Not long ago, healthcare involved little more than a patient seeing a physician who kept handwritten notes of the visit in a manila folder, and received payment at the time of service. Not anymore. Today, instead of the simple doctor-patient relationship of the past, healthcare is collaboration-oriented, with multiple stakeholders—providers, clinicians, product developers, insurers, employers, patients and patient-advocates—with mutual interests. And behind the scenes, the IT side of the industry has been key to integrating and improving healthcare.

“All of those perspectives need to be presented,” says H. Stephen Lieber, President and CEO of HIMSS (Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society), the global not-for-profit focused on better health through information technology. “Our view is that you really need all of these in order to get the best answers. Because if you’re basing answers only on one component, you’re missing the others, and that produces gaps in knowledge sharing.”

Modern medical testing and processes now produce massive amounts of data on a daily basis in the form of patient records and charts, X-rays, PET scans and MRIs. The guiding principle here is that the more information caregivers have, the better care they can give patients. The challenge, however, is that this vast amount of data must be not only transmitted...

Changing Your View on Healthcare Management.

As the healthcare landscape continues to change, one thing remains the same: patient care is paramount. But healthcare data is growing exponentially, and with it security concerns, data breaches and ever-expanding regulations. By integrating Healthcare IT systems to optimize workflow and deliver quality care, Konica Minolta can help your organization solve interoperability, productivity and security challenges. Our portfolio of solutions includes:

• Enterprise Content Management to improve speed to market
• Cloud Services for information sharing
• HealthCare IT Platform encompassing PACS, RIS, EHR, Specialized Imaging Viewer
• Primary Imaging Hardware Solutions including full DR systems, retrofit DR panel solutions and ultrasound

It’s just another way that Konica Minolta gives shape to your ideas—and transforms the way you care for your patients and your business.

For an in-depth look at our Healthcare IT portfolio, and a chance to win a Passport to Paradise giveaway, visit our Booth #7400 at HIMSS16.
**The transformation of healthcare is all about trying to achieve a better world in terms of patient experience and the reduction of errors.**

—H. Stephen Lieber

The transformation of healthcare is all about trying to achieve a better world in terms of patient experience and the reduction of errors. We need access to documents and images from a patient’s chart from a hospital’s emergency room from three nights ago, how do you access high-resolution files that are a thousand times larger than they used to be?”

“If you’re a specialist—say, an orthopedic surgeon—and you need access to documents and images from a patient’s chart from a hospital’s emergency room from three nights ago, how do you access high-resolution files that are a thousand times larger than they used to be?”

If you don’t have the whole picture—if you have 90 percent of the information you need, but not the other 10 percent—that brings the efficiency and the benefits of the 90 percent down.

Fortunately, innovations in healthcare IT are making it much easier for healthcare providers to share and access current patient information, while saving time and money, and avoiding miscommunication and errors.

**A Platform That Delivers Speed and Access**

Accessibility and speed of information transfer have become healthcare buzzwords in recent years, and Konica Minolta is at the forefront of innovation in these areas.

Last year, Deaton’s group launched Konica Minolta’s Exa PACS/RIS/EHR Platform, a package of customizable tools that enable healthcare organizations to manage workflow and the integration and transfer of high volumes of data to multiple facilities. Thanks to new coding technology, the company can quickly deliver enormous files to remote users without resorting to downloads, caching, routing or forwarding— and as easily as logging on to an e-mail account from any server and internet-speed connection.

The Exa Platform bridges the gaps among radiology, IT, software manufacturers and the rest of healthcare informatics, with patients’ charts all configured in one place. The platform also addresses the workflow needs specific to radiologists—specialists who had been siloed for many years.

“In radiology, historically,” explains Deaton, “you had to have a fixed client on the radiologist’s workstation, a night viewer on an iPad, then two different user passwords for two different websites, or different applications to open, in order to access images. We thought we should massage the experience so it’s streamlined and efficient for them—stripping out the useless tools and steps to give them what they most need, and in a familiar way.”

This initiative is important for Konica Minolta, given that radiology ranks second behind only cardiology in profitability. But just as important is the company’s commitment to healthcare providers and their patients.

“Doctors who run back and forth among multiple hospitals need to be able to read images and dictate reports about their patients from outside their offices,” Deaton notes. “With the Exa Platform and mobile app, they can access records from any workstation including a smartphone, then dictate, save and send reports.

“Frankly,” he adds, “physicians are our principal user and we care about them, but we’re giving them this strategic advantage to provide more effective care to their patients. In reality, it’s 1 percent about the physician and 99 percent about the patient.”

**Keeping Healthcare Data Secure**

At the same time that healthcare IT is making life easier for hospitals and staff, it sometimes appears to have left patient records and information vulnerable, as several high-profile healthcare data breaches have hit the headlines in recent years.

Four years ago, Experian, a leader in credit risk and reporting, saw opportunity in the electronification of healthcare data, on both the clinical and business sides. “Experian has a strong history around authentication and identity management,” says Jennifer Schulz, the company’s Group President of Vertical Markets, “and we noticed a number of different things happening in the U.S. healthcare system that called for our services.”

One issue is the increasing frequency of security breaches involving healthcare data systems; in fact, in the last two years, healthcare has become the No. 1 source of data breaches. Experian Health has put what Schulz calls “industrial-strength solutions” to work on providers’ online portals—including the company’s Precise ID fraud detection and prevention platform, for consumer identity verification, that is integrated with Epic, Allscripts and other health information systems. On the provider side, Experian Health’s Identity Management solutions ensure that doctors have the most relevant, current and comprehensive information for managing, matching and protecting identities.

Serving another important front in the healthcare space, Experian Health offers its patented eCare NEXT®, a Touchless Processing™ system to create more efficient, accurate and productive workflows that also helps manage revenue cycle functions, from ordering tests or procedures to scheduling appointments, to billing and payments.

“Most of the investments in healthcare over the past five years have been focused on clinical software and services, and EMRs, with minimal investment in the financial applications used in the patient-access and revenue-cycle departments,” says Scott Bagwell, President of Experian Health. “In addition to expanding our eCare NEXT® platform with integrated workflow for the revenue cycle, we’ve expanded our core capabilities to include identity management, population wellness and patient engagement solutions to help healthcare organizations make smarter business decisions, better understand their financial performance and strengthen their bottom line while enhancing the patient payment and care experience.”

According to Bagwell, Experian Health’s solutions are currently used in over 3,000 hospitals and by more than 100,000 physicians.
Curing the Breach Epidemic
Konica Minolta has also jumped into the security fray by helping healthcare customers manage the document life cycle and multifunction devices on the network.

“Obviously, keeping a physician’s or hospital’s patient information secure is important, but unfortunately, data breaches have become epidemic,” observes Joe Cisna, the company’s National Healthcare Market Manager. “And that concern is amplified by regulatory adherence due to stepped-up compliance requirements that are part of HIPAA [the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act] and the HITECH [Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health] Act. There’s so much value in patient medical records today that it has surpassed the value of credit cards or Social Security numbers, leading to record breaches affecting more than 100 million people in the past couple of years.”

In the past, there have been cases where a healthcare organization’s multifunction device was retired without sanitizing the hard drives, putting patient data at risk. However, Konica Minolta secure service helps ensure that the security capabilities of its devices are enabled and optimized, and that sensitive patient information is kept confidential.

Konica Minolta has expanded its solutions and services to include proximity card authentication and advanced audit log software to more effectively secure and track patient data access and usage of its multifunctional printing devices; launched HIPAA Consulting (risk assessment) Services; opened five Konica Minolta Business Innovation Centers tasked with developing new-horizon healthcare technologies for its customers to improve processes, reduce costs and improve security; and created an advisory council to workshop ideas and envision future solutions.

Consumers and the Future of Healthcare
Meanwhile, consumerism has been driving the tech trend toward mobile and home-monitoring devices. While early advancements have mostly involved wellness and fitness tracking devices, new and innovative products allow patients to track their own medical conditions and easily report the information back to their physicians and clinicians. The result is a reduction in doctor visits and healthcare expenses. This is especially relevant for those with chronic conditions—a high-cost population that, according to HIMSS, represents some 20 percent of patients, who consume some 80 percent of annual healthcare costs.

“The most important point we try to make is that there is a direct and high correlation between the adoption and use of technology and the improvement in the outcomes of patient care,” says Lieber. “The transformation of healthcare is all about trying to achieve a better world in terms of patient experience and the reduction of errors. Technology is not the only component in making these things happen, but it’s a significant one, and it’s the piece of the puzzle we’re engaged in.” — Tom Connor