

CarePartners Plus exploring joint venture for software built to prevent suicide in veterans

October 10 2019, by Erin Arvedlund



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CarePartners Plus, a healthcare software firm based in Horsham, Pa., wants to get its product into consumers' hands as soon as possible.

After years of waiting on the Veterans Administration, CarePartners Plus is now in discussions with bankers and financial advisors to sign a joint venture or strategic partnership with a larger, prime contractor to the U.S. government, according to the founder and CEO.

"We're looking for a [consulting firm](#) or a vendor that already has an existing [government contract](#)," said founder Michael Manning. He pointed to Accenture, Cerner, Intel and Optum as healthcare companies that have existing contracts and are "always looking for something new to sell to the government."

The private market version of CarePartners' software is Wellby, and the government version is called GetVetsHelp, which CarePartners Plus initially offered the Veterans Administration as part of a pitch to help bring down veterans' suicide rates from an average of 20 a day across the country.

Wellby was tested in seven states in sites that included a Bucks County doctors' offices. It tracks healthcare outcomes and [insurance coverage](#) and is the private market version of the software.

The government version offers federal and state agencies the ability to intervene more quickly to reduce potential opioid misuse, track risk factors for suicide and other red flags among first-responders, such as police, firefighters, veterans and "anyone who puts their life at risk at work," said Manning.

Manning, who has been an Army officer and hospital CEO, reinvented his career and founded the medical software company, in part to help fellow veterans.

GetVetsHelp, which has been tested with veterans at VA facilities in Center City and Washington D.C., functions like an early warning

system. Veterans log in through a tablet or computer at the VA or local veterans center, and indicate the services they need, whether for substance-abuse help, suicide prevention, a place to live—even just a ride to the hospital.

Having dealt with three different VA secretaries in a relatively short period, CarePartners Plus has been stymied. "The idea is still sitting on the VA secretary's desk, just waiting for a signature," Manning said. "And the software works, it can be available immediately."

Manning describes the source code as "SurveyMonkey meets medical records, plus a data trail." GetVetsHelp keeps tabs on all the vets' requests for help and services. And if they don't get what they need, "someone up the chain of command could be held accountable," he said.

CarePartners Plus commercialized its patient engagement platform and raised money from individuals and [institutional investors](#) including BioAdvance, an early-stage life sciences fund.

"Patients' answers—all saved as computer data—drive the outcomes for their health care," said Manning.

"It can work in any high risk population in our health care system, it works through your phone," City Councilman-at-Large David Oh said in a recent radio show interview.

"President Trump made the commitment as part of his campaign to bring suicides down among vets, and this can do it, plus it can track outcomes for other at-risk healthcare populations," Manning said.

Other investors include Phillip Gerbino, past president of the Philadelphia School of Pharmacy, and Ian Rawson, former executive for Allegheny General Healthcare and CEO for AmeriNet.

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Citation: CarePartners Plus exploring joint venture for software built to prevent suicide in veterans (2019, October 10) retrieved 3 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-10-carepartners-exploring-joint-venture-software.html>

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