

Progressive thinking on patient monitoring enables clinical transformation at speed

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Why CIOs need the nimble business model flexibility of an ‘As-a-Service’ approach

As the second most impactful IT investment behind EMRs in the delivery of care, patient monitoring systems have always been a priority for health leaders. However, the COVID-19 crisis has made its criticality and the need for an expandable/retractable service-model approach even more apparent to meet dynamic shifts in patient demand. In the last several years, patient monitoring has quickly evolved from being focused simply on ‘equipment management’ to more broadly ‘system optimization’ that enables standardization in clinical workflow across departments and facilities. With a strategic view of patient monitoring, CIOs can create the necessary organizational agility and holistic visibility to drive transformational change.

Get out of ‘Fire Fighting’ mode

Traditionally, CIOs often find themselves in a crisis management capital-rationing cycle, allocating equipment and infrastructure investments and resources to the areas of greatest perceived risk or need. This results in a patchwork of disconnected systems – different monitors, vendors and software revision levels – that don’t work well in an operational environment requiring data integration and standardization. CIOs struggle to solve one problem and then another pops up; it’s an exhausting ongoing effort to keep everything performing to standards.

Compounding the challenges, major IT investments such as patient monitoring can consume significant upfront capital resources. For example, replacing or updating a patient monitoring ecosystem (along with ongoing maintenance) can be a significant investment – and over time can incur into the tens of millions of dollars. Many health systems simply do not have the capital resources to purchase it themselves, any longer. If they do have the capital resources, they often haven’t yielded returns or met the success metrics they were looking for – making it difficult to justify the value of the investment or change course.

Move to a system service-model approach

When CIOs can move to a systematic approach to patient monitoring, they can derive greater value out of their investment. With an “as-a-service” model, monitoring systems stay up to date on technology and eliminate the historical CIO questions such as, ‘When is my next crisis in my system going to emerge?’ or ‘How am I going to maintain all my interfaces into the EMR?’ Those problems become the vendor’s problems; it doesn’t create ongoing frustration for CIOs.

More importantly, when patient monitoring is viewed as a working system that CIOs can shape and control – versus a complicated technology solution that they need to keep going – that’s where real progress can be made to drive continuous improvement. With a more mature approach, patient monitoring solutions can achieve greater economies of scale, particularly across integrated delivery networks, and connect more readily to critical areas and reimbursement metrics (such as Length-of-Stay) for patient care.

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Make meaningful connections to macro-level problems

One of the biggest issues with a self-managed solution is that many of the valuable metrics on patient monitoring are not even being collected or analyzed to look for patterns, variables and interdependencies that may create inefficiencies in clinical workflows and inconsistencies in patient care. For example, many health systems have no way to identify varying levels of patient alarm loads and alarm response times across departments. Without the data, the variability and patterns of micro-level issues (such as response time) go undetected and can persist into macro-level problems (such as quality of care).

With a patient-monitoring-as-a-service solution, health leaders can make meaningful connections in each of their clinical units on things such as device utilization rates and workflow variability that have very real implications on the larger issues of productivity, patient care and material implications on cost and throughput. The data analytics provided in a service approach allows CIOs to more effectively address problems because there is not only ongoing measurement of the proper utilization of technology and workflows but also clinical services to help with quality and adherence to best practices among staff. This reduces complexity for CIOs, enabling them to better manage their existing patient monitoring system for continuous improvement while transforming it.

Drive greater value over time through an outcomes-based partnership

Driving the full value of enterprise applications takes time to achieve the 'use maturity' that reliably delivers the desired outcomes. Bringing a strategic partner's perspective into the daily operations of a health system facilitates better utilization of technology, higher staff proficiency and ultimately, better patient care delivery. The "as-a-service" approach applied to patient monitoring ensures broad adoption and consistency by minimizing skill gaps and inefficiencies in workflow. Shared accountability facilitates fluid course correction to align with business objectives, reduces short-term capital outlay and ensures predictable cost. It also mitigates risk and manages expectations by delivering outcomes tied to success objectives.

Without partner engagement through the business model, there will be ongoing measurements that are not captured, or in-use data that won't be observed, that may affect the efficiency of patient monitoring solutions long-term. With the collective clinical insights that a strategic partnership service model can offer, progressive-thinking CIOs can create broad new areas of value, business model flexibility and clinical transformation at speed.

Philips is a leading health technology company focused on improving people's health and enabling better outcomes across the health continuum from healthy living and prevention, to diagnosis, treatment and home care. Philips enterprise monitoring as a service delivers comprehensive patient monitoring capabilities through an acuity- and use-driven financial model, helping ensure systems are continually optimized across the enterprise and KPIs are met in a predictable, financial-friendly way.