IBM Expands Health Analytics Solution Center to Address Explosive Growth of Medical Information

IBM

DALLAS - 26 May 2011: IBM (NYSE: IBM [1]) today announced the expansion of its Health Analytics Solution Center. Located in Dallas, the center is adding new technology and has doubled the number of healthcare solution architects and technology specialists working at the center. Teams there are working to help physicians connect smart phones, tablets and other devices to electronic medical records (EMRs) while also helping healthcare providers build new solutions for remote patient monitoring.

As part of this expansion, the Analytics Solutions Center is incorporating some of the same technology used in IBM's Watson, the experimental computer system that defeated the two best human contestants in the game show Jeopardy! earlier this year. Using sophisticated analytics to understand the meaning and context of medical information, advanced health analytics is increasingly being used to help healthcare organizations gain new insight from the explosion of health data growing at a rate of 35 percent per year, according to a recent study by Enterprise Strategy Group.

Connecting Physicians, Smart Phones and Medical Records for new insight

Today, more than 27 percent of specialists and primary care physicians use a tablet PC or similar device. As clinicians adopt smart devices at five times the rate of the general population, they will increasingly need to connect to EMRs for instant access to patient records in their office, during hospital rounds, or on call.

This growing use of mobile devices however creates new challenges. Updating medical records, entering notes and accessing information on small devices with tiny keys can be challenging. Physicians may choose to interact using their phone via text, voice or a combination of both.

Using clinical voice recognition from Nuance Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ: NUAN) and medical terminology management from Health Language, Inc., IBM is working to improve the mobile EMR experience through voice recognition and technology that provides understanding of medical text, similar to the way Watson analyzed hundreds of millions of pages of text from books, encyclopedias and periodicals to compete on Jeopardy!. This will allow caregivers to derive more insight from medical notes, exams and pathology reports that now can be evaluated and compared electronically.

By using analytics to determine hidden meaning buried in medical records, pathology reports, images and comparative data, computers can extract relevant patient data and present it to physicians, ultimately leading to improved patient

care.

Remote Analysis of Patient Data

IBM is also expanding its work in remote patient monitoring at the center, helping hospitals integrate and connect devices from among different manufacturers, enabling patients to be closely monitored from home.

For example, remote monitoring can be used after a patient leaves the hospital to watch for complications post-discharge. By feeding important data such as temperature, blood pressure, pulse oximeter readings, and even when medications are taken automatically by an application on a Bluetooth smart phone, a nurse care coordinator can monitor the patient in real-time. This allows patients to recover in a comfortable setting, while still enabling caregivers to take action if and when needed.

These and other health analytics technologies are designed to help healthcare organizations make sense of the massive volumes of data they generate every day. With the rapid adoption of electronic medical records and other health IT applications, the amount of data associated with health care providers in North America is expected to reach close to 14,000 petabytes by 2015.

The massive increase in health data and the need to gain insight from it has made the field of health analytics increasingly important as leading hospitals use analytics to transform many aspects of their business such as clinical decision making, coordination of care and for measuring performance and patient safety.

The Health Analytics Solution Center has worked with more than 150 hospitals, health plans and other healthcare organizations since its opening in late 2009. The center provides clients access to health analytics experts, technical architects and specialists, with access to hundreds more health industry experts from across IBM, including experts from IBM's Business Analytics and Optimization consulting organization and IBM Research.

It is the first center of its kind to address the need for advanced analytics across the health care industry, taking advantage of increased computing power to collect and analyze data streaming in from sensors, patient monitoring systems, medical instruments and handheld devices as well as the volumes of data generated by hospitals every hour.

This year marks IBM's centennial and healthcare continues to be one of its most important areas of industry focus. The company spends more than $6 billion a year on R&D, much of it on healthcare, and IBM is one of the few technology companies with large teams of physicians and other clinicians on staff to ensure healthcare's most pressing needs are met.

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