

# Healthcare IT News

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## New partnership expected to boost health data exchange

By [Patty Enrado, Contributing Editor](mailto:patty.enrado@medtechpublishing.com) | 06/04/07 |

CAMBRIDGE, MA – The new partnership between Wellogic and PricewaterhouseCoopers promises to take health information exchange to a new level - from early adoption to mainstream, according to industry observers.

Wellogic brings to the table technology for connecting the healthcare community. PricewaterhouseCoopers adds its professional services expertise.

“One of the biggest challenges for innovative companies like ours is how do you scale innovation beyond the early adopters,” said Sumit Nagpal, founder, chairman and CEO of Wellogic, whose RHIO clients include the Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative and MedVirginia. “PricewaterhouseCoopers will help establish business processes as mainstream and make it viable in the real world.”

### Measured risks

Nagpal said PricewaterhouseCoopers has built its reputation and culture on financial expertise and fiscal accountability. “They take the right risk at the right time,” he said. “Those together – innovation and financial expertise – can be a vehicle for acceleration of change.”

Nagpal sees slightly more activity and interest in HIEs than last year, but cautions that the industry is still in the early adopter phase. “The good news is that early adopters are starting to experiment and take a few risks,” he said. He credits leadership that has recognized the problems in the community with regard to healthcare costs and patient safety and sees an opportunity to solve those problems.

### Progressive executives see value

Dan Garrett, managing director of the Health Industry Advisory practice at PricewaterhouseCoopers, is meeting many mainstream executives for hospitals, physician groups and payers who want to incorporate the HIE business model into their organizations. “This is a big change,” he said.

Progressive executives are asking themselves what health information exchange means to their core businesses. “They’re asking themselves how HIE impacts how they serve their constituents, members and patients,” he said. “The next stage has to be based on tangible business value.”

Garrett noted that providers, payers, distributors and pharma manufacturers are looking at the people around them and forming alliances. “They want to serve their immediate clients,” he said, and integrating data is one of the ways they are effectively serving their constituents. “We’re in the business of making this happen for clients,” Garrett added.

### Building consensus

The biggest challenge for those wanting to develop HIE initiatives, according to both Garrett and Nagpal, is bringing all the different stakeholders to the table.

“What’s most important and missing is an honest and frank dialogue amongst the different parties about what’s in it for them individually and collectively,” Garrett said.

Building a consensus to achieve goals in the community is one of the hardest things to do, but it’s one of the most important things to do, said Nagpal.

Both organizations are spending a lot of time with clients in the early stages, pulling constituents together and reaching consensus on goals.

While Garrett said it was unlikely there would be any movement toward national deployment, the industry will see success within organizations, as they adopt core technology within their four walls that will provide them with actionable data

throughout the delivery of healthcare services. Expect outside integration with these organizations and those next to and around them.

While Nagpal sees slow growth in HIEs, he said he's by no means pessimistic, given that the healthcare industry hasn't changed in decades. "The level of activity is encouraging," he said. Over the next five years, he expects more proof that HIEs are sustainable and more incentives that implementing HIE strategies will improve healthcare quality and cost.