

Get Recognized: How Amedisys Uses Speech Recognition to Provide Personalized Care





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Amedisys leaders were looking for something simple: a speech recognition solution that would allow their clinicians to dictate their patient notes rather than typing them.

They found it and a whole lot more.

“What I needed was some sort of dictation option,” says Dr. Amy Moss, Amedisys Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations Hospice. “We very fortuitously found nVoq, and thought, why don’t we listen to what they have to offer? At first blush we thought the nVoq capability was more than we needed— This looked like a Cadillac and we really just needed a Volkswagen.”

Speech recognition software is revolutionizing home-based care in ways that go well beyond what many might imagine. Because of its benefits to improve quality of documentation and workflow efficiency, speech recognition technology actually delivers on a higher purpose than just accurate dictations—it drives new capabilities in personalized care and improved care outcomes.

As Dr. Moss makes clear, patients and caregivers with the home-based care Amedisys are benefiting greatly from the “Cadillac”—nVoq’s Speech Recognition platform, which allows home health care and hospice clinicians to document patient notes verbally, rather than writing or typing them, creating streamlined documentation for the caregiving team.

This white paper reveals how Amedisys is using nVoq’s platform of speech recognition solutions to improve quality of clinical documentation and efficiency, what is planned for nVoq and Amedisys moving forward —and why Amedisys is rolling the technology out across its portfolio of providers.



Clinicians, by nature, are narrators, she says. They tell stories. They don’t talk in bits of information and numerical data elements. They talk about patient stories. nVoq’s speech recognition allows them to do that in a simple, secure and affordable way.



Dr. Amy Moss

Amedisys Senior Vice President of Clinical Operations Hospice

THE AMEDISYS-NVOQ PARTNERSHIP

What Amedisys needed. How nVoq delivered.

“I think it’s important to appreciate that Amedisys is an organization of people, of caregivers, and it is mission-critical for us, particularly the leadership, to take care of our people,” Dr. Moss says.

Amedisys provides industry-leading clinical home-based care to more than 415,000 patients, annually, across home health care, personal care and hospice, with a focus on facilitating aging-in-place for patients. Care team collaboration and communication are paramount.

To continue enhancing its quality of documentation and clinical workflow efficiency, Amedisys was seeking a speech recognition solution that would help its physicians improve care documentation, both in terms of efficiency of workflow and depth of content. The company was frustrated with their former speech recognition solution, not realizing some of the potential benefits of a cloud-based architecture.

“It led to a very sour taste in our mouth,” Dr. Moss says. “As we began to learn about what a cloud-based, speech recognition product could offer us, we became extraordinarily excited, because it offered us things that we did not realize with a traditional dictation product.”

Amedisys was impressed by several key aspects of nVoq’s solution.

How nVoq makes speech recognition easy – and invaluable



Cloud-based Architecture

nVoq’s cloud-based speech capabilities have proven to be vital when supporting Amedisys’ remote and mobile workforce.



Simple Setup

Setup requires minimal involvement and requires limited training.



Ease of Use

An easy way to capture the patient narrative resulting in substantive documentation.

Learning Language

nVoq's system understands home healthcare and hospice medical terminology



A key capability that Amedisys needed for its speech recognition solution was understanding home health care and hospice terminology. They needed a system that could learn specific home health care and hospice vernacular because that would play a huge role in workflow efficiency.

“Taking care of our people involves adjusting our approaches to the daily work, and the burden of documentation in health care has increased exponentially,” says Dr. Moss. “The demands on our clinicians continue to increase, and documentation as a pain point is not unique.”

To address that pain point, nVoq's tool learns key hospice terms. Among the most important, are:

- **PPS**, which stands for “Palliative Performance Score.” The system quickly learned the abbreviation “PPS” so that clinicians don’t have to speak the entire phrase.
- **FAST**, or Functional Assessment Staging Tool. “This is a staging tool that is widely used for patients with dementia, specifically those with Alzheimer’s,” said Dr. Moss. “It is accompanied with the appropriate stage, meaning the clinician is dictating “FAST 7C” or “7A” or “7F,” for instance. The ability for the system to understand and learn that ‘FAST’ was always going to be capitalized, and was going to generally be followed by some number and then some letter, was very, very helpful,”
- **NYHA**, or New York Heart Association classification. Like with “PPS,” the system learned the “NYHA” abbreviation quickly.



TOP BENEFITS OF THE NVOQ PLATFORM

For Moss and Amedisys, ease of implementation was just a starting point. Once in use, the nVoq platform provided several key benefits to clinicians and patients, and to agencies as a whole. Among the most important were:

- **Accuracy.** The importance of dictation accuracy cannot be overstated. Whether it spans learning health care and hospice terminology, supporting a broad range of speaker dialects or simply dictating speech-to-text at speed, dictation accuracy is foundational to great experience with speech recognition.
- **Workflow Flexibility.** nVoq's technology lets clinicians dictate patient notes from a desktop or tablet. The system converts the speech to text and stores it directly into the electronic health record (EHR) or other system of record.
- **Efficiency.** Because of the ease of use combined with the accuracy, nVoq Speech Recognition Solutions have improved Amedisys' collective ability to adhere to patient visit documentation timeline requirements.
- **Versatility.** Dr. Moss originally wanted speech recognition for physicians, but on the hospice side, Amedisys is using it for nurses, social workers and chaplains.

Learning Language

How nVoq's solution masters a range of dialects

"Amedisys set out to help its physicians, first and foremost, and that presented a unique challenge, as many of these doctors are not native English speakers, making their accents difficult for some systems to learn," Dr. Moss says.

"In traditional products, that has often been a barrier to use of a dictation product, and we have a handful of physicians who admitted they were not excited to try nVoq's solution because of their experience with other products that did not understand their accent."

Instead, these physicians have been vocal in their support of nVoq and its ability to quickly and accurately transcribe a range of accents. Adds Dr. Moss: "I think that's a huge barrier to adoption that this product has been able to overcome."



The hidden values of speech recognition

Beyond the more obvious benefits of speech recognition, the right platform delivers advantages that exceed a client’s expectations, in part because the client does not realize the reach of capabilities in these systems. This is what nVoq VP of Enterprise Sales, Chris Moran calls the “hidden values.”

“Among the most important is the downstream value,” Moran says. “By improving the note quality, the caregiver is decreasing communication time between the clinicians and the coding team, for instance, or between the agency and CMS. If speech recognition lets an agency complete same-day documentation, and then lets that documentation quickly flow to packet review and billing, then the wait time between a patient visit and reimbursement gets cut substantially.”

“That actually has significant financial implications for a company,” says Moran.

Meanwhile, all of this efficiency and streamlined communication improves employee engagement, too, and hence helps agencies retain staff.

“You think, Okay, I’m speaking instead of typing, no big deal,” Moran says. “But there are really interesting hidden values that come out of that.”



Building the vision: How nVoq helps caregivers tell each patient’s complete story

Documenting a care visit is about telling a patient’s story — a story that will inform how every member of the care team, across the continuum, sees and serves that patient. Telling that story and capturing that vision, requires communication.

“From a 30,000-foot view, clinical documentation serves many purposes,” says Dr. Moss. She notes that it enhances communication between clinicians and across the whole care team, but also the advantages to reimbursement.



If speech recognition lets an agency complete same-day documentation... then the wait time between a patient visit and reimbursement gets cut substantially.



Chris Moran
nVoq VP of Enterprise Sales

The hospice advantage



While speech recognition will help Amedisys across all of its care sectors, the company's early win with speech recognition has been in hospice. Moss envisioned two major benefits from the nVoq solution in hospice: support for certification of terminal illness notes and rollout at scale.

Documentation accuracy is critical for home health care because clinicians need detailed patient notes that tell each patient's unique story, but it's even more important in hospice, where providers must create a certification for terminal illness note in order to certify a patient for hospice.

"We can't use a template – CMS prohibits that," says Dr. Moss. "Using nVoq's speech recognition, Amedisys has seen a 58% improvement of prognostic statement presence in their hospice documentation," adds Moran.

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Another huge boost for Amedisys' work in hospice is the ability to roll out nVoq's platform at scale – crucial for Amedisys as it expands its hospice offering. In 2020, Amedisys acquired Arkansas-based AseraCare Hospice for \$235 million, and Amedisys now extends the gift of hospice to approximately 14,000 patients each day throughout their 190 care centers that span across 35 states.

"We are actively working within the top 10, national Amedisys-size (hospice) organizations, so Amedisys' size alone is really not of concern to nVoq from an implementation point of view, especially with our tablet offering," he says. "So, the scale has not been a challenge for us in being able to do the lift with them."

A look to the future

How Amedisys plans to build its speech recognition benefits

“When it comes to speech recognition, Amedisys is still very much in its growth phase,” Dr. Moss says. “While the hospice rollout is underway, that still leaves the company’s home health and personal care segments.”

nVoq will continue to figure into those plans.

In summary, Dr. Moss says: “Using a speech recognition product has allowed us to recognize an improvement in workflow efficiency, which has translated into reduced time documenting and allows clinicians to spend more time doing what they really do best and that is working with our patients and families. Speech recognition fits with Amedisys’ mission of taking care of our people.”

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:

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