



Above: Bobby Robertson, President and CEO of HEALTHCAREfirst

Fast Track Award Winner



HEALTHCARE FIRST

Hospital Readmission Rates of 10% Compared to 28% National Average

EVERY DAY in the United States, 10,000 people become eligible for Medicare. America's aging population is spurring explosive growth in the home health industry, including Ozark-based HEALTHCAREfirst, a company that provides the market-leading software and services platform for home health and hospice markets. Last year, the company more than tripled its revenues. "The technology we deliver allows medical treatments and skilled care to be delivered to

patients' homes—where patients would rather be—at a much more affordable cost than nursing homes or hospitals," President and CEO Bobby Robertson says.

HEALTHCAREfirst serves more home health and hospice agencies than any other firm of its kind. With more than 1,200 clients, HEALTHCAREfirst's 130 employees provide web-based services, including software to manage back-office operations, admitting patients, scheduling visits, and clinical documentation on multiple devices such as iPhones, iPads, or laptops.

It provides an easy interface for the different health care payers such as Medicare, Medicaid, commercial in-

surance, and private payers. The ever-growing complexity of medical billing even prompted an additional product line for the company. "To sum it up, we allow agencies to focus on patients and we take care of the rest," Robertson says. "Especially now, during complicated times of change in the health care industry, we can be the experts in these areas for clients."

Health care analytics and evidence-based medicine is an area of future growth for HEALTHCAREfirst. Imagine a home health agency without an extensive IT department in a rural community. A nurse from that agency can compare a patient's vitals against similar patients with the same diagnosis from 1,200 other agencies and see what type of therapy and support would work best. "That is invaluable support," Robertson says. "Not only will this support keep patients healthier and in their homes longer, it will also make the system vastly more efficient."

Just this October, hospitals began being penalized by Medicare for patients readmitted after hospital release. "We've created a technology platform that combines a physician portal and remote patient monitoring system that is proving to take hospital readmission rates down from the national average of 28 percent to 10 percent," Robertson says.

That is a significant savings for Medicare. In addition, it improves the outcome for patients and allows home health agencies to be a very valuable resource to hospitals in their communities, he says. "The most important thing is that the patient stays healthy and out of the hospital." | www.healthcarefirst.com **MB**

—By Karen Buschmann

WHY THEY MOVED TO MISSOURI

HEALTHCAREfirst started in Texas in 1992, in the DOS-days of software. Eventually, though, the company moved from DOS to pioneer software access over the Internet. This transition was supported by hiring two software developers in Springfield to start the development of web-based home care software. As this area of the company began to grow, the company realized that the Springfield area provided great access to additional skilled workers with experience in the industry. A quality workforce, in addition to easy access to a world-class data center to support expansion, prompted HEALTHCAREfirst to move its headquarters from Texas to Ozark in 2005.