



# REAL TIME OR LEFT BEHIND

The Choice is Yours,  
and It's Coming Soon





# #1: RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR CHANGE. THEN EMBRACE IT.

The RTHS is an entirely new way of doing business. It's much more of a revolution than it is an evolution. That will make many in our space very uncomfortable. Status quo is powerful when it comes to healthcare. You can't be limited by traditional wisdom and "we've always done it this way" kind of thinking. You must think big and break free.

One big way status quo stalls progress in healthcare is restriction by regulation. Outdated government standards have created a drag on innovation in the healthcare space and can easily act as a deterrent for change and an excuse for maintaining the status quo. As an example, let's look at nurse call standards. UL 1069 evaluates nurse call systems by testing their performance and operation. Although its purpose is to ensure safety and reliability, many times its long-established standards constrain innovation. New mobile communication and collaboration platforms do not fit neatly within UL 1069 guidelines, and innovators find themselves with the difficult task of balancing major improvements with meeting the requirements of UL 1069.

When these standards were first created, the technology that hospitals have today did not exist. All the nurse call had to do was turn on a light at the door and ring a bell at the nurses station. At that point, there was not much data to be shared. Consequently, no regulation was put into place regarding sharing data or interfacing with the outside world.

A small handful of bigger vendors have benefited greatly by keeping the industry mired in the status quo standards. They maintain control by maintaining systems that don't easily

collaborate with solutions outside of their offerings. They have created a scenario where they are gatekeepers of data. Hospitals have been trapped. Innovation has been stymied. And they would like to keep you right where you are, because they are financially incented to do so.

The problem is that if you are going to respond to the requirements of the RTHS, you can no longer be satisfied with solutions that are not interoperable and open. You can't accept outdated regulations as your litmus test for whether your hospital is doing everything it can to maximize performance.



Richard Corder is a partner at Wellesley Partners, an organization that helps healthcare leaders and organizations manage change. Corder has a unique background that marries deep expertise from his time in the hospitality industry with significant experience within the hospital setting. He's been responsible for guest satisfaction at Four Seasons

Hotels and patient experience at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, one of the top hospitals in the country according to U.S. News & World Report.

**“The current reality of variable practice, unsafe systems and waste in our healthcare system is not sustainable,” Corder said. “The reality is that most businesses succeed or fail based on how responsive they are to operations, so having the ability to respond to data in real time is something we should start expecting in healthcare.”**



You have to keep your eyes wide open to the change that is required. You have to gain full commitment from your leadership team that you are “all in” with the transformation. You have to ready your culture to be responsive to your transition to the RTHS by clearly communicating your plans and creating alignment throughout your organization. You can’t back down when it gets hard. You can’t be afraid to fail. Across the board, you also have to get better at the basics of your business.

“Sensitivity and reaction to the feedback of those we are serving takes me back to my experiences in hospitality,” Corder said. “If you establish that you want to improve outcomes such as increased volume, lower turnover, and more profitable revenue, then you must pay attention to the real-time cues of performance from those you are serving. The feedback loops that give you an immediate line of sight to the performance of your operations, systems and people. Put another way, if you wanted to improve guest satisfaction, the quicker you can hear from, understand, and intervene with a solution, for that guest, the better. A sensitivity to operations and clarity of expectations is how you run a good hotel, how you run any business. Hospitals should be no different, in fact, it is more important given the nature of the work.

## Core Tenets of RTHS

After reviewing the foundational building blocks of RTHS (below), consider how dramatically this differs from “business as usual” in the delivery of patient care.



**Aware:** An RTHS utilizes situational intelligence and generates context-sensitive information.



**Adaptive:** An RTHS is more proactive (anticipate and predict) than reactive.



**Collaborative:** An RTHS uses social media to engage patient/consumer; reliance on clinical communication and collaboration systems within or across healthcare organizations.



**Mobile:** An RTHS optimizes workflow and timely access to patient information.



**Demanding:** An RTHS demands very high service levels, better user experience, high availability, caters to mobile and remote workforce.

SOURCE: The Top Five Technology Trends For Real-Time Healthcare Systems” - by Dr. Zafar Chaudry - Gartner Symposium/ITxpo, Orlando



## #2: LAY THE FOUNDATION. THEN BUILD MOMENTUM.

Before you can successfully embark on the changes required by the RTHS, you must first prepare for it by laying a smart and strong foundation.

“You cannot achieve a different ‘future’ state if you don’t know where you are now. You need clarity first,” said Corder. “What does your current state look like? What do you want the future state to be? And then start working on the plan to get there.”

At Amplion, we encourage our customers to implement three pillars of success to drive any significant adoption of new data-driven technology or dramatic departure from the old way of delivering care. These pillars are strategy, consistency and transparency. We’ve outlined them below.

### Strategy

Smart leaders set SMART goals. You’ve probably heard of this philosophy before. The best goals are: Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound.

This is a great exercise for your hospital as you chart your course for the RTHS. This is not a small endeavor. It will require a strategic plan that you can commit to and see through to completion. Having a thoughtful, detailed roadmap with clear

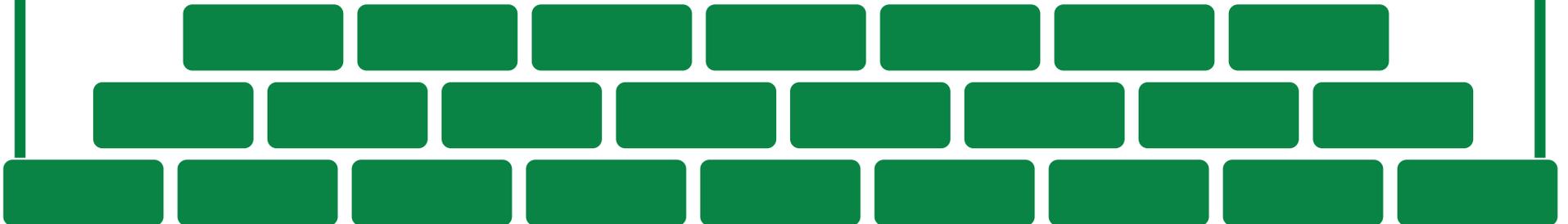
objectives and defined methods of measuring success is non negotiable. Too many hospitals run headlong into change, or take a pieces and parts approach instead of establishing a more strategic path that is comprehensive in nature. That’s how we got where we are as industry today, by only seeing one piece of the picture at a time.

### Consistency

Consistency is often the difference between failure and success in just about anything you do. Once you have identified what success looks like in your pursuit of RTHS capabilities, you must regularly track progress, evaluate your performance and look for ways to improve. Start small by identifying weekly or monthly key performance indicators that you can monitor, and then get your team acclimated to the process. If you aren’t frequently communicating, reinforcing, evaluating, reporting and addressing performance, your RTHS plans will fall by the wayside as the distractions of everyday business sabotage progress.

### Transparency

Once you’ve established your strategy and implemented a process for consistently monitoring your performance, you must also ensure that you are being transparent with



your team. Define how and when data/results will be shared and make sure everyone on your team has a clear understanding of how you are measuring success. Allow your team to see the success and the failure of the initiative and to have a global appreciation for how things are developing.

To execute successfully on these pillars, it will require deep commitment from your organization. Executives must make it a clear priority. Clinical leadership must commit to using real time data. It takes effort. It will either verify what's going well or show you what you need to work on, but either way it's intended to be proactive and to influence action. Which means there is time and effort required to make RTHS pay off for your organization.



Stacy Palmer serves as senior vice president with The Beryl Institute, a global community of practice dedicated to improving the patient experience through collaboration and shared knowledge. The Beryl Institute defines patient experience as the sum of all interactions, shaped by an organization's culture, that influence patient perceptions across the continuum of care.

Palmer believes that commitment from leadership must also be matched with engagement by staff at all levels. Your team must be prepared to use data and empowered to deliver a different patient experience. Modeling of expectations, training, rewards and recognition, all must be tied together to drive employee engagement.

“Collaboration and culture are the two biggest keys to drive change and advance big ideas like RTHS,” said Palmer.

Corder agrees.

“Real time data can be a scary proposition for some hospital leaders, it creates transparency and demands personal accountability to respond and act differently,” he said. “Quite frankly, some leaders are hiding from the data because they don't have the tools, language, training and support to respond and react differently to it.”



**“Collaboration and culture are the two biggest keys to drive change and advance big ideas like RTHS”**



# #3: ENGAGE WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY. THEN EXECUTE.

Insight into what happens at the bedside is a critical deliverable in the realm of the RTHS. Obviously, how your hospital incorporates new technologies will heavily influence your ability to accomplish this. We currently live in a disjointed, non-communicative, siloed world of technology. This must change as you push for real-time care. For RTHS, the future mandates a change in IT focus, with significant emphasis placed on patient and end-user experiences.

Palmer agrees that a foundational shift has occurred in healthcare that requires hospitals to think about the patient experience and technology as inseparable, pointing to a range of developments in areas such as virtual visits, text message reminders and video discharge instructions.

“We are on the cusp of change,” Palmer said. “For a long time, we struggled with that in the healthcare industry. But it’s here. We are living in a world where we have higher expectations for brands across the board. We want personalized experiences. We’re accustomed to Amazon and Starbucks. Those expectations are trickling into healthcare as well. Real-time technology can help us meet these new demands.”

Back to our nurse call example for a moment. In the RTHS, providers will be required to look beyond conventional, single-purpose nurse call technologies in favor of integrated platforms that combine nurse call functionality with a range of other capabilities, such as clinical communication and collaboration, interactive patient care and alarms and notifications. With a more complete picture of patient needs, and a more sophisticated way to ensure care is being delivered, you will

have a foundational box checked for getting ready for the RTHS.

“More organizations are partnering with technology vendors to capture real time feedback,” said Palmer. “That’s a great first step. But how are they using it once they capture it? How far are they taking it? Who’s responsible for ensuring changes are made? When those activities become part of ‘normal processes’ you’ve reached the next level.”

## 5 Important Tech Trends Driving RTHS

- **Clinical communication and collaboration**
- **End-user experience (performance) monitoring**
- **Positive patient identification**
- **Information life cycle management**
- **Location and condition sensing technologies**

SOURCE: The Top Five Technology Trends For Real-Time Healthcare Systems" - by Dr. Zafar Chaudry - Gartner Symposium/ ITxpo, Orlando



# How do you ensure a proper approach to your technology investments in light of RTHS demands? Here are five tips to help you better respond to the five pressing technology trends associated with RTHS.

## Closely examine your digital roadmaps

Are you setting yourself up for success? Have you plotted your course with the end in mind? Are you thinking of everything? Once you commit to the RTHS, make sure your technology roadmap is prepared to take you all the way. Another critical consideration, according to Paul Caracciolo, a nationally recognized healthcare IT leader, is that “the people who need to adopt the technology should be the people who are involved in building it.” He said, “It’s not about trying to convince them to use new technology, but finding out what fits in with their needs.”

## Engage in rapid cycle product development

Fail fast and learn quickly. Engage in short and iterative development cycles as you push your technology agenda forward. While you don’t want to rush this process, you also can’t sit and wait either. Make decisions, implement and adjust as needed. And above all, choose to work with vendors who share and can execute your viewpoint.

## Push for open source

The RTHS can’t happen without systems that communicate with one another. Any piece of technology you invest in moving forward should be open source and highly collaborative. The RTHS is about breaking down siloes, not perpetuating them.

## Take calculated risks

For most providers, the idea of investing in technology can be a dreadful thought. You have to push through past experiences, as most organizations can offer more than their fair share of horror stories around failed IT initiatives. If your organization is risk-adverse, as many hospitals often are, build in a safety net by working with vendors who can guarantee rapid adoption and the ongoing support you need to ensure success at every level of the organization.

## Don’t accept the status quo

Just because federal guidelines are outdated doesn’t mean you have to follow suit. Understand where regulatory standards start and stop, and then architect innovation around the regulatory circle. It is important to remember that innovative healthcare technologies in many cases surpass the government’s longstanding requirements and standards for such technology.



## #4: HARNESS POINT-OF-CARE DATA. THEN USE IT.

### The right information, at the right time, in the right way to the right person.

Real-time, actionable data helps effectively manage, monitor and nurture an exceptional patient experience. In the most basic sense, the RTHS is about your ability to access the right information, at the right time, and having the capacity to use it effectively. In other words, it's all about the data.

By collecting data and acting on insights, hospitals can better understand where exactly the turbulence exists in the patient experience. With proper data management and open data sharing, hospital leaders have the power to connect the dots on patients' interactions with hospital staff. This data enables management to make small but significant changes that evolve into system-wide improvement.

As we discussed before, you need to leverage technological innovations to get the right information at your fingertips at the right time. But you must combine that technology with appropriate training of staff and sound clinical judgment to understand and fully maximize the insight data provides. To do that, you must shift your culture to one that embraces data and accepts accountability.

Data is power. You can use it to inform and improve patient care, to increase responsiveness and patient safety and to more objectively manage your clinical team and evaluate individual and group performance. By strategically

**“Even if real-time data started showing up tomorrow, most leaders and managers wouldn't have the training, skills and experience to deal with it effectively”**

leveraging information, you can rapidly detect, mitigate and eliminate poorly designed processes and procedures while proactively supporting staff development.

“Wildly lagging data is still the only thing we have had to work with in this industry,” said Corder. “So, even if real-time data started showing up tomorrow, most leaders and managers wouldn't have the training, skills and experience to deal with it effectively.”



Which takes us back to our pillars of success. You have to have a strategy in place for how you will collect, analyze and use data, and then do so in a consistent and transparent fashion.

“The place to start isn't fun,” said Tod Fetherling, CEO of Perception Health.

“It's down in the drudgery. You have to curate data and create a data dictionary first. You have to work with the end in mind and identify the key pieces of data that will drive profitability.”

Fetherling began working with big data in the 1980s while in the market research field and has developed expertise and insights in data warehousing, modeling and analysis over the past 30 years. His current business processes more than 5 million healthcare claims daily.

According to Fetherling, once you establish a process for capturing data, you must



determine who has a right to look at information at a specific time and how systems should be built to differentiate between various parts of the hospital. You need a data governance process and oversight committee to track data through the process and hold individuals accountable if policies are violated.

“And after all of that work, you are only through the first phase,” said Fetherling. “From there, you still have to translate the data, make sense of it and drive actionable insights. And then you have to use the data to be prescriptive and take action in a real time manner through alert mechanisms, protocols and workflows.”

So, while just about every hospital would like to be using real time data to make decisions, Fetherling predicts that currently about 20 percent of the market is making good progress, while the majority of hospitals are overwhelmed by the magnitude and velocity of changing data.

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“Many organizations aren’t sure how to get started,” he said. “Just getting organized and putting data governance policies in place kills a lot of real-time data initiatives. Organizations have to determine if they are going to be proactive or reactive to their data process.”

While it may be a herculean effort to tackle the data component of RTHS, Fetherling suggests that it’s not an optional body of work in the long run.

“There is a monumental shift coming for hospitals where it will be increasingly difficult to manage a shrinking difference between revenue and profit margins, he said. “Put simply, hospitals with a real-time mindset will be the survivors.”



# SUMMARY

At the end of the day, the RTHS is about improving patient/staff communication while also delivering valuable real time data and analytics to help you improve staff responsiveness and performance, manage workflow, balance workloads and prevent safety issues that cost hospitals millions of dollars. A major benefit from this body of work is closing the loop on care, which is a critical piece for hospitals who want to achieve next-level patient care.

## RTHS = Closed Loop Care



Riding the RTHS wave may feel like a daunting challenge for your hospital, but with a commitment to change, a strategic plan, and a thoughtful approach to technology and data, you can successfully surf into a bold new future. Besides, as we mentioned at the outset of this eBook, the alternative to riding this wave is getting crushed beneath its weight. It's not a matter of whether you will try, but how will you ensure success.

“We believe that responding to real-time feedback of those served and cared at our hospitals is becoming the norm. Our expectations in healthcare are changing, and real-time data is more readily available,” said Corder. “The question is whether you’re ready to respond, and how will you behave differently as a result?”

For more information on the RTHS and Amplion’s role in facilitating the transition to closed loop care, please contact us at 1 877-938-6439.



# WELCOME TO WHAT'S NEXT

Amplion is building a better future for patient care. We combine capabilities in clinical workflow optimization, advanced patient communications technology and in-depth analytics to help organizations make data-driven decisions and create accountability within clinical teams. We close care loops and dramatically improve clinical and financial performance as well as patient and clinician experience.

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