

The Case of Satellite Health: Digitally Enabled Ecosystem Redesign

STS Roundtable

September 2017

Background

The rising need for healthcare in the US and globally continues to surpass the resources and availability of care. Digital technology is one means for continually delivering higher quality care, as well as, more sustainable approaches to healthcare delivery. This is especially needed in the US as healthcare shifts from fee-for-service to fee-for-value where value is measured against patient outcomes and the delivery system is resourced and rewarded based on value creation for the patient.

Satellite Health is a kidney dialysis company operating in six states across the US with over 80 in-patient dialysis and 20 home dialysis centers. Patients with chronically worsening kidney malfunction often have had to travel great distances to get regular treatment at a medical center that is equipped to provide dialysis services. The company is a front runner and market leader in providing the option for home therapy. In addition to the convenience and independence that this offers to patients and their families, home dialysis can be clinically more effective because it can be carried out more flexibly with closer connection to the patient's individual physiological cycles rather than at a pre-scheduled time, contributing to feeling better and to longevity. Although there is a significant cost to delivering the upfront training, the ongoing cost of home dialysis is less than regular visits to the clinic.

The challenge to Satellite is that only 20% of its total patients opt for and stay in home dialysis over time. More than 500 trained patients will come off home therapy this year. Satellite Health knows they need to design a more effective homecare model with significant changes in how patients are trained, monitored and supported to improve patient engagement, sense of connection to healthcare professionals, and comfort and ease of managing their own healthcare. Solving this problem will have significance benefits to the company, to the lives and health of their patients, and to the ability to provide dialysis services to a larger population at a lower cost.

Design Initiatives

In 2016 Satellite engaged in a systematic multi-stakeholder, socio-technical design process called Reimagine Home to fundamentally re-design the full life-cycle system of home

dialysis. The focus is to design a solution that more effectively meets the needs of the home dialysis patient, creates a better experience and outcomes, and results in the patients choosing home dialysis as their preferred treatment method. This socio-technical digital design method recognizes the interaction between technology, individuals, organizations and the larger ecosystem, and builds on the concepts of user experience design.

The ultimate goal is to make home dialysis treatment easier, more supporting, and informative. This expanded sociotechnical approach attempts to design an aligned ecosystem, understanding that creating a coherent integrated system of care that creates value for the user extends well beyond the work system of any particular care delivery organization.

In late 2016 a second parallel initiative with 5 in-patient dialysis centers was launched to design and prototype a high-performing adaptive work system with center employees. The purpose of this second design initiative is to lay the foundation to engage employees in determining the most effective ways for aligning in-patient and home dialysis care.

Format

This case presentation will present the next phase of work to the home dialysis case study presentation made by Stu Winby and Dean Hovey during the 2016 STS Roundtable.

Presenter

Rick Vanasse – Spring Network

Ishrag Khababa – Satellite Health, Director – Patient Experience (possible attendee)