

McKnight's
POWER PANEL

**STRATEGIES TO OUTLAST
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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PANELISTS

**John Nebergall**

General Manager, Consensus Interoperability Solutions

John Nebergall is an accomplished senior executive with over 30 years of operating experience in the compliance space, with a particular emphasis in healthcare IT. Prior to Consensus Interoperability Solutions, he held several executive-level positions, including senior vice president, Global Client Services and Solution Adoption at Orion Health; senior vice president, Client Services at Allscripts; and senior vice president, Credit Solutions at Experian Information Services. Most recently, he served as the general manager of Demandforce, a Bay Area cloud software company serving the healthcare, dental, chiropractic and lifestyle industries, where he drove all aspects of this business. He is also an adjunct professor of clinical informatics at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He is a certified public accountant and earned his undergraduate degree in Accounting from DePaul University and an MBA from the University of Chicago.

**Steve Pacicco**

President and CEO, MatrixCare

Steve brings more than 25 years of experience in healthcare and healthcare technology. He most recently served as vice president of portfolio strategy and corporate development for the ResMed SaaS business. He came to ResMed through its acquisition of MatrixCare, where he was executive vice president of corporate development and operations. Prior to MatrixCare, Steve was CEO of SigmaCare from its founding in 2006, leading the business through substantial growth and expansion, including its acquisition by MatrixCare in 2017. Before SigmaCare, he served in various executive capacities with Amicore and Pfizer. Steve holds an MBA with honors from Columbia University and a BS in Chemical Engineering from Lehigh University.

**Malka Trump**

Director of Compliance, Viventium

Malka Trump, CPA, CPP is Director of Compliance at Viventium. Malka has over 10 years of experience in the payroll industry with a focus on payroll taxation. She is an active member of the American Payroll Association's Government Affairs Tax Force, creator of Viventium's Pay Matters, and a regular blogger on payroll tax and compliance topics.

**Donald Keane**

Senior Vice President Marketing and Channels, SmartLinx

Don Keane has over 25 years of successful business and brand-building experience at a number of world-class technology companies. He served as vice president of marketing for cloud services at Genesys, a global customer experience and contact center solution company. Before that, he was vice president of marketing and business development at MicroStrategy's Cloud Solutions division. Don also served as managing director with global brand responsibilities at EarthLink and held marketing leadership positions at Intuit, General Mills, MetTel and Rust-Oleum.

Mcknight's most recent Power Panel discussion, "Strategies to outlast the COVID-19 pandemic," took an in-depth look at how senior housing and care sectors can recover occupancy, leverage predictive analytics, continue monitoring for COVID-19 infection and optimize staff relations, workflows and payroll compliance.

The panel of industry experts included Donald Keane, senior vice president marketing and channels at SmartLinx; John Nebergall, general manager of Consensus Interoperability Solutions; Steve Pacicco, president and CEO of MatrixCare; and Malka Trump, director of compliance at Viventium.

Each of the participants expressed optimism — rating the current scene at least an 8 (out of 10) and agreeing that getting through the pandemic and emerging on solid ground is on the near horizon and within reach.

MULTIPLE & DIGITAL

"Coming out of COVID, I think facilities have to ask themselves, 'What are the lessons we've learned?'" said Nebergall. "We need to ask ourselves how we can be positioned most effectively to be the kind of facility that draws in patients and delivers care, as well as remain responsive to the various regulations around reporting."

For Trump, the new normal comes in multiples.

"From a payroll compliance perspective, that means a lot of activity in Washington, DC, and state capitals, which means healthcare professionals are going to have to be in the know so they can take advantage of it," she said. "The government is likely going to continue to use payroll as a vehicle to offer credits to employers which means things will get more complex; it's going to be important that facilities



have the guidance, software and data they need to navigate it."

Added Keane: "The biggest driver of our new normal is digital transformation. I think we're going to be very focused on mobility, real-time analytics and reporting and I also think some level of AI will affect every aspect of the business."

FRONTLINE SUPPORT

The discussion turned toward staffing and ways in which frontline workers can be better supported moving forward.

Answers ranged from better tool sets, of which technology plays a big role, Keane noted, to the imperative

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— STEVE PACICCO

For Pacicco, the future of fee-for-service reimbursement is fast disappearing.

"It is declining rapidly, and it's not coming back," he predicted. "Providers already know this, but it's going to accelerate further and providers will begin taking on greater risks for the care they deliver."

and interchangeability of recruitment and retention, according to Trump. Nebergall made the point that the foundation of better recruitment and retention demands creating an environment in which caregivers can be caregivers and not clerical staff.

"The most special, mission-driven people in the world are in this workforce," added Pacicco. "We need



to reduce the challenges that we can for them. Give them a career path. And also, pay them more.”

“Second, is to make these tools more effective using predictive analytics that provide actionable insights and enable caregivers to act in real

“PAY TRANSPARENCY IS GOING TO BE REALLY IMPORTANT.”

— MALKA TRUMP

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

When it comes to better supporting frontliners for today and beyond, Pacicco highlighted three key areas:

“One is optimizing the workflow as much as possible by leveraging strong interoperability,” he said. “There are emerging workflow technologies such as voice-activated documentation that has seen some great success and a change in legislation last year around the Conditions of Participation, which created a tailwind around interoperability on ADT admissions discharge transfer information.

time. And third is upskilling — we train thousands of people each year at long-term care facilities and are moving toward leveraging this by creating professional development programs to support other organizations.”

In Keane’s estimation, supporting frontline workers means a better set of tools — in which technology plays a large part — which allows them to find the shifts that make sense for themselves, their organizations and their providers to ensure there’s coverage.

“With our current workforce shortage, I think you’re going to see the industry

“THE IDEA OF BEING ABLE TO FOCUS ON PATIENTS, RATHER THAN WORRYING ABOUT PAPERWORK IS A REAL DIFFERENCE MAKER FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.”

— JOHN NEBERGALL

really looking at staffing on a very localized, larger metro or national basis,” Keane said. “On the staffing side, we saw a tremendous jump in usage of our mobile solutions during COVID, which I believe will be a key driver moving forward.”

For Trump, lessons learned around staffing issues in 2020 were focused on recruitment and retention.

“I think those two concepts are related,” she said. “We need software that’s going to streamline the hiring and onboarding process that is user friendly and makes the process easy and stress-free. New employees are going to have their first impression of their new employer via that system; as we know, you only get to make a first impression once.”

Trump reiterated Pacicco’s point about the need for education and Keane’s about mobile solutions and workflow technologies, adding, “Moving forward, pay transparency is going to be really important. Employees need to understand how they’re getting paid and why they’re getting paid that amount. In the long-term care industry we have overtime, blended rates, retroactive pay, double time. Making sure employees

understand their paycheck is going to be a key part of keeping them happy.”

For Nebergall, improving recruitment and retention, issues that have been greatly magnified during the pandemic, can be improved by creating an environment in which caregivers can be caregivers instead of clerical staff.

“The idea of being able to focus on patients, rather than worrying about paperwork, is a real difference maker for recruitment and retention,” he said. “Applying AI to information coming in so that it can be quickly and easily applied without having to be transposed, transcribed, printed out and scanned ... all of these things are big alleviators for the staff, offering up a satisfying work environment in which they can focus on what they want to focus on — the patients.”

SEEING THE LIGHT

The conversation also touched on better addressing infection control, rebuilding census, the future of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, and what the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Department of Health and Human Services have coming down the road. In addition, the experts delved into the prospects of new legislation, regulations and protocols.

Panel members concluded just as they had begun, returning to themes of overall confidence.

Trump mentioned the employee retention credit (ERC) increase from \$5,000 per employee in 2020 to \$7,000 in 2021 as a sign that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

“Even though these are challenging times,” she said, “government assistance is out there and I’m optimistic that if we can use it, we can get through this pandemic.”



For Pacicco, it’s about infrastructure.

“Ten-plus years ago, long-term care was kept out of meaningful use incentives,” he observed. “It is a priority of the Biden administration to support long term care

is finally here for long-term care,” he said. “The biggest learnings from COVID are the fact that you’ve got to evolve the business, especially from a technology perspective. It is one of the few positive things to come out of this mess.”

“THE BIGGEST LEARNINGS FROM COVID ARE THE FACT THAT YOU’VE GOT TO EVOLVE THE BUSINESS, ESPECIALLY FROM A TECHNOLOGY PERSPECTIVE.”

— DONALD KEANE

interoperability and analytics. We’re working with our association partners to try to make that a priority that could be included in an infrastructure bill.”

Keane focused on digital transformation as the harbinger for hope.

“I believe that digital transformation

To that, Nebergall added, “The digital wave is here. I think the important skill is to make sure it doesn’t sink the boat. Consider how to implement changes using technology in a way that doesn’t disrupt your business, but helps push it forward.”

These days operators can look forward with renewed optimism to outlasting the pandemic. ■