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3 Ways the Internet of Things Is Improving Healthcare

The healthcare landscape is changing drastically, and many organizations are seeking ways to make improvements amidst the evolution. However, due to its heavily regulated nature, the healthcare industry has several hurdles to overcome and moving parts to manage in order to deliver advancements that are compliant with various regulations.

At the end of the day, you can't put a price on the safety and well-being of patients and staff, and hospitals can't afford to underutilize their inventories due to lack of proper tracking and management. And in healthcare, timing and quality are mission critical. To make informed decisions and deliver quality care, healthcare organizations need instant and accurate information pertaining to their assets, people and transactions.

To reach a new level of efficiency, accuracy and patient safety, organizations need real-time visibility into their data such as patient records, specimens, medications, supply inventories, etc. What's more, you need a system that can capture, track and share the real-time data from anywhere, anytime. Solutions like electronic health records (EHRs) and radio frequency identification (RFID) tags have allowed healthcare staff to leverage data from patient wristbands to diagnostic test results—enhancing efficiency and accuracy. However, the actionable insight into operations and processes is what provides organizations the **Enterprise Asset Intelligence™** they need to improve. This actionable insight is gained through a set of enabling technologies in the areas of asset management, cloud, mobile and Big Data.

From clinicians that need to identify patients, collect specimens, administer medication and monitor vital signs to pharmacists that need an accurate inventory count, with the right IoT solution in place, healthcare organizations can benefit from Enterprise Asset Intelligence.

I. Operational Efficiency

The healthcare industry faces pressures and challenges from nearly every aspect of operation. From managing equipment, inventory and time to tracking patients—the level of accountability is high. Furthermore, most healthcare organizations would agree that their operations need improved efficiency. When it comes to medical inventories specifically, many hospitals overstock certain inventories to prevent "running out" during an emergency. But without a need for the surplus of supplies, funds are tied up when they could be put to better use elsewhere. Furthermore, many hospitals often have to purchase rush order, non-contract items, and if demand could be anticipated, significant savings would be possible.

Moreover, with connected mobile devices designed to capture real-time data, healthcare organizations can keep better track of their assets. Implementing solutions such as RFID tags and/or mobile scanners, and connecting with cloud technology, organizations can gain visibility into these assets, the people involved and the transactions necessary to ensure hospitals have what they need, where they need it, when they need it.

> By leveraging asset intelligence to support improvements in patient care, organizations are setting new industry standards.

II. Improved Patient Care

In order to provide the best quality patient care, clinicians and staff need access to the right equipment at the right time. Moreover, hospital staff need to better allocate their time to patient care rather than manual documentation, and tracking down the right supplies. With mobile devices and comprehensive electronic medical records stored on RFID tags, clinicians can spend less time doing needless testing or asking redundant questions, and more time focusing on the patient's current problem.

With existing solutions and devices such as patient wristbands and mobile bar code scanners, healthcare staff can use the generated data to ensure the proper medication doses are given to the right patients at the right time. Not only does this minimize manual documentation, which is prone to error, it saves significant time. However, verifiable visibility is needed to ensure precise accuracy.

With an IoT solution that provides Enterprise Asset Intelligence, healthcare organizations can gain access to the information they need to improve patient experiences and outcomes. By leveraging asset intelligence to support improvements in patient care, organizations are setting new industry standards.

III. Leadership and Innovation

For healthcare organizations to stay ahead of the curve, rather than always fighting to catch up, implementing solutions that capture and analyze their data enables them to find common patterns and anticipate what's coming. With IoT technologies maturing at a rapid rate, the healthcare industry stands to benefit from Enterprise Asset Intelligence—improving performance and innovation.

Armed with insight and the ability to prepare, healthcare leaders can perform with agility, allowing them to respond more quickly, which in turn allows them to know when they can spend time on tasks such as clinical research and surgical training. Furthermore, real-time visibility into certain situations and/or trends allows healthcare staff to administer resources where they're needed most. The ability to calculate and project these situations, while leveraging data generated by their devices, ensures organizations get the most out of their existing assets—positively influencing their bottom line.

When it's said and done, by spending less time manually managing processes and tracking down resources, healthcare professionals can spend more time dedicated to patient care and building strategies that improve how they operate. Enterprise Asset Intelligence provides healthcare professionals with the real-time visibility needed to improve the timeliness and quality of patient care delivered today and the insight to drive leadership and innovation tomorrow.

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