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Automated ID

GARY HUTCHINSON, COREY NELSON and **SCOTT HIRST** of Precision Dynamics Corporation discuss the methodology and products to identify patients and the road map to connect those patients against electronic medical records

Future Healthcare What initiated the merger with TimeMed Labeling, and how does the combination better serve your customers?

Gary Hutchinson The marketplace really drove it as we listened to the customers talk about the challenges they are having personalizing all of the data, information, laboratory reports and of course, the identification requirements, and then connecting that information. We knew we had to broaden our portfolio to address that market requirement, and we were fortunate enough to get the deal done with TimeMed. For our customers now, it's a one-stop solution with the support both from a technical and integration perspective of having the best methodology and products to identify the patient and set the road map to connect that patient against the electronic medical record.

FH How do automated technologies, like bar coding, help hospitals better protect their patients?

Scott Hirst We pretty much distill this down to three key points. It helps to enhance the personalization and the accuracy of the patient ID, and everything that's linked to that patient through the continuum of care, from admission to discharge — whether it's medication, specimen, testing or any of the charting processes that take place. That helps to enhance how

hospitals improve their patient safety for identification. It helps to improve the workflow by eliminating any type of manual processing, manual transcribing and tracking of that information. You eliminate the potential for error from hand-written information or things that are done manually. In addition to enhancing clinical management, it improves revenue cycles and information sharing and data exchange, which is critically important across departments in a hospital. Having that automated identification and being able to cross over those identifications are very important.

FH Are hospital wristbands and labels typically purchased via multiple vendors? What are the benefits of using a single source, and what consultative approach do you offer?

Corey Nelson We do see that wristbands, and more specifically labels, are purchased via multiple vendors. We've had experiences with some of our customers when we've gone in to evaluate the vendors that they use and found that, in some cases across their system, they are purchasing from 20 or more different suppliers. Because of the number of suppliers available in this market and the decentralized purchasing within a hospital, it allows for a wide array of vendor choices when it comes to each department selecting the particular wristband or label that they need. In

response to that, what PDC-TimeMed has developed is a program that helps those hospitals consolidate their spending and vendor base. It's called the PowerPlus Purchasing Program. We've gone into hospitals that were purchasing from 40 or so suppliers, taken them through our program and delivered savings of over 20 percent in that area.

FH How do you view the development of bar coding win healthcare today? What factors curtail its expansion, and what elements are driving it?

SH It's slow, but progressing in the right direction. Bar coding is not new to healthcare, but the adoption rate for using it is quite slow. There have been studies out there which tell us hospitals are using bar coding for identification, but they don't have it integrated. Less than 5 percent of hospitals are using it in the format to scan and track things appropriately. There are a lot of infrastructure issues that are related to the development of bar coding. It's not that it's not being used; it's just the connectivity issues related to that. The systems in a hospital are not truly connected. We've heard and read that some hospitals have as many as 40 different IT systems. Hospitals have a tendency not to want to benchmark error rates, for fear of public outcry that they're not doing things properly. It's very difficult to track a return on investment for tracking errors, and therefore figure out the true benefit of implementing bar coding for patient safety.

FH The Joint Commission recently released its 2009 patient-safety guidelines. What goals do PDC-TimeMed products most effectively address?

CN The combination of PDC-TimeMed provides an even more compelling case for our patient-safety solution to hospitals and helping them address the Joint Commission goals. In terms of the goals, there are a few that we are able to help hospitals become most compliant with. The first being Joint Commission goal No. 1: "Use at least two patient identifiers when providing care treatment and services," and that clearly relates to our bar code and wristband offerings. The second would be "Improve the effectiveness of communication among caregivers." Through our wristband offering or call-out labels, we're able to ensure that whether it's a shift change on the nurses' floor or the patient moving from one department to another, the patient is accurately identified. A third would be improving the safety of using medications. In the sterile field, we're accurately identifying the drug and syringe and ensuring the proper medication is being used in surgery. Our labeling helps identify the right drug, the right dosage and ensures that it's applied accurately.

FH What new product have you launched that's in high demand? What are its benefits to patient safety, the caregiver, and hospital efficiencies?

SH Our print on-demand or auto-ID wristbands — whether that be a thermal-printed wristband or label, or a laser-generated product like our new DuraPrint laser wristband system, or simply taking a label and placing it on a wristband. The key is the use of automated technology to produce the identification component for patient ID. Those are the ones in highest demand and where we've seen the largest growth over the last five years.

As far as the benefit to patient safety, I'd have to refer to the answers in Question Two, where it enhances the personalization and enhancement of the patient ID and everything that's linked to the patient, including the improvement of workflow, improving the revenue cycle and, most importantly, improving the information sharing and data exchange so the proper care can be given to the patient.

As far as the caregiver goes, from a benefit standpoint, it's sort of a



GARY HUTCHINSON
PRESIDENT & CEO
PRECISION DYNAMICS CORPORATION

Since joining PDC in 2003, Mr. Hutchinson has established European headquarters in Brussels, Belgium; set up manufacturing operations in Tijuana, Mexico; acquired the wristband product line from Hollister, Inc.; and partnered with Water Street Healthcare Partners, a Chicago private-equity firm focused in the healthcare industry, to expand PDC's global position in the marketplace. Water Street helped PDC acquire TimeMed Labeling Systems, Inc. in 2008 to offer the most complete line of patient identification solutions in healthcare.



COREY NELSON
VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES & MARKETING
PRECISION DYNAMICS CORPORATION

Mr. Nelson joined the company in 2008 through PDC's acquisition of TimeMed Labeling Systems, Inc., where he served as vice president of sales and marketing. Mr. Nelson brings 15 years of experience in healthcare sales and consumer-products marketing. He has also held various sales, business development, and national account management roles with Haemonetics Corporation, and worked with Newell Rubbermaid, Fisher Scientific and the Gillette Company in marketing and business development positions.



SCOTT HIRST
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
PRECISION DYNAMICS CORPORATION

Mr. Hirst is director of marketing at PDC. He joined the company in 1991 and brings 17 years of experience in healthcare sales and product marketing. At PDC, he has held positions in sales management, product management and marketing management. Prior to joining PDC, Mr. Hirst worked in the voice messaging and interactive voice response market with several value-added resellers, including GTE.

double-edged sword. Any time that you're integrating technology into the healthcare setting, the nurses who are so used to handling the personalization of care with the patient at the bedside, there's a learning and adopting phase that takes place. Not that care given to the patients is lessened by that, it's just doing more things than you used to do in order to make things better. Now you're connecting the physical world and you're introducing this electronic world to that without trying to give up the physical world. There are challenges inherent in this process, but at the end of the day, there is quite a bit going on with everyone recognizing the overall benefits. From a hospital efficiencies standpoint, you are eliminating the manual processing of identification. **FH**