How Speech Recognition Software **Helps Optimize** Home Health & Hospice Care Delivery

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Telling the patient's story is the most effective way to communicate in health care. The patient narrative is the foundation for how care plans are developed, how specialty services are identified and how social workers identify patient and family needs. It also impacts how chaplains and many others on the caregiving team are introduced to the patient.

From the moment a patient requires care, the expression of that need is transferred from stakeholder to stakeholder, such as from a caregiver or family member to a clinician and from one home health clinician to another. Capturing a complete and accurate patient story along this care journey is paramount for quality care delivery.

A key enabler for telling the patient story completely, accurately and in a timely manner is speech recognition technology. New capabilities in speech recognition, such as nVoq.Mobile Voice, now allow home health clinicians to document patient notes verbally, rather than writing or typing them. This streamlined communication has many benefits for the patient, the caregiving team, and the home health agency.

This white paper will show how leading home health and hospice providers are using speech recognition tools like Mobile Voice to dictate patient care notes in real time, directly into the system of record —improving clinical efficiency, increasing clinician satisfaction and accelerating reimbursement.

WHY SPEECH RECOGNITION MATTERS & HOW IT WORKS

Overcoming two obstacles to timely, accurate documentation

Producing accurate clinical documentation is one of the most important aspects of the home health care delivery process. This documentation serves as the foundation for patient care. Without this information arriving in a timely manner to subsequent clinicians and providers, care plans suffer, and continuity of care becomes deeply challenging.

Also, for home health providers to capture maximum reimbursement, clinical documentation must be accurate and comprehensive. Otherwise they cannot bill for the totality of their services — without complete reimbursement, the organization is financially exposed.

There are two key obstacles to documenting care provided in the home, which can inhibit patient outcomes, clinician satisfaction and reimbursement potential: the accuracy and quality of the documentation note, and the technology ease of use. Speech recognition can help overcome both.

> With speech recognition, there is a greater opportunity to tell that story in more robust detail, reducing the need for downstream inquiries that the provider has to field from back offices.

Chad Hiner RN, MS
Vice President of Customer Experience, nVoq

Accuracy and quality of note

The days of handwriting illegibility challenges are pretty much over, yet digital data entry leaves its own problems, such as missing information when the clinician is entering data quickly. Whether the clinician is using shorthand, or there are time pressures to end the visit quickly, typing can still leave a care note incomplete or inaccurate.

"When you're documenting a clinical note, you're really telling a patient's story, and that story is way more descriptive and more accurate than checking any box or picking from a dropdown list," says Chad Hiner RN, MS, nVoq's Vice President of Customer Experience. "With speech recognition, there is a greater opportunity to tell that story in more robust detail, reducing the need for downstream inquiries that the provider has to field from back offices."

Technology ease of use

nVoq's solutions are designed to help clinicians be productive within a matter of minutes. When the clinician dictates a note using either a headset or tablet microphone, nVoq converts their speech into text and stores it directly into the electronic health record (EHR). Once the note is complete, the clinician can proofread it and re-dictate any component as needed, or use nVoq's medically predictive text to suggest correct alternatives.

Clinicians can also tailor nVoq solutions to their specific job functions and terminology. This is done via artificial intelligence, machine learning and neural nets. Hiner notes that the HIPAA-compliant nVoq platform uses the same technology principles as consumer-grade speech offerings but includes highly specialized medical language relevant to home health care and hospice caregiving professionals, including physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, registered nurses and chaplains.

"We've been able to take what the big tech companies have done to make speech recognition user-friendly for consumers, but also provide HIPAA compliance and medically relevant vocabulary to support home health care and hospice clinicians," Hiner says.

The 4 Major Benefits of Speech Recognition In Home Health Care

BENEFIT 1: Improve clinical workflow efficiency

When considering the amount of documentation that happens in the home — or, that could happen within the home if time were not a factor — the impact that speech recognition software can have is significant. The end-to-end workflow from entering the home until reimbursement brings a lot of activity. The more information that a clinician can accurately capture upstream, the less documenting and correcting will have to be done later in the process.

Take the headaches of medication reconciliation, for instance.

“Imagine going into a patient’s home and that person is taking eight different medications, which isn’t that uncommon,” Hiner says. “You have to document the medication: the dose, the route and the frequency for each. Documenting each medication is time consuming. Alternatively, if you can speak the name of the medication, the dose, the route and the frequency, you can do it very quickly.”

Crafting clinical notes with high accuracy (potentially greater than 95% on average) and increased detail and distinction while trimming the time of the work — those are significant capabilities that save clinicians time, especially while in the patient’s home. Matt Tillman, nVoq’s Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, estimates that most providers typically complete their spoken notes in half the time they would spend typing.

BENEFIT 2: Increase clinician satisfaction

Clinician turnover and staffing shortages continue to be a challenge in the industry, and part of that turnover, Hiner and Tillman believe, is due to high caseloads. Helping staff manage those caseloads through speech recognition reduces their stress while showing them that their needs are important.

“Home health care clinicians are suffering from a growing sense that they are neglecting their patients as they try to keep up with an overload of type-and-click tasks. Their time is valuable,” Hiner says. “If you can provide them with a tool that gives them time back in their day, their satisfaction goes up, stress goes down and their willingness to stay and work for your agency goes up.”

“If folks are feeling like the company is investing in them, then they will invest right back,” adds Tillman. “And because of COVID-19, many clinicians are working a lot of overtime. Speech recognition is a technology that can help employees have more of a traditional work-life balance, which means a lot these days.”

BENEFIT 3: Maximize reimbursements and drive better patient care

In the end, everything comes back to reimbursement. A maximum reimbursement enables a home health agency to be in business, and that is what drives patient care and patient outcomes.

Accurate and timely documentation helps ensure that the services provided during the patient encounter are captured accurately and the electronic health record properly reflects the services that were provided. The downstream benefit is that you get a more robust, accurate clinical note that’s completed in the same day. This provides coding/billing efficiency in the back office, maximizing reimbursement.

BENEFIT 4: Maintain HIPAA Compliance

One important factor to consider when choosing a speech recognition product is HIPAA compliance, and whether you control your data, Tillman says.

“When clinicians include PHI (protected health information), and don’t have direct control over how that data is used, they’re creating an unnecessary and avoidable risk for their organization,” he says.

Spotlight On Hospice

How speech recognition helps hospice organizations

Documentation time and accuracy is just as critical in hospice as home health. To be reimbursed for hospice care, agencies must comply with the patient narrative note requirement from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), among other documentation requirements.

These narratives, which must be in the clinician's own words, are the starting point for Medicare reimbursement in hospice.

Speech recognition software can also help reduce denials, by enabling the clinician to dictate a detailed terminal diagnosis and prognostic statement for the patient. In other words, hospice certification and visit reimbursement depends on accurate documentation. Speech recognition facilitates this.

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Matt Tillman
Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, nVoq

With more and more revenue tied to clinical outcomes, home health and hospice care requires a complex web of documentation that needs to be captured at every visit. Thanks to nVoq's state of the art speech recognition technology, clinicians can quickly input documentation during each visit – without having to catch up at home later.

Voice-enabled documentation can be a game-changer for home health and hospice agencies. To learn more about the nVoq platform, visit **sayit.nvoq.com**.

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