

# A lot to like about laboratory-provider links software

**Anne Ford**

**April 2014—It's not a race, but you gotta keep pace or risk losing face (and customers and revenue).**

While this rhyme isn't an axiom, for vendors of laboratory-provider linking software, it might as well be.

"It seems like a new health care initiative, best practice, or regulation is announced every year," says Tim Kowalski, president and CEO of Halfpenny Technologies. "That makes it crucial to choose laboratory vendor partnerships and solutions that are designed to withstand this ever-changing industry."

At the moment, LPL vendors (and their colleagues and customers) are responding to more than one regulation, trend, or legislative requirement. There are the requirements to convert from ICD-9 to ICD-10 and to demonstrate meaningful use of EHR technology. There's also the trend toward EMR adoption, as well as the Department of Health and Human Services' finalization of a rule expanding patient access to laboratory test results.

Many of the companies in this month's product guide, which focuses on providers of LPL software and begins on page 15, report that these changes are fueling their decisions about new products and product updates. Take 4medica, which has launched what it calls its flagship health information exchange solution, the 4medica iEHR. "It's meaningful-use certified," says Gregory Church, director of business development and communications. "It's also fully connected to the laboratories. Therefore, expensive LIS-to-EMR interfaces aren't required for the laboratories to build and maintain, so the laboratories save thousands of dollars and eligible providers can achieve meaningful use requirements to receive their incentive payouts."

One of the new functionalities available from CareEvolve is the result of "recognizing the industry's trend toward EMR integration and investing heavily in this arena," says director of marketing and strategic projects Linda Newman. She's speaking of a portal functionality that "allows an order to originate in the EMR in a physician office, captures that order, runs it through our back-end tools, and produces a work queue at the lab for missing demographics and insurance data before the specimen and order arrive at the lab."

"The CareEvolve portal and integration services are ICD-10-ready and meaningful-use stage two compliant," she adds.

CompuGroup Medical has responded to the ICD-10 deadline by adding ICD-10 support to its CGM LabNexus LPL software. "We've also taken steps to improve end-user workflow by adding features such as batch result report printing, batch review and approval from the user's inbox, batch specimen label printing, and a user notification system that lets laboratory managers communicate with end users," says Jim Kasoff, president, laboratory division. A patient portal that will allow patients to access their laboratory test results is in development.

At Brunston, the push to make laboratory results accessible to patients has resulted in the company's Brio/Web ordering and resulting product interacting with its voice laboratory test service, thereby allowing patients to hear summaries of their results. "In the last year," says president Donald Butler, PhD, "we've expanded that service so that physicians can also provide patient-friendly laboratory test documents to patients." The services are provided through Brunston's Web site.

Patient access to laboratory results is a hot topic at Pathagility, too. "We roll out updates to our ReportPath software every two weeks, and over the last year we've added a multitude of features," says co-founder and president Mark McCuin. "One that's of particular interest at the moment is secure report retrieval for patients. We've incorporated the ability for our laboratory clients to not only provide test results in a multitude of ways to providers, but also to offer patients a secure, private way to retrieve reports."

This past February, NovoPath Version 9.0 was certified by the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology as an EHR module supporting select meaningful-use criteria. "In addition, last year NovoPath achieved a milestone in providing interfaces to more than 200 software and hardware systems," says Rick Callahan, vice president of sales and marketing. "We've interfaced our AP LIS to all the major enterprisewide vendors and all the leading EMR vendors and added a plethora of laboratory hardware systems to the list of equipment interfaced."

Orchard Software has boarded the ICD-10 train by implementing ICD-10 support on its Orchard Copia product. Says Kim Futrell, MT(ASCP), products marketing manager: "We're working on taking this a step further by offering diagnosis conversion options on the collection screen. Orchard Software is also offering an ICD-10 conversion package to assist clients through the testing process and ensure a smooth conversion." As far as meaningful use goes, the company is implementing the HL7 2.5.1 standards into Copia to satisfy meaningful-use stage two criteria.

The past year has seen several developments at Atlas Medical, says chief business officer Bob Gregory. First, patient service centers that use the company's LabWorks platform can now capture patient payment and check patient balances across encounters. Second, LabWorks' nursing home functionality has been enhanced to give phlebotomists more tools to efficiently manage orders and collect specimens. Third, laboratories that manage multiple lab operations now have more tools to streamline management and reporting.

Finally, Atlas has introduced the next generation of its enterprise master patient index, a product called HealthCentric EMPI. It will "help minimize the interoperability and patient-matching issues that labs are facing as they transition from a transaction-based model to one that is patient-centric," Gregory says.

The news at LigoLab Information Systems: "We have introduced chain-of-custody functionality to our LigoLab Connect LPL solution to enhance tracking and reporting of forensic toxicology specimen collection, delivery, and laboratory processing," says Suren Avunjian, business development executive. Use of biometric readers is integrated with the solution to identify patients and couriers.

Meanwhile, Psyche Systems CEO Lisa-Jean Clifford tells CAP TODAY that her company has recently launched version 8.0 of its WindoPath LIS, which is now a single product for both anatomic and clinical laboratories. "Laboratories can purchase the entire LIS or choose the module that fits their lab's specialty," she says. Labs can incorporate any of Psyche's add-on modules for outreach, EMR connectivity, reference lab hub, and intelligent test routing for multi-site facilities.

To improve lab outreach and operations, Halfpenny introduced its Business Intelligence Analytics for hospital and commercial labs. "It gives laboratory administrators a dashboard view of order patterns, top referrers, and test volumes," Kowalski says. "This includes a view into lab order volume from high-volume physician practices that may indicate downward trends" suggesting business possibly at risk from a competitor. In the next year, Kowalski says, Halfpenny will release a referral management product that pulls from EHR systems discrete structured clinical data such as discharge summaries and continuity-of-care documents.

From Liaison Healthcare Informatics in the past year: the addition of multi-lingual support for patient-friendly lab results, mobile distribution of results to physicians, and enhancements to the EHR-Partner integration kits that already integrate lab ordering rules into the EHR's workflows. Liaison director of product management Pat Wolfram says the company expects to expand its rules-based ordering capacity within the next year. "We already integrate lab and radiology orders and results into the EHR workflow. We'll expand that to include ACO rules and redundancy checking, since labs are an important part of ACOs," he says.

CAP TODAY's guide to LPL software includes products from the aforementioned manufacturers and from many others. Companies supplied the information listed. Readers interested in a particular product should confirm it has the stated features and capabilities.

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