

Chain Drug Review

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New technology designed to improve adherence



Chris Bergstrom

NEW YORK — Technology developed by companies outside the realm of traditional device and drug manufacturers is having an increasing impact on the diabetes category, particularly innovations that have the potential to improve patient medication adherence rates.

For example, last month the Food and Drug Administration approved the WellDoc DiabetesManager System, which WellDoc chief strategy and commercial development officer Chris Bergstrom describes as the first mobile medicine solution cleared by the agency to offer automated coaching to patients and behavioral algorithms that are driven by real-time patient data.

The software-based system, he explains, supports patients and enables health care professionals to configure specific parameters and extend their care beyond traditional office visits by utilizing mobile phones and the Internet.

"The clinically based, behavior-driven algorithms could be synergistic with services delivered at a pharmacy, such as through retail health clinics,"

comments Bergstrom. "We also have the WellDoc medication adherence business in which we build custom and Web-based solutions for pharmaceutical and medical device brands and could also build them for pharmacy chains.

"Eventually, our programs will integrate with the medication adherence programs already occurring at the pharmacy level via hard and soft edits, refills and reorders, etc."

Bergstrom believes that "in the era of the mobile Internet tsunami," every company — including chain drug operators — should incorporate mobile solutions into their business strategy.

"In health care, virtual coaching is perhaps the best way to engage patients in the moment that they need help and support and is thus the best way to change behavior and truly move the needle on the chronic disease epidemic," Bergstrom says.

In development for more than five years, the DiabetesManager System, expected to be commercially available early next year, provides for the capture, storage and real-

time transmission of blood glucose data and other diabetes self-management information, which is then analyzed by the company's proprietary Automated Expert Analytics System that identifies trends and delivers educational and behavioral patient coaching and provider decision support.

"With the WellDoc Diabetes-Manager System, we provide the medical community with decision support tools that can help doctors and patients work

together to manage diabetes more effectively," says Dr. Suzanne Sysko Clough, founder and chief medical officer of WellDoc. "WellDoc products are rigorously developed by our clinical staff using evidence-based guidelines and then tested for their impact on health outcomes. Patients and providers expect a certain quality level from all medical devices, including mobile health solutions, so obtaining FDA clearance is a milestone."