Annual Healthcare CEO Roundtable: Technology is Changing Patient Care

Innovation in healthcare, medicine and wellness, driven by technology, will benefit patients today, tomorrow and in the future.
Our children will be able to live healthier lives.

Compiled by Miles Z. Epstein
Editor, COMMERCE

As tech giants including Apple, Amazon, and Google make healthcare market entrances, traditional healthcare systems and hospitals face increasing pressure to remain competitive. Traditional healthcare systems continue to merge to compete; the fear is that providers will become vulnerable to competition from digital health companies who can more efficiently deliver care and treatment directly to patients.

Many drugstore players are working to expand digitally, while pharmaceutical companies are also competing with Amazon’s first official move into healthcare, following the e-commerce giant’s upcoming acquisition of online pharmacy PillPack.

Given these market trends, COMMERCE asked New Jersey’s top healthcare CEOs to address the following questions. How is technology changing healthcare, patient care and the future of medicine? What impact is it having on the healthcare system and the medical, pharmaceutical and biotech industries?

The following industry leaders participated in our Annual Healthcare CEO Roundtable:

- Atlantic Health System President and CEO Brian Gragnolati, FACHE;
- BioNJ President and CEO Debbie Hart;
- CarePoint Health Chief Executive Officer Natasha Deckmann, M.D.;
- Celgene Corporation Chairman and CEO Mark Alles;
- Delta Dental of New Jersey President and CEO Dennis Wilson;
- Englewood Health President and CEO Warren Geller;
- Hackensack Meridian Health Co-CEO Robert C. Garrett, FACHE;
- Hackensack Meridian Health Co-CEO John K. Lloyd, FACHE;
- HealthCare Institute of New Jersey President and CEO Dean J. Paranicas;
- Holy Name Medical Center President and CEO Michael Maron;
- Jefferson Health, New Jersey Division President Joseph W. Devine, FACHE;
- Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation President Sue Kida;
- New Bridge Medical Center President and CEO Deborah Visconi;
- RWJBarnabas Health President and CEO Barry H. Ostrowsky;
- Saint Peter’s Healthcare System Interim CEO and President Leslie Hirsch, FACHE;
- St. Joseph’s Health President and CEO Kevin J. Slavin, FACHE;
- Trinitas Regional Medical Center President and CEO Gary S. Horan, FACHE;
- UnitedHealthcare of New Jersey CEO Paul Marden;
- Valley Health System President and CEO Audrey Meyers.

Atlantic Health System
By Brian Gragnolati, FACHE, President and CEO

The care patients receive has benefitted from technological advancements for decades. Countless examples of drugs, devices, surgical techniques and equipment have furthered our ability to prevent, diagnose and treat disease. In addition to these medical breakthroughs, Atlantic Health System is harnessing technology to improve access to care while making it more affordable. Through mobile apps and online scheduling, patients may seek care at their convenience.

With tele-health technology in our ambulances, physicians use the precious minutes during transport to assess patients in real time. Soon, we will launch tele-medicine services to support electronic physician consultations, saving patients time and money by preventing unnecessary office and hospital visits. Behind the scenes, we have implemented amazing technologies to deliver better coordinated care. One foundational component is Epic,

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which has created a single electronic health record for each of the 780,000 patients seen annually at our 450 sites of care. Epic provides patients with easy access to their physicians, medical and prescription history and test results—right from their smartphones. At Atlantic Health System, we envision a future where technology and compassion meet to encourage a lifetime of health and wellness for the patients, families and communities who entrust us with their care.

BioNJ
By Debbie Hart, President and CEO

The healthcare landscape is changing rapidly with the introduction of new digital technologies and the infusion of “non-traditional” stakeholders in the life sciences space. The convergence of big data into the clinical environment has created powerful point-of-service tools allowing providers and patients to tailor treatment plans to meet personal needs—yielding better, more cost-effective clinical results. We are especially seeing this in the field of oncology which is undergoing rapid change due to the integration of genomics, precision medicine techniques and easier access to large EHR data sets. New Jersey’s Hackensack Meridian Health is making great strides in this area. With the implementation of new digital advancements, healthcare delivery is in transformation, creating new collaborations and opportunities for the biopharmaceutical industry, patients, regulators, payers and policymakers to look differently at the drug development process, the regulatory

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New Jersey’s Life Sciences Industry: A Global Leader

As the life sciences trade association for New Jersey, BioNJ’s mission is to help our Members help Patients. And we are so proud of the medical innovation coming from the Garden State. It is second to none – our Members are delivering new therapies and cures for Patients around the globe.

New Jersey represents:

- Over 3,200 life sciences establishments
- Headquarters or major presence of more than half of the 40 largest biopharma companies
- Over 350,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs
- More than 1,000 drugs in development
- In 2017 alone, companies with a footprint in New Jersey represented nearly 50% of all new FDA drug and therapy approvals

Visit www.BioNJ.org or call us at 609-890-3185 to learn more about the medical innovation taking place in New Jersey.
environment and the healthcare system as a whole. This is an exciting time with the advent of cutting-edge technologies and Big Data helping to expedite the creation of life-saving drugs and treatments and getting them to market and, ultimately, to patients, with less overall cost burden to the healthcare system.

CarePoint Health
By Natasha Deckmann, M.D., Chief Executive Officer

The healthcare industry, like nearly all industries, is benefitting significantly from advances in technology. Innovations are transforming the consumer experience and increasing the ways in which patients can take ownership of their healthcare—an asset to the patient and industry overall. Engaged consumers drive better outcomes and help lower costs. That’s why we made it a priority to include, in our newly redesigned website platforms for patients, the ability to search for physicians, book appointments online and digitally research healthcare information. Just this year, we also introduced CarePoint Connect, a unique technology-driven platform that utilizes telemedicine to facilitate continued patient care after emergency room visits. Now, when a patient is discharged from the ER, they are provided the opportunity for a “video-visit” with a clinician several days later. This helps ensure the patient is improving and allows the doctor to discuss test results, answer questions, and schedule follow-up appointments in real time without a repeat visit.

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CarePoint Health is currently the only hospital system in the New York metropolitan area using this technology in its emergency departments. Innovation is at the core of our mission and is integral to how we extend the continuum of care beyond the traditional hospital walls.

**Celgene Corporation**  
*By Mark Alles, Chairman and CEO*

The treatment of cancer is at a remarkable technological inflection point, where cutting-edge innovation is increasingly harnessing the power of the human body’s immune system to attack blood and solid tumor malignancies. At Celgene, our purpose is to change the course of human health through bold pursuits in science and a promise to always put patients first. One of these bold pursuits is the use of chimeric antigen receptor T cells (CAR T) in the treatment of blood cancers. By applying Celgene’s experience with treatment of hematologic malignancies and a history of developing cellular-based treatments and pioneering technology through research partnerships, we are building a clinical development program that has the potential to deliver several novel therapies for patients battling these deadly cancers. We are expanding our capability to produce these potentially transformational investigational therapies, including at a newly opened facility in Summit, New Jersey, where a CAR T therapy for multiple myeloma is being developed for the U.S. market. For patients, the stakes are too high and the potential for discovering life-changing...
The dental benefits industry and oral healthcare have changed for the better because of technology. We’re using technology to better inform our providers on dental treatment trends, clients on benefits utilization, as well as build an industry-leading Data Science Team to better interpret and drive actionable insights from our data. One key project we’re currently executing is a partnership with Google to apply artificial intelligence, sometimes called machine learning, and learn from those insights to better understand our customer’s journey with us, enable efficient operations and improve interactions with our clients. As the industry continues to move toward helping people improve their oral health and overall wellness, technology will be one of our greatest assets. We look to the future through a “tech-forward with a human touch” approach.

Englewood Health
By Warren Geller, President and CEO

Englewood Health recently joined the ranks of major hospitals and health systems around the country with the installation of Epic, a single-platform electronic health record system. Rather than patients having separate records tied to each point of care, such as the emergency room, an internist’s office, a lab or imaging center, or an inpatient unit, all data and information about a patient are consolidated into a single Epic record. This longitudinal record gives every member of the care team real-time access to the patient’s entire history of treatment provided in Epic.

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Dental Care is a Priority for Most Americans Who Value Good Health and a Great Smile

PROPER ORAL HEALTH IS CRUCIAL to a healthy life, according to a recent national survey from Delta Dental. The results reveal that many more adults say their oral health (85 percent) is important to their life than their diet or nutrition (71 percent), relationship with friends (71 percent) or weight (71 percent).

The Delta Dental survey shows that most adults (85 percent) recognize their oral health is important to their overall health, and having good oral health makes them feel confident on a daily basis (67 percent). In addition, nearly half of adults (48 percent) in the United States are concerned they will not have an attractive smile as they age, according to the survey.

While a quarter (25 percent) of Americans are extremely satisfied with the health of their mouth, teeth and gums, only a few (15 percent) would rate their current oral health as excellent, leaving most American adults with healthy room for improvement.

The Adult’s Oral Health & Well-Being Survey was conducted between December 13 and December 28, 2017, among 1,008 nationally representative Americans ages 18+, with a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent.

Delta Dental’s Adult’s Oral Health & Well-Being Survey indicates that 88 percent of Americans are dedicated to the well-being of their mouth, teeth and gums.
facilities. The resulting benefits related to quality, safety, coordination and collaboration, efficiency, and patient experience are profound. Epic also allows healthcare providers to access information from hospitals outside their network. If, for example, one of our patients seeks emergency care in another state while on vacation or traveling for business, the receiving emergency department can pull the record of the patient's care at Englewood Health, and vice versa. Robust reporting and analytics, a user-friendly and powerful patient portal, additional patient safety tools, and customizable templates and tools for providers are just some of the additional benefits of improving care and making workflows more efficient.

Hackensack Meridian Health
By Robert C. Garrett, FACHE and John K. Lloyd, FACHE, Co-CEOs

Technology is helping us take quantum leaps to improve patient care, the patient experience and to achieve another major goal—making healthcare more affordable to our patients. Electronic medical records are providing more coordinated care and helping us reduce costs by eliminating duplicative testing and other unnecessary treatment. With electronic medical records, everyone is literally on the same page. Additionally, enhanced technology leads to better data collection and analysis, which is essential for improving population health strategies. It gives

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HealthCare Institute of New Jersey
By Dean J. Paranicas, President and Chief Executive Officer

Technological advances are dramatically altering the landscape for our member companies, which include most of the world's leading research-based biopharmaceutical and medical technology firms.

Artificial intelligence (AI), for instance, can provide highly sophisticated tools for drug discovery and development. AI offers the prospect of accelerating the shape and pace of research and improving results, enabling scientists to succeed—or fail—faster and cheaper. AI also can discern patterns across patient population data that yield critical insights, allowing the creation of new, more effective medicines.

New analytical tools will enable expanded data review of the benefits, use and risks of medicines. Information gleaned from the practice of medicine may contribute toward more efficient drug development programs and lead to more timely access to innovative, safe and effective medicines.

Precision medicine, personalized healthcare, remote monitoring and wellness and prevention programs are dramatically reshaping the way patients are diagnosed and treated. They require increasingly sophisticated analytical and diagnostic tools from medical technology companies, which is a major reason for the 80 percent increase in patents for breakthrough medical technologies in the last decade.

Information gleaned from the practice of medicine may contribute toward more efficient drug development programs and lead to more timely access to innovative, safe and effective medicines.
Technology has revolutionized how we care for patients in numerous ways, from how they are treated—with robotic surgical systems and surgical navigational systems—to how mobile carts are allowing physicians to access patients’ clinical data at the bedside. Within 10 years, we’ve moved from a paper-based recordkeeping system to electronic health records (EHRs) that assist the healthcare team visits between patient and physician. We are also using technology to improve patient satisfaction. We launched Wambi, a digital system powered by real-time feedback. This allows us to immediately remedy patient issues and reward team members for outstanding care. Our pilot was so successful that we are rolling this out network-wide.

Holy Name Medical Center
By Michael Maron, President and CEO

Technology has revolutionized how we can observe patterns in illness by looking at groups of patients in addition to treating individual patients. We created a $25 million innovation fund to launch the next breakthrough in healthcare delivery and recently funded a company that developed a health hub for the home. A robot reminds people to take medication, automatically refills prescriptions and arranges telemedicine visits between patient and physician.

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us a better read on disease. It makes us smarter when we can observe patterns in illness by looking at groups of patients in addition to treating individual patients. We created a $25 million innovation fund to launch the next

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in providing personalized, culturally competent care. Within the next decade, we’ll see more of the use of artificial-intelligence technology in surgery and data-sharing beyond our borders. At Holy Name Medical Center, we have remained competitive while providing exceptional patient care by developing our own innovative, easy-to-use secure information technology environment. Ours is the only such software in New Jersey and one of only a few in the United States to be developed and owned by the facility that uses it. This allows us to deliver value-based, efficient patient care that stands out among others within a complex healthcare environment.

Jefferson Health, New Jersey Division
By Joseph W. Devine, FACHE, President

At Jefferson Health, we pride ourselves on staying up-to-date with the latest healthcare technologies that help our team provide patients with the best possible care. One way we plan to “stay ahead of the curve” is by transitioning our New Jersey facilities to the EPIC electronic medical records system, which has been rated several times as the #1 electronic health records system by healthcare research and insights firm KLAS. Using electronic medical records has revolutionized and added another layer of security to medical

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recordkeeping—making it a top priority for us. Jefferson Health’s Philadelphia locations have been using EPIC for a few years, and by introducing it to our New Jersey locations, the EPIC system will provide seamless medical records throughout our enterprise. That means whether a patient is in a physician’s office, ER, operating room, or procedural area, all of their medical data will be accessible to their entire care team at Jefferson—not just at one location. Using EPIC will help our physicians, nurses and support staff deliver convenient, accurate and efficient care, while minimizing errors. We look forward to this exciting addition that will improve patient care and enhance workflow.

Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation
By Sue Kida, President

Medical rehabilitation is being enhanced by an increasing variety of technologies designed to help individuals who have had catastrophic illnesses or injuries return to productive lives. For example, robotics, including exoskeletons, are being used to help restore strength, function and mobility. Innovative wheelchair and assistive technologies, along with computers, smartphones and a growing library of apps are offering greater support and independence for those living with disabilities. Furthermore, electronic medical records and telecommunications are providing new platforms through which we can connect with patients and providers at points all along the care continuum.

We envision a future
where every pet has a family
and every family can keep their pet.

Companion Animal Advocates (CAA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Bergen County, NJ. CAA is dedicated to the welfare of companion animals within our community through programs designed to keep pets in their homes and reduce pet overpopulation.

Operation Feed-A-Pet • Humane Education
Stop Littering • Home2Home

For more information on Companion Animal Advocates or how you can help, please contact Info@CompanionAnimalAdvocates.org or phone (201) 706-7666. Please visit our Web site www.CompanionAnimalAdvocates.org to sign up for our e-newsletter.
and enable individuals to better monitor and manage their health. And as autonomous cars become available, greater personal, social and employment opportunities are likely to follow. In our field, however, the balance of high-tech and high touch makes all the difference. Technological advances can help to transform the delivery of care, communications and the ability to perform daily activities. But it can’t replace the human factors of caring, compassion and empathy that make medical rehabilitation so valuable and impactful in the lives of our patients and their families.

New Bridge Medical Center
By Deborah Visconi, President and CEO

New Bridge Medical Center utilizes technology by maximizing interoperability, the ultimate goal of healthcare reform, which allows disparate technology systems to interact so patient information can be exchanged. NBMC is the first Trusted Data Sharing Organization to route healthcare data to the New Jersey Health Information Network, a shared services platform, created by the NJDOH and powered by NJII that provides the infrastructure for electronic exchange of patient health information among healthcare providers, HIE organizations, and state health data sources. As part of the Jersey Health Connect HIE, New Bridge can leverage the utilization of the health information exchange, while giving consumers more convenient access to their records. Connecting partners through the exchange of data in

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NOT A DAY GOES BY WHEN I don’t hear from fans who wish me good luck dealing with my injuries. For those who don’t know, I was diagnosed with spinal stenosis in 2015. It hasn’t been easy. I’ve had problems with my neck and shoulder and now my back over the last few years.

Like anyone else, I wish I could go back in time and be injury- and pain-free. Nothing would make me happier; I’ve played baseball my whole life and it’s something I’ve always loved. But I’m 35 and have to be realistic about what happens to many athletes at this age. Sometimes your body stops cooperating.

"No one is guaranteed a career without injury, and if mine were to end today, I would say it was a great run, playing in front of great fans, surrounded by great teammates," says David Wright of the New York Mets. Photos Courtesy of the New York Mets and Dreamstime.com

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dependents a convenient, low-cost option for urgent care medical services, delivered online. Visits occur through a smartphone, tablet or computer, where users can view profiles of the doctors who are “on call” and connect to the doctor of their choice via video. Our goal is to expand our telemedicine services to positively impact more of the communities we serve. Technological creativity is changing all kinds of industries and, based on what we are doing already, the health and patient care industries are clearly no exception.

Saint Peter’s Healthcare System
By Leslie D. Hirsch, FACHE, Interim CEO and President

The Medical Genetics and Genomic Medicine department, led by Geneticist Debra Day-Salvatore, M.D., Ph.D., is the first to provide patient consultations and counseling using telemedicine technology at Saint Peter’s University Hospital. Since 1992, our state-designated regional center has seen more than 34,000 patients of all ages with more than 2,000 different genetically-influenced conditions. Diagnosis is commonly delayed in rare-disease patients, if ever made at all, resulting in missed opportunities to avoid or decrease sometimes life-threatening medical complications. Patients or other providers can now connect online, in real time, in 30 seconds.

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I don’t want people to feel sorry for me, though. First of all, my story is not over. I have not given up on the idea that I’m going to someday return to the field. Each one of the surgeries I’ve undergone—to repair my right rotator cuff, to fuse a herniated disk in my neck and a laminotomy in my lower back—was done with the idea of resuming my baseball activities.

After all this, I still have the passion to play. It would be much less complicated to say I don’t love the game anymore and that I’m ready to get on with the rest of my life. But it still kills me to be on the sidelines when I know my teammates are out there playing that game I love. I still yearn to compete. If that fire didn’t burn inside of me, this would be the easiest decision of my life: hang up the uniform and enjoy retirement with my family. But I’m not there yet.

Whatever happens, I want to be able to say I gave it everything I had, that I poured myself into rehab and exhausted all the medical options. If I reach the end of the road and am satisfied that there were no other choices available, then I can walk away in peace. But like I said, I’m still holding out hope.

What keeps me going? For one, I owe it to my teammates and the Wilpon family to reach as high as possible. This is the only organization I’ve ever known, and I am forever grateful for the way they’ve supported me throughout. I love the Mets and I love the fans at Citi Field. To me, they’re the best and most dedicated in baseball. They’ve been with me from the beginning, through good times and bad, and that’s not something you ever forget.

“I love the Mets and I love the fans at Citi Field. To me, they’re the best and most dedicated in baseball,” says Wright.
with a geneticist, genetic-metabolic dietitian and a licensed genetic counselor. This two-way virtual consultation helps eliminate the need for patients requiring repeated follow-up to travel regularly to the hospital. It improves access to care when barriers such as geography, transportation, limited patient ambulation, home ventilator support, immunodeficiency or other chronic medical problems are present. Telemedicine also facilitates interactions among different specialty providers to improve patient care coordination and allows us to expand the reach of our renowned genetics service to other regions, states and countries where genetic services may be limited or non-existent. This technology is simple to use, and we plan to expand telemedicine services in the future.

Trinitas Regional Medical Center
By Gary S. Horan, FACHE, President and CEO

We are seeing an expanding range of robotic surgical procedures that are shortening operations and lessening trauma to the patient. In our emergency department, we are using technology to raise the quality of care and lessen the time of diagnosis through our 128-slice CT scanner. High quality CT scans can be done in seconds. Technology is also having a significant impact on Information Technology. Electronic medical records are now a reality, and so is the ability to share (with the patient’s permission) information among hospitals and physicians.

My goal has always been to bring a championship to Flushing.

We’re all on the same page here. When we [the Mets] signed Todd Frazier, I knew it was because there was uncertainty as to whether I would be healthy enough to play this year. I knew Todd was coming to take over at third base, which is my position. [Owner] Jeff Wilpon called to say the deal was going to happen; he wanted to give me a heads up. I appreciated the gesture.

Todd is obviously an excellent player who’s helped teams throughout his career and I knew he would be a great addition to the Mets. I was all for bringing him on board and I told Jeff that. It gives us another option. Ideally, we want to get to the point where we have good options everywhere in the infield.

That’s what every team strives for—so many choices that it becomes a problem for the manager. That’s a good problem. I’m hoping to become one of those options.

In the meantime, though, I’m dealing with health issues that have been frustrating to say the least. I first started experiencing symptoms that were similar to sciatica a few years ago, sharp shooting pains down my leg. I’d had some hamstring problems at this time, so I didn’t think much of it, but doctors eventually diagnosed me with spinal stenosis. That’s obviously more serious. The problem has been compounded by a herniated disk and arthritis in the facet joints, which probably comes from wear and tear in baseball.
cians so that emergency treatment can be more effective and repeated testing can be eliminated. Trinitas is a leader in Jersey Health Connect—the largest and most comprehensive Health Information Exchange in the state, which allows thousands of healthcare providers and millions of patients to be electronically connected. Telemedicine is now a reality for our patients thanks to a partnership with Horizon BCBS and American Well, which is offering easier, more convenient access to quality healthcare for those who may not have the time or ability to get to a doctor’s appointment. Telemedicine physicians and select mental health practitioners provide face-to-face, real-time “examinations” online for a diagnosis, prescription and referrals for subsequent testing.

UnitedHealthcare of New Jersey
By Paul Marden, CEO

For many Americans, the health system is a challenge to access and navigate. But the industry is evolving with innovative programs and technologies that are helping deliver connected health solutions to people nationwide. Technology is making quality healthcare more accessible and affordable, while empowering consumers to take charge of their care like never before. By providing people with more personalized, convenient and easier-to-use resources, we can simplify the healthcare experience, achieve better outcomes and translate data into action. UnitedHealthcare is doing its part through wearable device wellness pro-

I do back exercises on a daily basis to take the pressure off the lumbar area, but I can tell when I wake up in the morning if it’s going to be a good day or a bad day. That’s just the nature of this condition.

I’ve also had ongoing issues with my neck, which required surgery [in 2016]. I knew something was wrong in spring training when I was in the batter’s box trying to fix my gaze on the pitcher and realized how much it hurt. The doctors had to move my esophagus aside to access the damaged vertebrae. When I woke up from the operation I couldn’t believe how sore my throat was. I was living on soup and lost 10 pounds right off the bat. The doctors took bone marrow from my hip and used it to fill in the gaps of the

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grams that enable people to earn financial incentives, value-based contracting that helps make healthcare more affordable and online resources that enable people to better manage their health. We are even simplifying the pharmacy process with PreCheck MyScript, which allows doctors to run a trial claim before prescribing medication. Technology is enabling predictive medicine that will use direct-to-consumer genetic tests to anticipate health problems, and remote patient monitoring programs that will use connected devices to evaluate the health of patients in real time. These emerging trends will become more widespread during the next five years, and they will enable individuals to make better decisions based on quality and cost of care.

Valley Health System
By Audrey Meyers, President and CEO

Advances in technology are reshaping the delivery of healthcare in many different ways. For example, patients are seeking health-care providers that have the highest outcomes with the lowest associated costs. As such, providers must focus on improving technologies and developing innovative treatments to ensure that patients are receiving the highest level of care in the most cost-effective manner. One way that providers are achieving this is through telemedicine, which enables them to communicate with, diagnose and/or prescribe treatments to patients remotely. In addition, it allows for a patient-centered approach to chronic disease management (i.e., a patient’s heart rate or blood sugar levels can be monitored accurately without needing to come into the office). As another example, Valley is using online appointment scheduling to facilitate patient access to providers. By using advanced analytics, we are able to make informed, evidence-based clinical decisions for our patients, reduce unnecessary costs and improve the efficiency of care as patients move across the healthcare continuum.

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vertebrae. The surgery was successful, but I was ordered to rest for six months. I had to start from scratch when I was finally allowed to work out again. Even so, I found that I lost some range of motion in my neck. I feel it when I have to look over my shoulder, changing lanes when I’m driving. I can’t really get there.

Hopefully the surgeries have corrected these issues. The doctors who have treated me have done a great job. Now the rest is up to me in rehab and fate. Like I’ve said before, I don’t want anyone to take pity on me. Every athlete that steps on to the field knows there’s a possibility of getting hurt. When I got beaned [by a pitch in 2009], I accepted it as one of the risks of being a baseball player. No one is guaranteed a career without injury, and if mine were to end today, I would say it was a great run, playing in front of great fans, surrounded by great teammates.

I’ve always tried to conduct myself as a professional in the clubhouse. Be honest, be accountable. That’s been my philosophy from the very beginning but even more so as I became one of the older players. I tried to lead by example, not so much in what I said, but how I went about my business. Attitude and hustle and willingness to do what it takes to win are just as important as talent.

There have been more skilled players than me, but I’ve prided myself in how much I’ve poured into being a good teammate. I’ve made many friends along the way, but I feel especially close to Jose Reyes. We both came up at the same time and represented the future hopes of the Mets. Things didn’t always work out the way we’d wanted, but we had some good times too and, above all, we will remain friends for life.

I’m not sure what’s in store for me, so I don’t like to talk about post-retirement plans at this point. Like everything else I’ve done in my career, I’m taking this one day at a time. ■

“...if I reach the end of the road and am satisfied that there were no other choices available, then I can walk away in peace,” says Wright.