

### Is there really a difference?

Healthcare providers are embracing mobile technology more than ever and health systems are implementing collaboration and communication tools at record rates. But does the type of technology matter?

The short answer is yes. The long answer is a little more complicated.

Clinical environments and workflows present a unique set of challenges best addressed by a solution dedicated to the healthcare vertical. Clinical and business collaboration differ greatly in terms of tools, security, and purpose. If you cannot reach someone in accounting or sales in real time, it is usually not a life-or-death situation. In healthcare, it absolutely could be.

Business collaboration tools are normally limited to computers and phones, whereas clinical tools could be phones, smart devices, pagers and critical alert systems. Use of applications designed for specific functional departments within businesses can be effective; less so in a clinical environment. Clinical collaboration platforms facilitate more effective communication among care team members across all facilities, not just one department. Connecting everyone on a care team without department boundaries not only saves time but also potentially lives.

#### TOOLS

Clinical collaboration platforms are accessed on mobile devices and via internet browsers. These solutions are designed to provide on-the-go, real-time communication channels between providers and other patient care team members, enhancing mobility through portable devices. Teams can use clinical collaboration tools to send and receive secure, HIPAA-compliant text messages, place and receive VoIP calls, and interact with health system schedules and roles.

Business-oriented communication tools are more typically accessed via multiple methods because they do not take clinical workflows into consideration. Providers would have to use one app for messaging, another app for phone calls, and then they may have to refer to a paper schedule to obtain that information. Business applications don't integrate with clinical collaboration needs very easily, which defeats the workflow efficiencies health systems would gain when consolidating multiple platforms. Providers may also be left confused when trying to figure out which tool to use for which purpose.

#### SECURITY

HIPAA compliance is of paramount importance when discussing clinical collaboration. Solutions must be designed to provide encrypted, secure communication that complies with U.S. legislation - keeping patient Protected Health Information (PHI) safe. When a platform is developed specifically to meet the needs of health systems, users can interact with all the different communication channels within one application, and all communications stay encrypted. Because they are not developed with HIPAA-compliance in mind, business communication applications may leave a system open to exploits.

#### DEDICATED PURPOSE

Clinical collaboration tools have a broad purpose to enable more efficient communication across health system facilities and between roles and areas of service, in real time - something business applications do not need to consider. This is one case where one size does not fit all, and why it is imperative that health systems implement a platform that is clinically focused.

