

message.” This includes the name of the patient and other relevant demographic details and the highlights of the patient’s condition.

and concerns that can be planned for discussion when the patient comes in. Or, perhaps the nature of the patient’s situation might mean that a care guide within the clinic (as part of their medical home) may want to be

with medical assistants taking the calls and handling concerns that do not require a clinician. For those that do, the call is immediately transferred to a nurse. ■

For This Outsource Company—A Beverly Hills Headquarters, But a Remote Workforce

BEVERLY HILLS, CA—Yuriy Kotlyar used to own a medical transcription company. One of the trends he saw in that part of the healthcare world was a move toward a remote workforce. That is something that he has carried through to American Health Connection, his almost four year old outsource healthcare call center venture. It certainly made sense to

have a remote workforce as there can be substantial savings by doing it that way, particularly since this company is located in Beverly Hills, one of the more expensive real estate markets in the nation.

Today, he’s got several hundred Patient Communication Specialists working remotely around the country, servicing a variety of medium to large

hospitals and medical practices. “There are challenges in managing remote employees,” he says. “One thing is showing up for work. You need good supervision and check in and check out. You need to know when someone is stepping away from the computer.” Having a strong technology platform can allow this to happen. Also important are personal

visits, first to help set up the home office and second for monitoring purposes including unannounced visits during working hours.

Because of the need to closely supervise staff, he’s tried to group employees in selected pockets around the country. Also helping is his

standing offer to all employees to contact him directly with any concern.

“The most popular service we provide is scheduling,” he says. “We have allocated and semi-allocated groups handling this.” That allows certain employees to become experts

in particular client scheduling needs rather than having all employees working to schedule any patient for any client. Among the other services provided are physician referral, appointment reminders and insurance verification. ■

Tracking Illness Through Social Media and Implications for Call Centers

BALTIMORE, MD—Several years ago Graham Dodge thought he had a stomach virus or food poisoning. Rather than call a telephone triage service to gain more insight into what it might be, he turned to social media instead. He looked on Facebook to see if any of his friends had the same symptoms. Turned out one of his

One of the reasons for creating Sickweather is “curiosity,” he says. “People like to talk about what’s going around in water cooler conversation.”

However, from the institutional perspective, there may be more here than simple curiosity. The company’s data may be of use to a clinical call center. One way a call center can

one thing it might want to do is craft messaging related to that symptom for distribution to its target audience using social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook and other communications channels. Knowing what’s trending could also affect scheduling patterns, for example, if a particular area is being hit really hard