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Justin: Thank you very much for joining us today and thank you for everybody who's joined us in person and then certainly the thousands online. Our listenership is growing by the moment here. I think they knew that you're coming Jitin. This is great. But thank you very much.

My next guest, I've been friends with him for a long time, partners in crime in the industry for several years now. Jitin Asnaani, executive director of CommonWell Health Alliance. Welcome, Jitin.

Jitin: Thank you very much.

Justin: Glad you could be here.

Jitin: Thank you for having me here.

Justin: Where is your booth first of all on the show floor? What number?

Jitin: It's 8331.

Justin: 8331.

Jitin: Yup. So that's one floor, one hall over to the right side.

Justin: Okay. Excellent. So before we dive in, when did you get in town?

Jitin: Got in town on Sunday night, easy to get to the hotel. Monday onwards, it's been a different story.

Justin: Exactly. I guess from CommonWell's perspective, obviously I'm a big fan of what you guys do. I'm fortunate to be in the front end of that when it was all being created. But tell us what are the top trends that you're seeing and has anything shifted since you've been here? I mean we've obviously set strategy well in advance but what are the top trends that you're seeing across the industry but then also anything with any recent announcements? Anything has maybe changed that you guys are going to tackle now?

Jitin: You know what, from the very beginning one of the things we showed when we even launched CommonWell but it was as much prediction at that time as it was realization, was that we're moving to a world where person-centered care is just a necessity. You have to be able to track the patient wherever they go and be able to share with them and their caregivers the data they need to be able to take care of patients.

Now we saw that back in 2013 when we launched when we were a tiny small group of vendors. Now we're 40 plus and what we're seeing is that person centeredness is key in places you'd expect. For example if you are a patient then you want your data to be available to you.

Justin: That's right.

Jitin: But also in places where you wouldn't expect. You know when I talked to...across our group of members, we have hospitals and ambulatory clinics and post-acute care centers and all the like. We have more than 10 different care settings representing Alliance. When I talk to the customers of our members who are vendors, they're looking at me like, "Yeah, that's right. We cannot track just a patient here in our hospitals or even in our community. Patients are mobile, they go everywhere. If I don't know the kind of care they're getting, where they're going, what kind of care records they're creating everywhere else that they go across this continuum up and down, left and right across the country then I'm really missing information which can give me the position to be able to take better care of my patients." Now that's what we're seeing.

So patient centeredness, not just where you expected with the patients but with the social worker, the physician...

Justin: Excellent.

Jitin: ...your lab tech, everywhere across the spectrum. We're seeing it now live and they're asking for a solution that follows that patient.

Justin: Now that's fantastic. Any big announcements that you guys made? I mean the last couple of years, there's always been these great announcements as we come into HIMSS but anything that you want to...?

Jitin: Yeah, absolutely. So there are a couple of them, we're particularly proud of. Looking way back when we started the Alliance, we said, "This is going to be about actually getting interoperability done, actually making it happen." We went from a concept to live deployment in less than nine months which was amazing. We went from there to initial deployments in 14 states in just a year and change. It's just amazing.

Now over the last year, we went from 60 sites live last year to more than 4,400 live today. So we're talking about not pilots, we're not talking about [inaudible 00:03:35]. We're talking about 4,400 live sites. That's been a big deal and that number increases practically daily. Between the time we last announced it and

where we are now we've already increased, but we're going with 4,400 because that's the last number we said.

Justin: Yeah.

Jitin: The other thing which we've done and you know this from the time we founded CommonWell is it's never been about the hospital and the clinic. That's what meaningful use, the first couple of stages were about.

Justin: Right.

Jitin: That was never what its purpose. It's about the whole care continuum.

Justin: Right.

Jitin: Patients are patients in a lot of different places.

Justin: They sure are.

Jitin: Now we're going live with the post-acute care space with skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies. We have such a variety of different care settings in mass and in concentration with Alliance. As we look forward, we're going to be going live with a number of them in the next 6 to 18 months.

Justin: Is Brightree supporting that?

Jitin: Brightree is very much a member and supporting that. They just announced that they're going live with CommonWell Services in their home health settings and later on this year. Along with Brightree, Cerner and McKesson also announced that in their post-acute care settings, they're also going live.

Justin: Excellent.

Jitin: It's fabulous. We have such wide breadth and variety of support from large companies, small companies, tiny innovators, companies looking forward to the future, companies who have built infrastructure 30 years ago, all sorts across the continuum. Realizing that this is just the thing we need to do to enable the patient data to follow the patient.

Justin: Yeah, I had your membership director Nick Nolton in studio here. We didn't put him on air, we weren't on air quite yet but we caught up this morning so that's how I knew Brightree. I thought Brightree was involved there.

Jitin: Oh yeah, very much so. Brightree is leading the charge in the post-acute service space. They're only in the post-acute care space and for them it was all about helping us to break through to another part of the care continuum where CommonWell intended to go and now it's again something which we made real.

Justin: Fantastic. So looking out over your strategy and as you advise people on interoperability and how they can achieve the results and the outcomes that they need in their care planning through CommonWell Services, what are two or three best practices that you offer out to the community? Not only your members but you try to educate others in the industry. So what two or three best practices would you share?

Jitin: You know, there are really a couple of things I always go to. If you are a vendor, right? The company is made up of so many different types of players. So if you're a vendor, you know that the strategy that's going to be driving the growth and the retention and actually all parts of whatever your strategy is needs to include an interoperability patient. There's going to be a time when it's no longer optional and that time is coming very quickly. So the advice there is get started, get dug in, start using it, start understanding it, and go forward.

My advice to the provider community is actually similar in some ways. What if you're an individual? Think about it if you are a person and you suddenly had the internet available on your phone, on your computer, it was just there, would you ignore it? Would you not touch it? Would you say, "No, I don't want that there?"

Justin: Right.

Jitin: No way. You suddenly have a beautiful asset which can bloom into something that's really amazing over time but you can probably think of opportunities right now to use it. That's what it's like to be connected to an interoperable functioning network.

So when I talk to provider organizations, I say, "You probably have a deliberate plan for how your hospital is going to be successful. Think about this as an enabler for that and for the ways you've not even imagined yet how your hospital can be successful. Or your clinic or your skilled nursing, whatever that is, your lab."

There is an opportunity here to just take a brand new tool that's in your quiver, that's available to you, that your vendors are giving to you. Utilize it, figure out how to use it, play with it. Help us make it better. You make it better as well.

Get your vendors to make it better. This is just a beautiful asset under you. It's just time to experiment and learn.

Justin: Yeah, no, that's fantastic. Just so we cover for CommonWell, what are the two or three main services that you offer out to our industry?

Jitin: Yeah, absolutely. So CommonWell is designed from ground up to be a person-centric service. The way we think about the world is we have an infrastructure where the services we provide are the ability for our patients to enroll or for their caregivers to enroll them with their permission, to be able to track their identities and their clinical data everywhere across the continuum, and then to be able to go and get that data right there over a single connection without having to build multiple point to points from one place to the other. It is extremely scalable, very person centered, and our infrastructure is built from the ground up that way. Those are the set of services we offer and that's what our member companies, our vendors are embedding right directly into their products.

The funny thing about CommonWell, our secret sauce is not even a service we offer but it's a philosophical piece which says that, "Any caregiver should not need to go and do something special to get the data. It should be just another feature of their EHR or the HIT system or their portal or whatever it is on their app." You know, anywhere that they're taking care of patients if they need the data, they should just have it there available in real time, ready for them.

Justin: That's fantastic. Throw a little bit of a curve ball at you because we came up with this question last minute yesterday and I like it where...

Jitin: That sounds like you.

Justin: What would be a bold prediction that you would put out there for 2016 or 2017 for the industry?

Jitin: The bold prediction I'm going to put out there is that the tipping point is going to come. What I mean by the tipping point is there's going to be a point sometime in the next 6 to 18 months where two related things are going to happen. If you're a provider, you're going to expect your vendor, whoever that vendor is to be able to enable you to get the data there. I don't mean provider in terms of CIO and CEO. I mean the doctor who just practices five days a week or whatever, that's their primary job. They're just going to expect that you can get that there. That's a mental tipping point that's going to come over the next two years.

There's a corollary prediction there which is there will be no more excuses.

Justin: I like it.

Jitin: We've hidden for 30 years behind "well the standards don't work" or "they're not compatible" or "we have a particular process for getting data from within one side of the hospital to the other." All of these things are going to disappear as excuses as the standard just becomes I want data, it's there. I can take care of my patients. That's going to be what's going on. It will happen in the next 6 to 18 months.

Justin: I think that's fantastic and so to give also a little bit of air time to maybe the four or five vendors, not to put you on the spot, but I am. Who would you say the last four or five vendors to join CommonWell? Let's give the some air time too because they need all the press they can get too for just joining.

Jitin: Yeah, absolutely. We've had some fantastic companies join us. Actually the variety is just amazing. On the side of large companies who have invested a lot over the years and have realized that this is the way that the business each go, eClinicalWorks just joined us and they've not only joined us. They said, "We're joining and we're going to start making this happen this year and actually taking it to our customers so it's ready to go this year." That's fantastic.

On the opposite end of the spectrum...

Justin: I remember emailing Girish from when we're starting the association. I remember emailing him personally trying to get that conversation going, so congratulations.

Jitin: Girish has been fantastic.

Justin: Awesome.

Jitin: He said, "You know what, this is the right thing to do. We are ready now, let's do this together, Jitin." He jumped on board with both feet and brought the whole team with him. It's fantastic.

Justin: Excellent.

Jitin: On the other opposite end of the spectrum, we have some really innovative companies across the care continuum. ImageTrend, Mona Health, even EHR companies, Modernizing Medicine which is not actually that small. They're somewhere in between small and large. All of these types of companies

who have just joined us recently and have said that, "Yeah, we're going to make this happen in the real world as well." They have joined us along with...

Justin: Dan Cane, Daniel Cane is that their CEO?

Jitin: Daniel Cane.

Justin: I like Daniel. We've done some work on Capitol Hill together, so yeah.

Jitin: Okay, yeah. Daniel is fantastic and he's another guy who says, "Yeah, I'm not going to join and shake hands. I'm going to join and then we just got..."

Justin: Make it happen.

Jitin: "...to make this happen."

Justin: That's right.

Jitin: I love that about him so. That's the spirit of the number of vendors who joined us. One plug I'll add in there, this is not just vendors. The Alliance was vendor founded but it's really been, we've had two states join us, we've had a federal agency join us, we've had HIMSS as an organization join us.

Justin: That's great. Join, yeah, I was excited to see that.

Jitin: Well we've been super excited. We're a member of this community. We're proud of this community, we're proud to contribute to this community and learn from the community and now we have a lot of the community as part of us and wants us to be a part of them. That's really exciting because that's what we always wanted to be.

Justin: Congratulations. I love the energy and I love the success. Jitin Asnaani from CommonWell Health Alliance. Thank you for joining today, my friend.

Jitin: Thank you, Justin. I appreciate it.

Justin: Take care, buddy. Thank you.