



So...podcast – Episode "Wake up Aged Care Providers: Technology can help" John O'Callaghan – Access Health

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John M: Greetings. John McKenna, So...podcast. The topic of aged care. Big topic, huge topic. My guest today is John O'Callaghan from Access Health. John, thanks for coming on to So...podcast.

John O: Thank you very much for having me.

John M: Now, everyone wants to hear what we're going to talk about because whether you've got a loved one in an aged care facility, or if you don't, you know somebody in aged care facility and the media love this topic right now. What I'm excited about you being on So...podcast is you have a lot of background experience with providing aged care facilities with the right technology. Correct?

John O: Correct, that's right. So founded in 2004, Access Health has blossomed to a company today that provides different technologies to aged care retirement and the health care sector, and I think one of the things about us is Australian company. We own and control all of our own products and it allows us to be quite adaptable. So, as you're aware, aged care, they've faced a few challenges particularly over the last 24 months.

John M: I think it's interesting with aged care facilities, especially when you are trying to select the right one for your loved one. Obviously you look at the furniture, you look at the garden, the location, and I just really believe that people who make these decisions need to be a bit more empowered and ask the types of questions about, we know there's a building, we know there's food and we know there's staff, but it's now time we should be talking about the type of technologies they've got which are going to perhaps take a bit of pressure off some of the staff. Would you agree?





John O: Yeah, it certainly takes pressure off the staff and it can also take pressure off families as well at times. I know myself, my mum's in an aged care and whilst I speak to her on the telephone at times, I travel a lot and don't get to visit her as much as I like. So not having that face to face contact, even before Covid, it can be stressful on families anyway, but particularly with staff at the moment in aged care, there's lots of pressure on them at the moment as well.

John M: There are two particular types of technology.... not so much technology, but solutions, that I'd like to discuss with you. Obviously, right now during the pandemic, we're worried about mum and dad's health, auntie, uncle, so monitoring is a big deal. We're seeing different facilities and hospitals do different things in different ways but I'd like to explore that more about what's the latest and greatest, and what's working also.

John O: One of the things that we did back in April that the federal government made an announcement that anyone that entered or worked in an aged care environment must have a flu vaccination, and that gave facilities a very limited time to adapt processes into being able to manage and monitor those flu vaccinations. Not too much guidance given. It is a medical document, it's not just a certificate. So even storing those documents is very important as well.

John M: You're talking about staff aren't you?

John O: We're talking about staff and visitors. Even if I want to visit my mum, I must show an up to date flu vaccination as well.

John M: But now there's a system where all that registration can be done. So if I wanted to go and visit my mum and dad, from my lounge room before going anywhere, I fill out a bit of registration. Is that correct?

John O: Yeah. We've developed a system, it's a terminal, it can be installed in an aged care facility. What that does, it looks for abnormal or normal body temperature and obviously if there's an abnormal temperature, it will ask





me to halt or to stop. If the terminal's installed external to the facility, so it interacts with the doors, it means I can't even enter the facility. But that's for the general purpose of normal and abnormal temperatures. But what we also did was then created some software around that device that allows staff or family or contractors, via any device, anywhere in the world, basically register to visit that facility. So basically on my phone or on my iPad or Samsung, whatever it might be, I can click on a link, I can upload a picture of my face, my name, my phone number, address and a copy of my flu vaccination. Then that gets sent off to the facility. We're call that a pre-registration. So someone at the administration side in the facility can then have a look at the backend of that portal, all of these pre-registrations, go through and identify that the document is correct, valid and up to date, and then approve that document. What we're then doing is taking a pre-registration that I may have done and the facility validating that pre-registration and making it official. So what happens then is my profile downloads onto the terminal that we've developed. So when I turn up to the aged care facility, I approach the terminal, it checks for an abnormal temperature. Once it passes me, it then validates my documents are up to date. It then asks me to answer the Covid questions that the federal government require us to answer now every time we enter.

John M: Just go back a step. So I've done my pre-registration in my own home. I've now gone to the facility to see my mum. Do I then expect to answer more questions when I get there?

John O: Yeah, so every time you went to the aged care facility, even staff, must answer those questions every single day.

John M: Of course, because things are changing aren't they.

John O: So it's happening very quickly and I guess there's a big priority on the safety that's required in aged care. As we know, if something like Covid is to enter, unfortunately the death rate can be absolutely horrific. So everyone is doing everything they can to ensure that it's a controlled environment.





John M: So visitor goes to an aged care facility, is there a kiosk, an iPad or something?

John O: Yeah, just a terminal. It looks like an iPad or a Samsung but it's not. It's actually built for this application.

John M: And they do it by themselves, there no staff involved?

John O: No, there's no staff. It's near the front reception desk quite often or as I said, external to the building, interconnected to the doors. So when I approach the doors, I engage with the terminal and if I'm approved and I've met all the requirements, the doors will then open and I can enter the facility.

John M: What sort of feedback are you getting from aged care providers?

John O: Obviously it's new, it's fast paced and it's changing. So the providers are accepting of it but what we've found is, which the providers are excited about is the families. The families absolutely love it. They believe it's leading edge, it's protecting their loved one. It's not about me going to visit my mum, it's about me doing the right thing for the other residents living there as well. So families are actually very engaged and attracted to it because they believe it is offering a good sense of security. It's not the only solution, but it's part of a tool or instrument with social distancing and all the other requirements with aged care, it's a very useful forefront runner of technology for them.

John M: People listening to us now may have mum or dad in aged care facility. They may want to raise this topic with the head nurse or the charge nurse. Obviously there's going to be different answers depending on what technology the facility is using. Some may say 'We don't have that technology, but we do our screening in this way.' Are there particular strategies that a son and daughter should approach? Should they be concerned to ask or do you think it's fair enough to ask about this?





John O: Whilst we've created a technology that helps the entrance or a flow of people into an aged care facility, we all know that every aged care operator out there will try to do the right thing. And that's the thing, that they all do try. Unfortunately, some aged care providers are smaller than others and have very stretched budgets, and we're talking about potentially one or two people manning a front door to manually take temperatures, manually make sure people are sanitising, manually making sure that they've got their flu vaccines, manually making sure they answer the questions. Manually entering their details into a book. So you've got someone overseeing five or six steps for every single person that enters the facility. So most will do the right thing, this is more about 'let's free up those resources to do something that's much more productive for the residents living there' rather than sitting there as a traffic cop basically at the front door, trying to dictate if someone should be able to come in or not manually. So whilst families want to ask these questions, I think it's more about do new technologies free up resources, and that's what this was about.

John M: That's right, because we're always hearing that 'staff are busy, staff are busy.'

John O: Correct.

John M: Parents who are living in aged care facilities are often left on the toilet, in the shower, because there's no staff available.

John O: Correct.

John M: So it's definitely going to halve the pressure from staff, the ratio, about having to spend too much time doing screening.

John O: That's right, and I think going back to what you were asking is, families asking about technologies in aged care. One of the biggest issues is families don't know what technology exists, so they don't know what to ask.





John M: Exactly.

John O: And an aged care provider like any of us, even me as my own company, I'm only going to tell you about what we've got. I'm not going to tell you about what my competitors have got. So therefore when you're ever investigating something to purchase or invest in, they're only telling you about what they've got. So I think there's got to be a bit more broader education around what types of technologies do exist for families to then actually implore and ask those questions when they are looking at an aged care provider.

John M: We've been talking about different types of screening in aged care facilities to make people feel safe. I now want to talk more about once a person's in a facility, the whole idea around isolation. At the moment we're seeing some great stuff where seniors are using iPads to stay connected. You were saying earlier before we started recording this really cool technology that works with the television.

John O: We've developed basically, it is an Android box and it basically has a very quick, easy interface portal with a webcam built into it.

John M: Slow down a bit. There's lot of jargon going on here. We've got lots of people asking what's Android, portal. So I want to dumb it down a bit.

John O: The easiest way to say is we've developed a little magic box that just plugs via HDMI, so just a cable straight into the TV.

John M: So it's like a little video box that sits on the TV of mum and dad's room in the aged care facility?

John O: Correct, on their TV. And that also has a webcam built into it.

John M: Has a camera?





John O: Correct. And what's required is internet access, so Wi-Fi internet in the room which most aged care facilities now offer. That allows mum or dad in the aged care facility, within about four clicks of a remote control button, to have a list of family members or contacts that the family have put in that can initiate a video call with a family member or a loved one.

John M: So let's go through the user experience. It can be as simple as me sitting in my room. I want to talk to you, you're my son. You and I have agreed to connect at 4 o'clock tomorrow. So here we are, 4 o'clock tomorrow. I've turned my remote control on, I press one button. I then press another button because your name's on my screen, is that right?

John O: Yeah, so you're basically going into an address book really on your TV.

John M: So there's no mobile phones involved people. Let's be honest. Seniors are pretty adapt with television remote controls, we've seen that. So the second button is your name comes up. Then I'll press another button.

John O: You're hitting a dial button, so when you press on the person's name, you're actually initiating a dial attempt.

John M: What are you going to hear? You're in the lounge room back at your home. What is your experience going to be? On your phone or...?

John O: You will have your mobile device start ringing as normal and the App, it is integrated through Skype this one. So the family member will need to have Skype installed.

John M: We'll go back to the scenario. So I've agreed to talk to you at 4 o'clock. I've turned on my remote control, it's 4 o'clock. You're out in the garden, you've got your mobile phone in your pocket, your phone starts to ring, and you say yes, and we start talking.

John O: Correct.





John M: So once again the senior's perspective, from their end. They're basically in their room in their nursing home and they've pressed three buttons on their remote control.

John O: Correct.

John M: Sounds great. Also, my understanding is that you're able to pre-load some really important information on the television such as photos and other things. So if I'm by myself feeling a bit isolated, I don't really want to talk to my son, but I wouldn't mind looking at some photos. You can have those pre-loaded on my TV, is that right?

John O: Correct. So the important part about this one too is, and especially with the pandemic at the moment. I'm a bit disappointed we're a bit late launching this product, but it actually allows the family remotely, so I can at home, log into my mum's little magic box and upload some photos for her and they'll start playing for her.

John M: That means mum and dad don't have to learn about Facebook.

John O: Mum won't have to do anything.

John M: They don't have to learn about Facebook, it's going to be on the TV.

John O: And for dementia as well, it is clinically proven that photos from childhood and music from childhood and early parts of life being uploaded does stimulate the brain. That's medical findings, that's not our research. So we've just opened up that conduit for a family to be able to do that. So this is about mum or dad not having to learn about technology, that we can share what's going on in our lived with them, without them actually having to do anything, and we can do it from wherever we are.

John M: I really love how the son and daughter, from their own home, can decide what goes on mum and dad's TV. Even things like television shows they like to watch.





John O: Yeah, they can go in and using the EPG or electronic program guide that every TV has, you can go in and actually set bookmarks for shows to watch. So 4:30 in the afternoon, there might be a particular show that we know mum loves and we can bookmark that to start playing at 4:30 for her.

John M: We know most aged care facilities do have internet access which is great. I want to go and buy one for mum and dad, so what sort of money are we talking about roughly?

John O: The actual price of the box is \$299 so it's quite cheap.

John M: Very cheap.

John O: There's no ongoing management fee for that box. There's no updates of software required so it's not like we need new technology to do what we're doing with it. So there's no subscription required, it's just a once off purchase.

John M: Gee it's cheap. I was expecting thousands.

John O: No, no, so nice and cheap and some aged care facilities were looking at implementing them in every room as a standard. Obviously, they get a deal as well.

John M: But where the aged care facility doesn't offer it, obviously families just buy it themselves.

John O: Correct.

John M: Going back to the camera. So the camera sits above the TV.

John O: The camera sits above the TV.

John M: And the senior person sitting in their favourite chair.





John O: Favourite chair or on their bed or wherever it may be.

John M: And you've got the good sound, the microphone is going to work.

John O: The microphone and everything's great. We understand it can be hard of hearing for some people and also speech back for the family to hear, it is quite important. So the technology that's deployed in the equipment, we've manufactured to fix up all those types of things.

John M: I'm sure people are going to get really excited about hearing this because not only is it really hard to go and visit mum and dad right now, but there's this whole thing about isolation. John, do you want to share a bit more about how people can find you? Obviously you've got a website.

John O: The website's a little bit different. So our website spelling is Access.com.au.

John M: I'll get you to repeat that nice and slow.

John O: So it's A for alpha, C for Charlie, S for Sam, E for echo, S for Sam, S for Sam dot com dot au. Which is actually an acronym for advanced communication systems and essential service solutions. So when we started out, that name with the word 'health' on the end of it, we do a lot of different things and a lot of it was about caring and the health of a product and health of a network and health of a community. So we've kept them together.

John M: Obviously you're based in Melbourne Australia but of course, all your products are available around Australia?

John O: Correct. So we also are incorporated with brands such as Jim's Security and Jim's Antennas. There's an interest in there mutually, so we have a reach all around Australia for support as well. We also have business dealings in Singapore, China and Spain. So we have a bit going on everywhere at the moment.





John M: John O'Callaghan from Access Health. Thank you my friend for coming on So...podcast. I think a lot of people have enjoyed our conversation.

John O: Thank you very much for your time and thank you for the opportunity.

John M: And to all my listeners out there, a friendly reminder that all my episodes are available on my website. That's johnmckenna.com.au. We also have all of these interviews that have been transcribed and people are able to print those off and read them and good old YouTube, you can listen and watch on YouTube. Thanks for coming on John.

John O: Thanks very much John. Cheers guys.

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