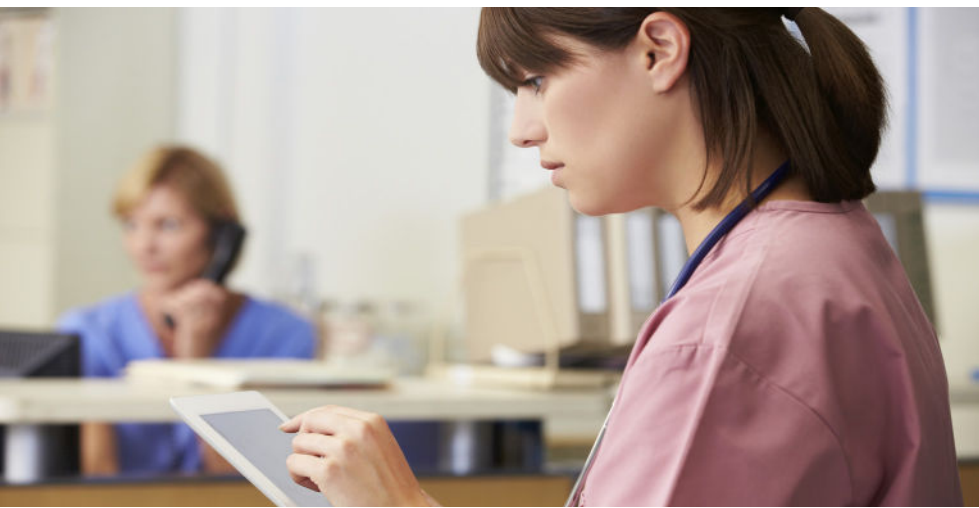
- What is your current technical infrastructure?
- Are your staff ready to embrace technology at your agency like they've adopted in their personal lives?
- Do you have the resources to take on a major project such as a new software implementation?
- Do you have the bandwidth for change management?

What are the signs?

Take our quiz to see if you're keeping up with the biggest technological advancements in the home healthcare industry or if it's time to think about making a change:

The healthcare cloud market is predicted to grow at an average rate of 20.5% from 2010-2017.





“Implementing home health care software resulted in 87% reduction in billing and referral processing times.”

Identify your Goals

Before jumping into the crowded market that is home health care software solutions, take some time to go over the simple things: **your goals**. Having a set of defined business goals and needs will lead to more focused and effective decision making when it comes to finding the right software solution for you. We recommend you follow the “SMART” goals process:

Specific
Measureable
Attainable
Relevant
Time Bound

Assess your Software Requirements

The first step in acquiring new technology is understanding what you need. This may include asking yourself questions such as:

- What are the EHR functions you require: do they include demographic information and care management data?
- What clinical decision support and subsequent reporting capabilities am I looking for?

- What interfaces to other technologies do I require? For example, if I am currently working with another provider, what is the best way to communicate information?
- What are the federal and local regulations that this new solution must comply with?

Once you come up with a list of must-haves and needs requirements, you will be more equipped to find a solution best-suited to help you achieve your goals.

Make a Plan

Now that you’ve set your goals and gathered some requirements, it’s time to devise a collaborative plan taking into consideration the needs of key stakeholders and system users. The vast majority of providers go into the purchasing process assuming technology will have to adapt to their current workflows. Instead, the implementation of a new software solution should be seen as an opportunity to revisit and optimize your business processes using today’s technology. When building an implementation plan, your entire team should be involved in clearly defining the changes in work tasks/processes that need to be made; only then will you be able to prioritize tasks in your plan.

The HealthIT.Gov compiled a list of tactical steps you'll likely encounter during your planning process:

- Analyze and map out the practice's current workflow and processes of how the practice currently gets work done (the current state).
- Map out how software solutions enable desired workflows and processes, creating new workflow patterns to reduce inefficiency or duplicative processes (the future state).
- Create a contingency plan – or back-up plan – to combat issues that may arise throughout the implementation process.
- Create a project plan for transitioning from your legacy software and appoint someone to manage the project plan. Keep in mind your staff have to focus on their day job in addition to transitioning platforms.
- Establish a chart abstraction plan, a means to convert or transform, information from paper charts to electronic charts. Identify specific data elements that will need to be entered into the new software and if there are items that will be scanned.
- Understand what data elements may be migrated from your old system to your new one, such as patient demographics or provider schedule information. Sometimes, being selective with which data or how much data you want to migrate can influence the ease of transition.
- Identify concerns and obstacles regarding privacy and security and create a plan to address them. It is essential to emphasize the importance of privacy and security when transitioning to EHRs.

(HealthIT.gov, 2016)





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next 14 years.***

Research

Once you've finished gathering needs requirements and have devised a plan for an implementation, you're well suited to begin your search for a home care software solution. There are a number of resources you can utilize to gather the valuable information you need in order to make an informed decision:

Online

While you can't always trust everything you read online, a simple google search for "home care software solutions" can go a long way. Vendor websites are a great place to start your high-level search, and generally foster the information you need to determine if their software should be in the running for your business.

Demos

After you compile a list of providers that fit your requirements and are well suited to achieve your goals, your next step should be to schedule personal demonstrations of each solution. During this process vendors will walk you through the more in-depth functionality of their software, going through use-cases and allowing you to ask more specific questions tailored to your agency's

needs. Generally, agencies will request a number of demos from each vendor before making a final decision.

Reviews

Looking at review sites such as Consumer Insights, Capterra or Software Advice can be very insightful when looking for a software solution. These sites contain ratings, comments and insights from individuals who have gone through the process of buying a software solution, and can help bring to light some of their experiences they've had that you don't generally find on a company website.

Referrals

A good referral goes a long way. The home health care market is saturated with software vendors, often leading to your first question to be "why are you better?" Therefore, chatting with other agencies will be key to get their impressions.

Key Factors and Features to Keep in Mind

Data Silos and the Impact

A major criticism of healthcare systems around the world is that the systems act in silos. This means that we have inherently categorized patient care into neat boxes. Whether the data silo is a hospital, a nursing home, or home care agency, there is inevitably the need to move data back and forth across these silos. This isn't just a localized concern; this information should also be able to move across cities, and even regions (states/provinces). Technology, specifically software, plays an essential role in how agencies can overcome the silo effect of this need-to-share data.

Outcome-Based Reimbursement

Increasingly home care is reimbursed based on the quality of services provided. At a high level, outcome-based reimbursement programs require home health providers to fulfill a mandate that intertwines quality and payment. Based on performance, experience and outcomes, payment adjustments will incentivize providers by financially rewarding those who meet and beat the quality standards, while those who fail to meet the standards are left with lower payment revenues. Even though this is still largely considered a pilot model, indications point towards national expansion, which is

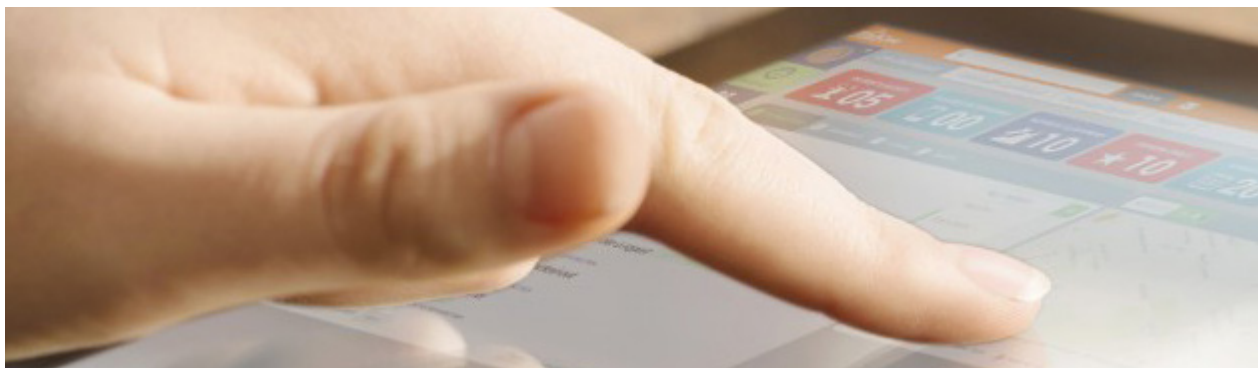
something to consider when researching software solutions.

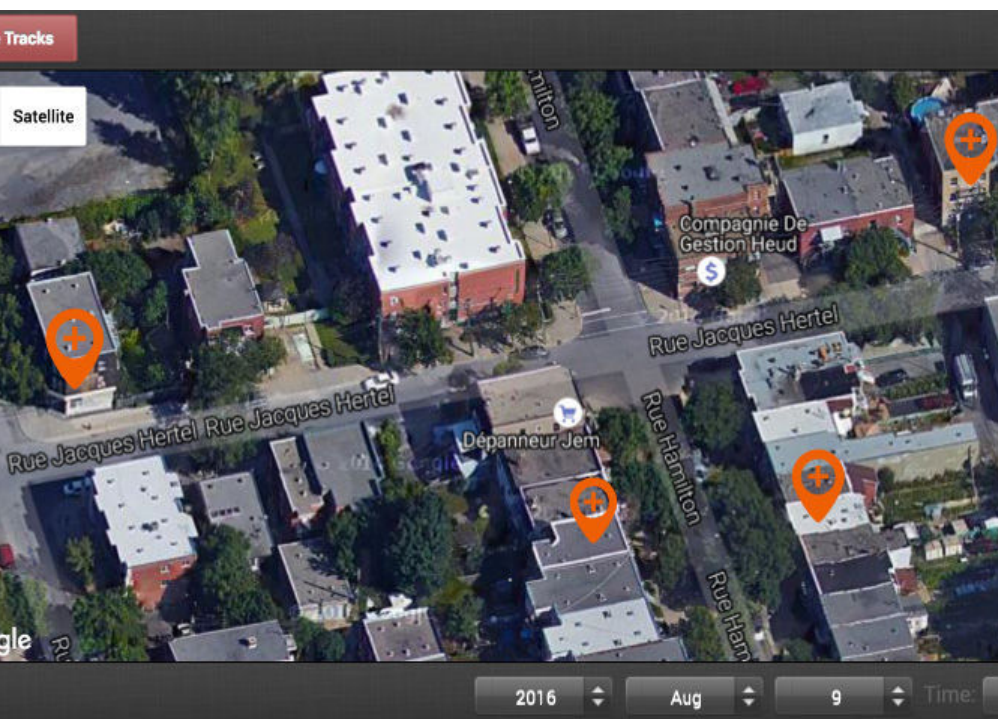
The Electronic Health Record (EHR)

Certified Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology is used to improve quality, safety, and efficiency, while reducing health disparities. It also allows health care providers to engage patients and family and improve care coordination. Though compliance is still an issue, there is no question that EHR's will become an industry standard.

Emerging Technologies

New advancements such as remote patient monitoring, optimization and predictive analytics allow agencies to anticipate future events and enable invaluable decision-support. While implementing new technology can be challenging, intimidating and costly (at first), its purpose is to help make the lives of home care providers easier and save your agency time and money. The capabilities of technology are only expected to grow, and it's certain that the future of home care will be increasingly efficient and streamlined. Rather than holding onto dated processes, take the time to step into the future.





*Imagine if you
could see where
all your staff
were at once?*

You can!

Cyber Security

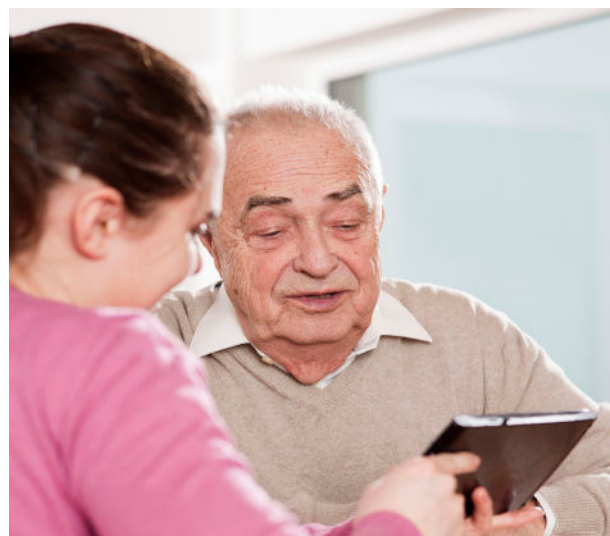
The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act sets the standard for protecting sensitive patient data. All home care agencies must ensure that all required physical, network, and process security measures are met and followed. Any exchange of data or information must be HIPAA compliant.

Mobility

Field workers are generally always pressed for time. They need fast and easy access to client information in order to complete visits efficiently and effectively. Mobile solutions give care workers all the necessary information they need to efficiently complete a visit at the point of care, while also eliminating paper time sheets and increasing safety. If you have yet to implement a software solution, consider one that offers a mobile solution to really streamline processes, reduce spending and save your employees valuable time.

Optimization

Schedule and route optimization for back office coordination yields more compressed schedules, resulting in more visits and less travel time for providers. Features such as Electronic Visit Verification and GPS functionality can greatly increase field staff compliance and security. Flexible time & attendance and schedule settings can make an incredible difference to an organization's profitability.



In Summary

UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE AS A DIFFERENTIATOR

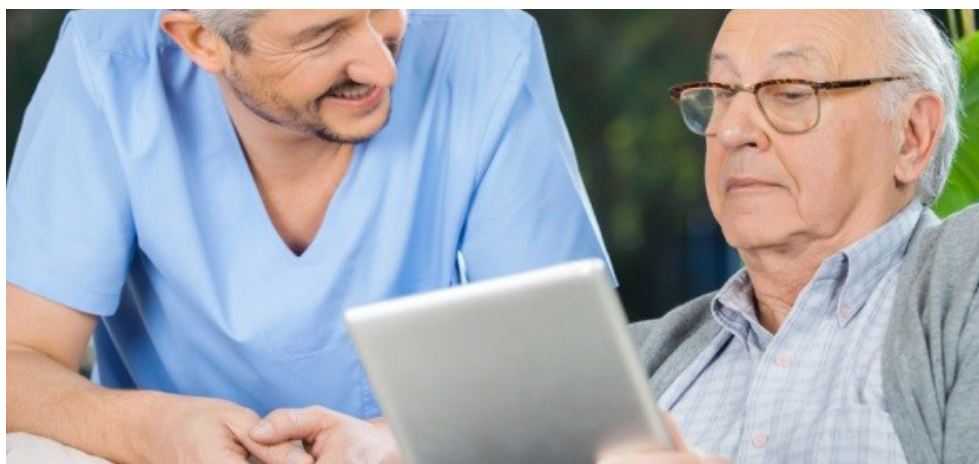
Technology can be a differentiator in today's modern health care environment. Business Intelligence tools and Revenue Cycle Management capabilities have increased the necessity for evolved software. Mobility, time tracking, and remote workforces have increased the necessity for synching to multiple types of hardware. With technology changing so quickly, cloud-based software systems make it less difficult to remain current and compliant.

Moving to the cloud and a SaaS model is the infrastructure of the future. Virtually every industry is moving to this model for a multiple of reasons, you can read more about this trend [here](#).

As more demands for access to patient care information become prevalent, having sophisticated software systems that talk to each other become more important. If you are dependent on funding sources like the government who is consistently providing less money, yet demanding better care, your software solution needs to make your practice as a health care provider more efficient than ever before.

Elements such as portals, communications, telehealth, and telemedicine are becoming more important in a multifaceted mix of private and public home care providers. Innovations in cloud computing, mobile technology, and artificial intelligence means now is the time to invest in software.

So there you have it! Hopefully now you're well informed to take the steps you need to begin implementing a home health care software solution. If you have any additional questions or would like to share your feedback or personal experiences, we are always happy to hear from you!



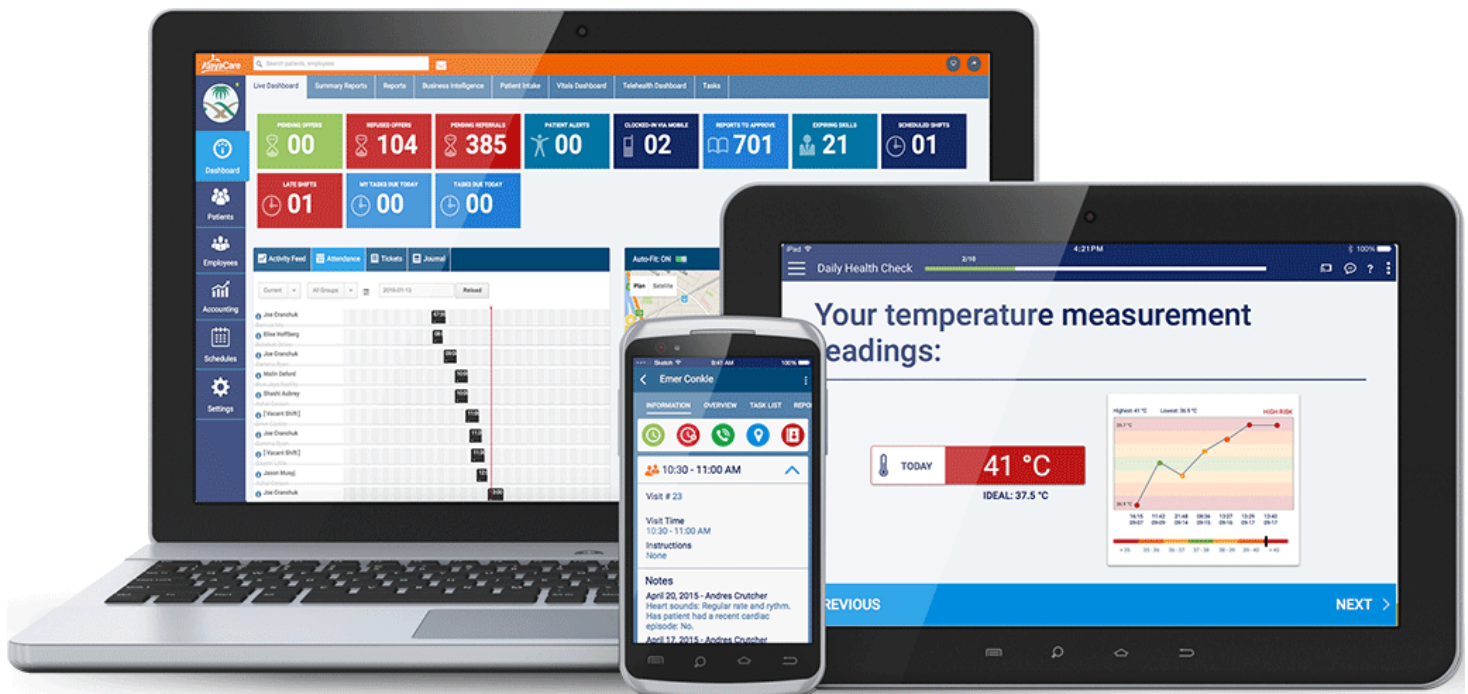
"Moving to a SaaS model is the infrastructure of the future. Virtually every industry is moving to this model."



ABOUT ALAYACARE

As a leading provider of an end-to-end home care software platform, AlayaCare offers a mix of real-time telehealth and face-to-face visit solutions, including robust clinical documentation, exceptional back office solutions, and next-generation technology. With our all-in-one solution, you can ensure your patients have the tools they need to be more confident and knowledgeable in their healthcare services, increasing engagement and ultimately improving patient outcomes.

LEARN MORE



Resources

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