

Healthcare organizations are not only merging with other health systems, they're also increasingly buying physician practices. If managed properly, these mergers and acquisitions create an incredible opportunity to develop networks of coordinated care that will allow hospitals to compete on price and quality outcomes.

However, the potential to reduce operating costs and gain economies of scale can be hindered by cultural differences among organizations. Clinicians who previously had not had to collaborate or communicate with one another – or may have even been competitors – now find themselves working on the same team. How do these groups coordinate care?

For mergers to be successful, hospital systems must align clinicians by providing an efficient way for them to identify and communicate with one another. There must be a central hub where collaboration can occur for better patient care, and to create a strong identity for the new organization.

### EASE OF USE

Nurses, physicians and other hospital staff must have access to a clinical collaboration platform (CCP) that provides them with easy access to colleagues. It is essential that clinicians know who the specialists are in *real time*, and that they can communicate with them in the most efficient way possible. If you make it difficult to find in-network colleagues, clinicians will default to their previously established referral patterns, which could lead to patient leakage and loss of revenue. Easy, HIPAA-compliant messaging and VoIP calls based on accurate, real-time schedules will help a merged health system synchronize its clinicians faster.

### PROVISIONING

Provisioning users onto a CCP must be seamless and is best achieved through the current Active Directory or SAML interfaces. This allows users to access the platform with the same usernames and passwords as other hospital systems. Users can often be provisioned onto a CCP via the same methods used for EHRs.

### ADOPTION

Adoption increases when the user experience is good. Instant familiarity with the primary functions of a CCP (texting, calling and alerts) delivers a comfort level that clinicians appreciate. The learning curve on a CCP needs to be low – if the technology is complicated to use, it becomes a burden. The user experience with smart devices using a CCP must be similar to personal smart devices to increase usage. The platform needs to be seen as a welcomed technical addition to their work and not something that will increase their workload or reduce efficiency. Saving a few minutes on each interaction by using an intuitive platform will add up to a big efficiency boost in a busy clinician's work day.

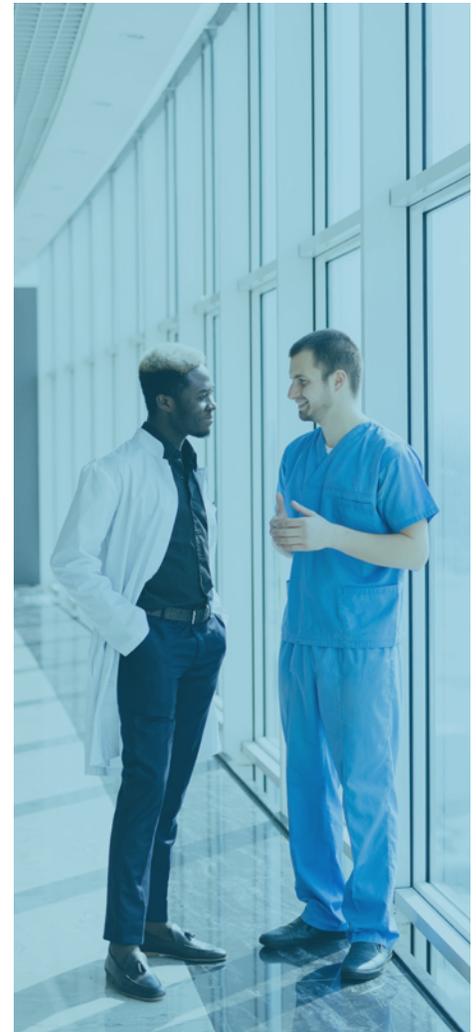
[See \*Improving New Technology Adoption in Healthcare\*](#)

### INTEGRATION

The ability to receive or send information from other systems such as operator consoles, Labs, PACS, EHRs and after-hours software is critical. One platform where clinicians can access the relevant information they need for clinical use saves valuable time, improves patient care and reduces caregiver fatigue.

[See \*Are Your Call Centers HIPAA-Compliant\*](#)

Health systems are coming to understand the benefits of a clinical collaboration platform for strategic alignment, which has become especially important following a hospital merger or physician group acquisition. Intuitive and flexible technology improves workflow and facilitates quality, coordinated care.



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