Siemens, IBM Watson Join Forces on Population Health Management

Two leading healthcare players are launching a unique joint population health management (PHM) alliance to support healthcare providers in the critical transition towards value-based healthcare models. Siemens Healthineers and IBM have just announced the launch of the new global alliance, the first of its kind for both companies. Bringing together the use of technologies and IT applications, the collaboration is scheduled to run for five years and represents Siemens' major step into the PHM sector.

The partnership is the companies' response to current trends in global healthcare, including the growing availability of Big Data and digitalisation, as well as the increased prevalence of chronic diseases and an ageing global population. While PHM is widely discussed in the U.S., the subject is also becoming more prevalent in Europe, where a transition into value-based healthcare models is also emerging. With that shift, the demands of hospitals for value-based analytics and reporting are evolving.

By joining Siemens's technologies with healthcare offerings for PHM, such as IBM Watson Health, their aim is to gather and analyse previously siloed information, such as imaging and lab results with patient demographic details. Speaking to *HealthManagement.org,* Dr Arthur Kaindl, Head of Digital Health Services for Siemens Healthineers, described the contribution of the alliance: "Probably seven out of 10 patients are either image or lab tested in a hospital, and we are providing the equipment, the systems and the services with which our customers can create these data" he said.

On the management front, Kaindl added that digitisation and PHM would help with their data to solve routine operational queries such as driving more efficient care management or matching the appropriate staffing to the patient load. Furthermore, clinical questions such as avoiding high readmission rates of heart failure patients could be addressed with streamlined efficiency as well.

"We strongly believe that digitalisation and population health management is a mission critical offering in order to address the challenges that customers have already today," he said.

With the U.S. being the major market for PHM at the moment, the focus of the next 12 to 18 months for IBM Watson Health and Siemens Healthineers will be to set a foundation and gain traction in that arena, by creating new partnerships with health providers. The alliance then foresees a second wave of focus planned specifically for the European market. There have already been preliminary discussions at a government level as well as with individual providers.

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Image Credit: Siemens Healthineers

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