

# OPTIMIZING HEALTHCARE IT FOR ENHANCED PATIENT CARE AND EFFICIENCY




EVENT REPORT

A Roundtable Organized by



Hosted by

**ZONES**



In 2024, healthcare IT is transforming, blending digital advancements with economic efficiency. Predictive analytics takes center stage, deploying precision healthcare and seamless interoperability, emphasizing elevated patient care. The reliance on Electronic Health Records (EHR/EMR) systems underscores the pivotal role of IT support. This paradigm shift includes platform unification, converging payers and providers, and embracing innovations. Predictive analytics is crucial for identifying early risks and steering data-driven insights.

Healthcare IT leaders grapple with critical questions: How does IT impact patient care? What pathways ensure cost-effective interoperability? How do we fortify patient data security? To address these, CIO Talk Network hosted a virtual roundtable with Zones on February 20, 2024, featuring leading healthcare IT leaders discussing challenges, opportunities, and solutions. The participating delegates were:

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- ✓ Adrienne Woods, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT, Hackensack Meridian Health
  - ✓ Balavignesh Thirumalainambi, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF IT, Care New England
  - ✓ Chris Paravate, CIO, Northeast Georgia Health System
  - ✓ Guy Shepperd, DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE PLATFORM SERVICES, Vanderbilt University Medical Center
  - ✓ Jeremy Meller, CIO, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
  - ✓ Keyven Lewis, DIRECTOR, Healthcare Services, Zones, LLC
  - ✓ Tara Eckert, AVP, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, Kennedy Krieger Institute
  - ✓ Matt Reich, CIO & SVP, McLeod Health
  - ✓ Ryan Blackwell, VP, CHIEF DIGITAL MODERNIZATION AND CLOUD OFFICER, Tufts Medicine

The virtual roundtable was initiated with a moderator-led inventory addressing challenges in the patient experience, specifically in scheduling and call center management across the care continuum. Emphasizing consistency and seamlessness in patient access, participants highlighted collaboration, innovation, and resource efficiency for organizational success. Discussions spanned project management, technology adoption, and the evolving role of IT leaders. With experiences, strategies, and solutions shared on workforce development, standardization, and other issues amidst technological changes, the event fostered insights into enhancing patient experience and optimizing healthcare operations.

## The virtual roundtable delved into several other noteworthy issues:

- ✓ **Growth Management:** Managing seamless care during annual growth.
- ✓ **Virtual Nursing and Supply Chain:** Finding appropriate medical-grade wireless access points for virtual nursing.
- ✓ **Project Requests:** Handling project requests during the ongoing Epic Enterprise rollout.
- ✓ **Digital Scheduling:** Streamlining online scheduling for clinicians, physicians, and IT partners on a single platform.
- ✓ **Legacy Systems Exit:** Overcoming challenges in exiting legacy applications from the data center.
- ✓ **IT, EMR, AI Collaboration:** Bridging IT, EMR, and AI operations and fostering ongoing collaboration among clinical teams.
- ✓ **Healthcare Autonomy:** Standardizing processes for autonomy in evolving healthcare.
- ✓ **Consistent Patient Experience:** Ensuring an ongoing, consistent patient experience across different departments.
- ✓ **Call Center Consolidation:** Consolidating call centers and continually streamlining scheduling processes.
- ✓ **Workforce Development:** Continuously managing workforce development amid ERP and EHR changes.
- ✓ **Idea Collaboration and Partnership:** Fostering partnership between ideas and enhancing ongoing collaboration and innovation.
- ✓ **Agile Application Efficiency:** Continuously optimizing with an online office and evolving application conditions.
- ✓ **Sustaining Innovation:** Continuously innovating amid current environmental challenges.

## Key Viewpoints:

### Adrienne Woods

Director of Digital Engagement  
Hackensack Meridian Health

"Our immediate challenge involves refining the online scheduling process for physicians and optimizing efficiency across digital professionals, clinicians, physicians, and IT partners. The goal is to enhance patient education and effectively communicate benefits, all while prioritizing a patient-centric approach to online appointment scheduling."

### Chris Paravate

CIO  
Northeast Georgia Health System

"Addressing the inconsistency in patient experiences across the care continuum is paramount. The industry seeks insights on how to manage call centers, centralized scheduling, and successfully present business cases for organizational change in these areas."

### Guy Shepperd

Director of Infrastructure Platform Services  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

"The staffing challenges, compounded by reliance on travel nurses and supply chain disruptions, necessitate strategic solutions. Acquiring critical components for medical infrastructure, including wireless access points, remains a priority for quick and readily available information."

Along with presenting the challenges, the participants also brought forward opportunities and solutions to seek innovative solutions to address these challenges, promoting collaboration and leveraging technology for improved patient care. The participants also emphasized the opportunity to standardize devices and interfaces across different areas for a consistent patient experience.

## Opportunities:

- ✓ To adopt AWS Connect for call center consolidation.
- ✓ To enhance patient access through education and centralization.
- ✓ To improve patient experience with digital health strategies.
- ✓ To address workforce development challenges through cultural and organizational changes.
- ✓ To establish informatics programs for enhanced collaboration.
- ✓ To leverage analytics to achieve clinical and business goals.
- ✓ To streamline operations through effective communication and problem-solving.

## Solutions:

### Organizational Standardization:

- ✓ Driving standardization through change, emphasizing benefits to overcome resistance.

### Collaborative Culture:

- ✓ Cultivating trust and collaboration through cross-team training in IT, EMR, AI, and clinical domains.

### Legacy System Transition:

- ✓ Phasing out legacy systems and investing in smoother transition technologies.

## Jeremy Meller

CIO

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

"The embrace of remote work flexibility, agile methodologies, and a collaborative approach is reshaping customer relationships. This paradigm shift cultivates deeper collaboration with internal experts, elevating expectations for partnerships and mutual success."

## Ryan Blackwell

VP, Chief Digital Modernization and Cloud Officer,  
Tufts Medicine

"Strategically adopting third-party applications and embracing cloud technology substantially cuts unplanned work, cybersecurity risks, and operational costs. This fosters autonomy for decision-making based on successful outcomes."

## Keyven Lewis

Director, Healthcare Services,  
Zones, LLC

"Prioritizing projects strategically ensures efficient progress, considering organizational goals and facilitating effective communication amid challenges."

## Online Scheduling:

- ✓ Prioritizing user-friendly design and enhancing education for maximum benefits.

## Epic Implementation:

- ✓ Strengthening IT governance and educating teams on project prioritization for Epic implementation.

## Supply Chain:

- ✓ Collaborating with vendors on supply chain, wireless solutions, and challenge strategies.

## Patient Access Centers:

- ✓ Centralizing patient access for improved scheduling and enhanced experience.

## Workforce Development:

- ✓ Focusing on culture, values, and engagement for effective workforce development.

## IT-Business Alignment:

- ✓ Facilitating regular IT-business meetings for consistent alignment of expectations.

## Technology Adoption:

- ✓ Fostering operational relationships for effective technology adoption.

## Matt Reich

CIO & SVP  
McLeod Health

"Acknowledging the organization's vital role in supporting change, collaborative efforts beyond IT leadership are crucial for successful implementation. Our successes stem from the instrumental support of organizational teams in integrating solutions seamlessly into operations."

## Tara Eckert

AVP, Digital Transformation,  
Kennedy Krieger Institute

"Crucial for patient experience support is the establishment of a formal, executive-backed initiative. A structured approach facilitates seamless transition and harmonization of practices across units, fostering positive organizational mindset change."

## Balavignesh Thirumalainambi,

Executive Director of IT,  
Care New England

"In the ongoing Epic implementation, our IT governance structure and communication committee ensure prudent project request management, aligning team members with the organization's strategic goals."

The participants stressed effective communication, prioritization, and strategic thinking for navigating the evolving IT landscape. Collaboration among leaders was encouraged to share insights and solutions for successful digital transformation. They emphasized the need for a unified healthcare system, leveraging technology for efficient patient care. Recruitment and mentorship were highlighted for talent retention in a hybrid work environment. The virtual roundtable concluded by emphasizing the critical role of analytics dashboards in resource allocation for successful IT implementation.

# CTN



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## ABOUT

## ZONES

## Zones

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