

Using on-line patient dialogue to drive health-care improvement

Challenges and opportunities for partnering organizations

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Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Health-care organizations need to brace for an environment of information overload:</i> • <i>Approximately 70% of patients access health-related Web pages daily and 60% of them contribute health content</i> • <i>1 billion Web pages (from all content categories) are created daily.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By partnering with this initiative, organizations could do better at listening to patients despite the ever-increasing volume of information. This partnership provides an opportunity to tap into the “pulse” of Web-enabled patients. While it’s true that this is a segment of the patient and caregiver population (so-called ‘early adopters’), the Cell’s experience is that these early adopters can lead organizations to transformative change.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Concerned by social media growth, many organizations are shutting down access from their institutional networks and preventing staff and patients from having an open dialogue. There is considerable misinformation concerning issues of privacy and data use on social networks.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By joining this initiative, partnering institutions will know what scenarios are best suitable to allow access to social media applications and to understand emerging best practices in the use of social media to improve care delivery. As this is a partnership initiative, partnering institutions will determine how extensive the pilot becomes. This initiative will evaluate whether the privacy and data control concerns raised by some critics have validity and if so, if they can be addressed. The majority of literature from the public relations and management communities reveal that shutting down access in any corporate setting presents more reputational and governance problems than enabling it. This partnership can test this hypothesis.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Few health facilities have social media strategies and fewer know how to use them to increase the quality of health-care delivery.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Joining partners will have the possibility to access a comprehensive social media strategy to determine how to better increase health-care delivery and quality. In the context of current health-care legislation, notably the Public Hospitals Act, boards have a fiduciary responsibility to manage reputational risk, and, as such, a social media strategy is necessary for governance reasons, in addition to the profound quality improvement reasons championed by the current initiative. Further, malpractice risk reduction has been linked to better corporate use of social media.</i>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding what patients say and mean in online conversations is very challenging as the language used is more conversational, rife with jargon-laden expressions, slang, and carrying varying emotional undertones (e.g. sarcasm, excitement, disappointment), and stated so briefly that context is difficult to discern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using (fast-emerging) publicly available and proprietary tools, this initiative will help delivery organizations understand real-time information beyond the traditional real-time analytics (keyword spotting) to truly understand the rich meaning and conceptual patterns within patient-generated content.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors to twitter.com grew 1,200% from Feb 2008 to Feb 2009. Twitter™ has become the third-largest social networking site in the US and Canada, attracting tremendous attention from the provider community despite the uncertainty (among non-adopters) about Twitter's usages as a communication platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the e-Tool-kit developed as part of this partnership project, partnering institutions will learn how to harness social media's explosive growth to their advantage. As other competitors to Twitter™ and Facebook™ quickly gain adoption, the e-Tool-kit can evolve to reference the usability of these alternate listening tools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining external insight about your patient population by condition, interest, physical location (geo-location) and sentiment is increasingly important as we near the first decade of the new century. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complement organizations' perspective on patient satisfaction by listening to the wisdom of the crowds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new ethos on the Web, and in customer service, is to engage and participate in the conversations about the services, products and brands offered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations could be leaders in this regard. In a nutshell, this drives patient-centredness to meet the increasing expectations of funders, clients and their families.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public relations offices in the corporate world are commissioning real-time intelligence to manage products, brands and reputations. Reputations in health care are also important as consumers have access to new venues to rate the clinical services received by health professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through this venture, organizations will understand how their facilities are assessed by patients, family members and friends and can identify where and even how to improve care. This is an emerging best practice in board governance, and may be explored.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Word of mouth" in health care has taken on new meaning and similarity to the corporate world. Identifying and engaging with key influencers to build trusted relationships and positive/constructive "buzz" is increasingly important in our globalized reality. Health-care facilities have not figured out how to do this well, while other sectors are leading the way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations will be better prepared to 'talk' and 'have meaningful conversations' with your "followers" when supporting the collaboration of The Change Foundation and the Innovation Cell. This will also offer the opportunity to learn from best practices in other corporations, such as Dell and Starbucks and General Motors.

