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TOP LIST

Family & general practice
medical groups,
pgs 4F & 6F

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Idaho-based firm creates telehealth product called Therapy-Conex

By *Gaye Bunderson*
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The expression “there’s an app for that” is becoming part of everyday vernacular. Now a Meridian-based company called Conex

Med/Pro Systems has created an iPhone app with broad ramifications for the future of health care.

The app and its duplicate Web site called Therapy-Conex aids doctors and therapists treating patients in speech or behavioral therapy, among other uses.

Boise-based physician Tyler Whitney, founder and clinical director for The Intermountain Center for Autism and Child Development, utilizes Therapy-Conex in his practice. “We use it at the clinic to track families needing consultations and recommendations but who may not need to be seen every week at the office,” Whitney said.

He explained that with Therapy-Conex, a patient’s records for an entire treatment team can be compiled in one place with video and audio, with access given to each medical professional. As such, it is an effective and efficient client management system.

Each medical team member, from the developmental pediatrician to the

behavioral therapist, is linked and can tap into the site and see treatment recommendations and patient progress, as well as add his or her own guidelines and advice, eliminating distance obstacles presented by offices widely interspersed throughout the valley.

The patient and his or her family also have access and can see recommendations from doctors, or hear and see instructions for treatment while at home; or, in the case of the iPhone app, while away from home.

This and similar programs are significant enough that Whitney said “telemedical and its associated tools are the future – the brick and mortar offices will go the way of the dinosaurs.”

See CONEX, pg 2F

Therapy-Conex: social networking with a medical purpose

CONEX from pg 1F

The Conex Med/Pro Systems management team is comprised of Paul Unger, president and chief executive officer; Rem Fox, vice president and chief operations officer; and Brian Ernesto, chief technology officer. The company started late in 2008, with Therapy-Conex debuting last September.

The team refers to its product as “purpose-driven networking”; during an interview Fox described it as “privatized social networking.”

He also stated that, new as the product is, the client base is growing. There is a cost-saving factor with Therapy-Conex: the benefit of a centralized medical group and the related convenience for patients and their families (particularly those in outlying areas) to access professional expertise in one convenient location – the Internet.

Many physicians, like Whitney, see the positives as well.

“There’s a lot of cost problems with outpatient care. The technology is saving them (medical professionals) money, but allowing them to stay in touch with patients,” Fox said.

“Families are on waiting lists to see some therapists. This allows them to connect,” said Unger, who also commented that with various job and other economic cutbacks, Therapy-Conex gives an added option to families who can’t afford frequent, in-office visitations with expensive specialists.

Because all transactions on Therapy-Conex are stored, the program also



Paul Unger, CEO of Conex Med/Pro Systems in Meridian, demonstrates a medical-related video on his company’s software product, Therapy-Conex.

serves as a medical records site, and everything is time- and date-stamped for clear, efficient, secure documentation.

Of significant benefit for parents is the ability to record a child’s behavior for a specialist to view.

According to Whitney, parents can shoot a video of their child, upload it to Therapy-Conex and send it to the physician or therapist rather than try to verbally explain the behavior during the next scheduled office visit.

Someone who can best speak to the value of that option is Amy Arana, a local mother of two sons, one with Asperger’s syndrome and the other with classic autism.



Amy Arana

collaboration.

“It’s put us in the driver’s seat,” she said. “We’re also better able to meet the needs of our children.”

A single family can sign up to use Therapy-Conex for free, but there is a charge if more family

members are added. Professionals purchase the technology but can use it as a revenue source, said Fox.

Other uses for Therapy-Conex include HIPAA-compliant telehealth and personal wellness programs and family advocacy (experienced professionals explain public education and government programs, including assistance with forms, plans and meetings, according to a company news release).

Conex Med/Pro Systems plans to hire up to 20 new employees over the next year, the release said, and positions include the support and promotion of new products and services.

Internet- and smartphone-based medical software will continue to grow as innovative minds like those of Unger, Fox and Ernesto – all of whom have sophisticated science and technology backgrounds – continue to create them.

And since illness and behavioral maladies won’t be eliminated from the spectrum of human experience anytime soon, there will be a ready pool of end-users.

“We can take telehealth to every home,” Fox said.

“In the past, we’ve spent a lot of time with the development psychologist retelling an event from two weeks earlier, and then doing our best when we are at the office visit to recreate and mimic the same behavior, which is not very effective,” Arana said. “Conex enables us to capture the behavior or note the situation right when it happens or soon after and provide more accurate information to the psychologist.”

Other positives about Therapy-Conex, according to Arana, are: organization of information; ready access; ease of program’s use; ability to understand specialists’ instructions; 24/7 availability; diminution of paper documents; and parent and medical team