

## Cloud Computing: Quality

OptumHealth's eSync system assembles medical and drug records in one place and sends out alerts if it detects a potential problem

In January, Linda Mower, a personal-care counselor for OptumHealth, had an experience that reminded her why she got into nursing 30 years ago. She was notified by the company's computing system that a patient might need counseling—based on software that scans patient information and detected he recently had had stents installed. Mower contacted Stephen Hart of St. Johnsville, N.Y., and, during a second phone call, when he reported feeling pressure in his chest, she urged him to see a doctor immediately. He did—and had triple bypass surgery the next day. Hart says the procedure probably saved his life. "You sometimes wonder if you're making a difference, but something like this lets you know you are," says Mower.

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OptumHealth provides an example of how cloud computing can help companies improve the quality of their services and products. The technology allows employees to pull together pieces of vital information they didn't have before and act on them. The company's system, called eSync, is designed to help health-care organizations improve their quality of service while reducing costs. It identifies gaps in care and helps people respond before minor issues become problems or even emergencies. Golden Valley (Minn.)-based OptumHealth is rolling the system out to health-care organizations serving more than 20 million members across the country.

With eSync, all of the electronic information about a patient is assembled in one place so the patient, doctors, health-plan counselors, and insurers can find what they need easily. Health-care plan members type in their profile information via individual Web portals. That info is matched up with health-care advice, electronic medical records, insurance coverage information, and pharmacy records. Analytics software sizes up the information as it changes and sends out alerts and recommendations.

The system is aimed at putting the patient at the center of health-care management and making it possible to get a holistic view of the patient's health and treatment. In the past, information tracking systems were oriented toward diseases or treatments rather the patients.

The next step will be reaching out to patients via mobile devices. OptumHealth is about to begin testing technology supplied by AllOne Health that lets patients and caregivers access eSync from anywhere and get alerts. Says Robb Webb, chief executive of the OptumHealth technology unit that developed eSync: "We're getting information to people so they can triage themselves."