How to become a **data-driven** home infusion company

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AlayaCare

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By all accounts, the home infusion therapy market is growing at a rapid pace. In fact, estimates peg the industry's worth at over 135 billion USD by 2024 in the U.S. alone, fuelled by increasing numbers of immunocompromised patients who suffer infections and chronic diseases that require continuous monitoring. Such monitoring is easier and convenient if it's received at home.

Leading home infusion providers know it's the way of the future, as it can make a huge difference for patients. Take multiple sclerosis (MS), for example, an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system. It's not uncommon for patients with MS to routinely miss considerable amounts of work or school due to the condition. Infusion treatments are proven to slow the progression of MS and prevent flare ups – and by receiving infusion at home, clients can lead a more typical lifestyle and can enjoy broader participation in the community.

There's no question that home infusion is the future for infusion therapies. But to do it well, it requires a highly efficient and streamlined operation that produces meaningful and actionable insights for patients – and that all begins with data.

*Estimates peg the home infusion industry's worth at over **135 billion** USD by 2024 in the U.S.*

Here we dive into why – and, more importantly, how – your organization can succeed in the new data-driven world of home infusion.

Why become data-driven?

The collection and use of data in health care has been a slow burn since electronic health records first appeared in the 1970s. Now, the use of data insights is accelerating at a tremendous clip, and it has revolutionized many markets – with home care helping to lead the way.

NHIA Data Initiative

NHIA Data Initiative

The National Home Infusion Association (NHIA) has developed standardized definitions for home and specialty infusion providers to use when collecting data related to patient events as part of ongoing quality improvement activities. These definitions were developed by a volunteer-based Outcomes Task Force comprised of individual provider and business-firm members committed to the utilization of quality data to advance the infusion industry.

Within an expanding home infusion market, it is now a business imperative for providers to modernize and use new software to capture data across all areas of operations. In fact, the entire industry sees the underlying potential: the National Home Infusion Association (NHIA) has rolled out a national data initiative that seeks to standardize how home and specialty infusion providers collect patient data in order to drive quality improvement.

These standardized definitions will allow providers to engage in industry-wide benchmarking and research activities, and therefore generate meaningful data that measures the quality and value of home infusion therapy. The final definitions cover everything from unplanned hospitalization and emergency department use to adverse drug reaction, medication error, and more.

Agencies stand to gain huge efficiencies

Apart from this initiative, home infusion providers can embrace positive change within their own operations by becoming more data-focused. Focusing on the daily collection of numbers can quickly uncover vast new realms of efficiency.

Treating individuals who require infusion therapy requires a very nimble level of efficiency. Manually completing reports before driving or mailing/faxing them to the office is a time-soaked pattern ripe for accidental errors or lost information. Such a cumbersome situation can actually lead to more work down the line.

For example: managers may be forced to laboriously print and scan documents in order to upload them into the system. Pharmacy departments can lag in knowing the next scheduled visit or what supplies are needed. The financial department can experience untimely billing if it has to wait for each nurse's note to return. The potential pitfalls are many.

In all, becoming data-focused means alleviating administrative burdens on the back end, and delivering more targeted and efficient services to clients on the front end. (For more on how data can be used to grow a home care business, see this article.)

How to become data-focused?

KPIs done well give staff a sense of empowerment, a critical first step to the entire point of using them: to **improve performance.**

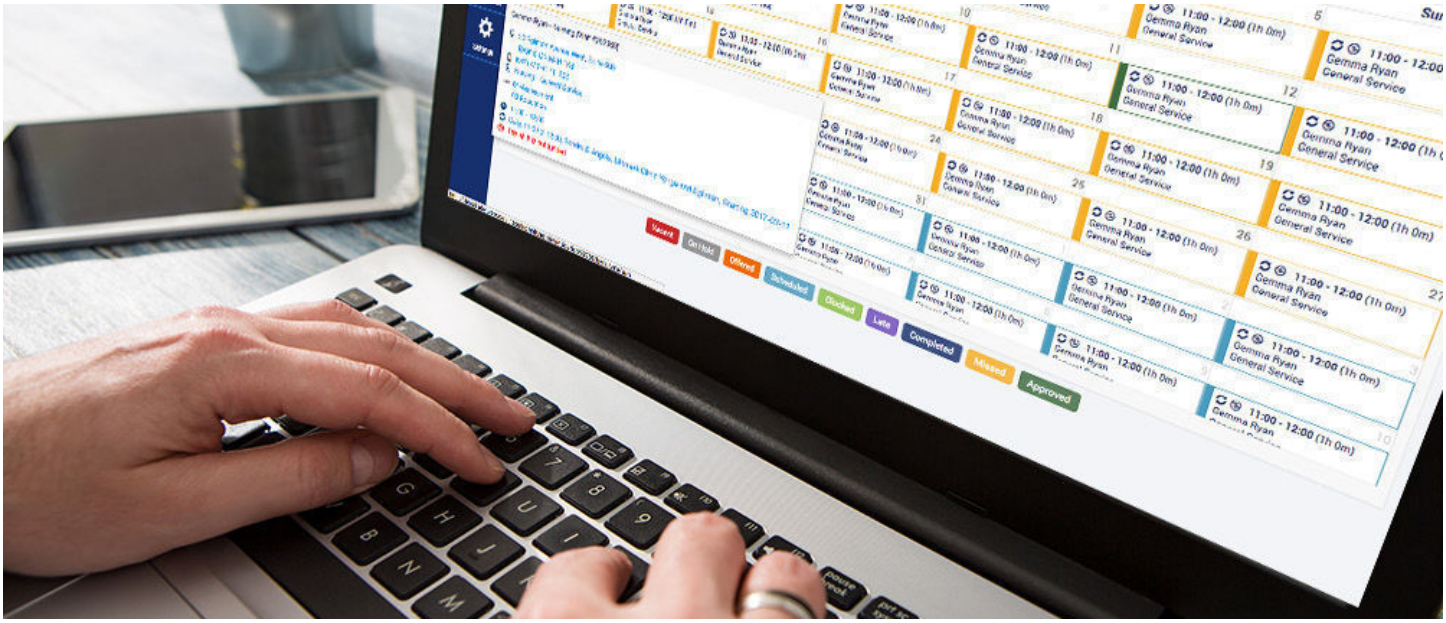
The benefits of becoming a data-focused organization are clear – but what's the best way to begin? It all comes down to the right software solution that is flexible enough to meet the data demands you place on it.

Beyond streamlining administrative tasks, customized software can capture the data needed to improve everything from operational efficiency to clinical data to business and workflow management.

You want to become data-focused in the most effective areas in order for technology to move the needle. Identify software that is tailored to your specific needs, and it can fast-track important data outputs, which will yield key benefits.

For maximum value, we would suggest agencies focus on these areas:

Scheduling: Data insights can improve busy nurse schedules and even eliminate the need to increase headcount – an invaluable tool given that the entire industry is faced with a caregiver shortage. Maximizing the time spent with patients must be a priority – particularly when it comes to infusion, which can be time-consuming. Care time and ongoing time (i.e. waiting with a patient during and after a treatment) are two aspects of infusion therapy that can ignite scheduling headaches. Yet the right software can serve as a remedy, by tracking the difference and allowing a nurse to monitor one or more patients while caring for another.



Visit insights: Software tailored for the home infusion market can deliver insights for the NHIA data initiative, but also for your business too. Moving away from paper and legacy solutions to software that can capture data via remote patient monitoring, mobile apps and on-site clinical documentation can provide full transparency into nursing schedules and patient well-being, revealing gaps in care, and even predicting upcoming busy seasons. Notes uploaded in real time can also help coordinate care across the spectrum of health-care professionals, keeping them all up-to-date on a patient's treatment and status.

Software tailored for the home infusion market can deliver insights for the NHIA data initiative, but also for your business too.

"We're trying to use responsive analytics to identify coming trends, such as when we may have a surge or drop in clients. Having the data automatically exported to the dashboard instead of manually entered into an excel spreadsheet has improved both the accuracy of inputting and efficiency of sharing the data."

Terri Soukup
VP, Helping Hands

APIs: Application program interfaces may seem intimidating. But they are the path to achieving a true ecosystem of care. To build a lasting reputation for top-quality client service and better outcomes, providers can build that ecosystem (with hospitals, health networks, software vendors, and more) through efficient API lifecycle management. This connects everything from human resource management systems to remote patient monitoring, electronic health records, and much more – providing invaluable data insights about your clients, your business, and the infusion industry overall at any given time. (AlayaCare's cloud-based software system is equipped with APIs in its innovative AlayaSphere to bring the most robust platform available in home care today.)

Ultimately, whatever software is implemented must be easy to use or the true power of data will remain just out of reach – instead of being part of the real change in our industry. Straightforward design and intuitive dashboards are key to ensuring the software is used to its fullest capabilities, so providers should spend extra attention on user experience before deciding on any platform.

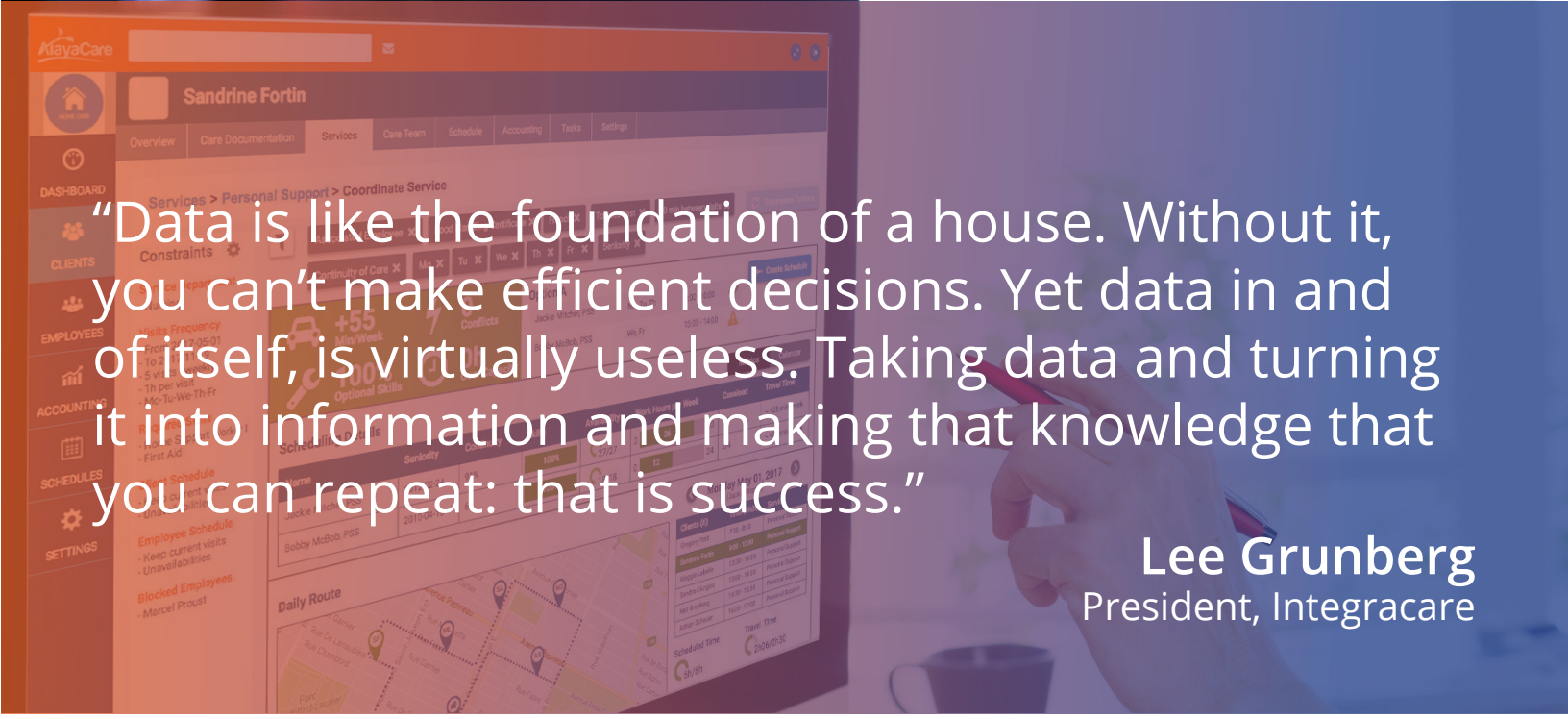
Now that you have this data, what's next?

As mentioned above, key data insights will be crucial to not only help inform NHIA best practices but also provide your organization with valuable insights for data-driven care.

The key is to make decisions – based on what the data reveals – that drive optimal care, improve agency operations, and empower field staff to the fullest degree possible. This begins by simply thinking about the ways data could be leveraged in your organization and adjusting accordingly.

Once the software is in place and data is being captured efficiently and accurately, it is time to establish key performance indicators (KPIs). These are measurable values that reveal whether your home infusion agency a company is achieving its objectives or not – by demonstrating whether the targets you put in place are being consistently met.

In the home infusion industry, data-driven KPIs can address key areas like on-time client visits, overall client satisfaction, employee retention, reporting and billing. They can cover all facets of a business from HR to finance to marketing to quality of care to optimal use of personal support workers to client conversion. The trick is to see what you can measure that will help your agency realistically achieve improvements in the most highly relevant areas.



If you're not sure how to best leverage company data due to lack of tools or limited functionality and flexibility in your current solution, research the AlayaCare platform in a web-demo and see how our system can give you seamless access to your data, advanced analytics and a tailored platform to equip you for success in the home infusion market.

The time is now to seize the opportunities that only data analysis can provide.

2019 NHIA Annual Conference
March 9-13, 2019 | Orlando, Florida
Educate. Engage. ***Empower.***

2019 NHIA Conference

Thank you to everyone who came by see us at NHIA 2019. Please check back at https://www.alayacare.com when any new developments impact the evolving landscape of home infusion. For those who didn't attend or have more questions about how software can unlock new business potential, don't hesitate to get in touch.

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