



Andrew Brooks, M.D.

Chief Medical Officer
TigerConnect

In this Voices interview, Home Health Care News sits down with Andrew Brooks, M.D., Chief Medical Officer of TigerConnect, to learn about the industry's increasing demand for patient-centric, provider-friendly tools — and how tech companies are delivering. Brooks also shares how new technologies are bringing otherwise displaced family members into a loved one's health care conversation, and why operators must continue to bring health care into the digital age.

Editor's note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

TigerConnect is a leading health care collaboration and communication platform that puts information, data and alerts in the hands of care teams — mobile, reliable, secure. To learn more about how TigerConnect can help your agency, visit [TigerConnect.com](https://www.tigerconnect.com).

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Q: Home Health Care News:
Andrew, what career experiences do you most draw from in your role as chief medical officer?

Andrew Brooks: The driving force and impetus for starting TigerConnect was my complete abject frustration with the basic communication functionality that existed in health care. As a physician, we were forced down this path of adopting complex data entry systems, but they really were never set up to be workflow tools. They were just systems of information and large repositories for that data.

I come at this from a physician's perspective. I'm an orthopedic surgeon. I've worked in complex inpatient environments, trauma centers, as well as ambulatory centers, and interacted with a lot of ambulatory types of care including home health, skilled nursing and home health PT. That background has helped inform virtually every aspect of what we've done with TigerConnect. The product from day one has been a mobile-first tool designed to optimize workflow.

Q: Home Health Care News:
What role has the pandemic played in increasing demand for patient-centric provider-friendly clinical care and communication (CC&C) tools?

Brooks: Without a doubt, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of all these digital tools. It forced people to adopt a different way of communicating and caregiving because of social distancing requirements and remote patient care. It's unequivocally accelerated what was going to happen in the next three to five years. CC&C tools are a far more efficient way to provide care, get quicker response times and deliver better service. It's just a more satisfying experience, I would say, overall for the clinicians and the patients.

Health care professionals often don't realize that health care is a service business, and if we were to use the same metrics that hotels and restaurants use, with star ratings, historically health care would probably get one or two stars. Clinical communication solutions like TigerConnect, where you're able to communicate with alacrity, has changed that paradigm and created a far better service model for patient care.



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Q: Home Health Care News:
What are the most interesting innovations from TigerConnect in the CC&C space, and how can these solutions help home health care providers and patients?

Brooks: The most interesting aspect of our solutions, and why they are so critically important, is that they were designed from the get-go to mirror the natural communication process that exists in health care. There's a certain sense in the public that the delegation and the conduction of how health care is performed is very formal. In actual practice, it tends to be much less formal.

TigerConnect fundamentally was built with a mobile-first architecture. There's an ephemeral component to the messages where they're not permanent. When clinicians are talking, it tends to mimic much more of that natural workflow style.

The other aspect of the tool that's amazing is that it's like a railway system. It's agnostic to whatever data or information is being moved that you're trying to get an answer on. It could move any data to the right person at the right time for an immediate answer or response. It duplicates the natural workflow process.

In health care, there are a lot of stakeholders involved in making the process run seamlessly, not necessarily just the physician and the nurse. What we've learned over the years is that within the health care system, what really makes the difference in how processes are done is the act of bringing in those outer concentric circles of people who you might not think of, such as environmental services or bed transportation or translation services. When they're all brought to the same ecosystem, it really has this very purpose-built type of feel to it that allows efficient delivery and care coordination.



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Another unique feature is that out of the same tool that you're using clinically, you could message anyone. By initiating an SMS text to them, it sends them a secure browser link, they click on that, and then they open it. Now they're in a secure session and a patient can talk back to the system, or even a clinician who may not be part of that system.

It's also super helpful for patient communication because patients can send photos and images, for example if they are worried about a wound being red or concerning in some other way.

Q: Home Health Care News:
In what ways do TigerConnect solutions empower both patients and families?



TigerConnect’s solutions have tremendous implications for every aspect of health care, including post-discharge from hospital, home health care, post-surgical discharge instructions, home-health hospice, ambulatory surgical centers. It really cuts across every aspect of health care.”

Brooks: TigerConnect allows patients and families to be connected back to the core people and organizations involved in providing the care. It’s been published fairly widely, somewhere around 40% to 80% of medical information that’s imparted to patients is almost immediately forgotten. Half of what they’re told is likely remembered inaccurately or incorrectly.

That makes sense, because most people rarely interact with health care. When you are in an event, it’s stressful and foreign, and your mind simply isn’t operating normally. What our solutions have enabled is the ability to be HIPAA-compliant, and provide messaging capabilities where somebody can actually re-read information and data because it’s now on their phone. It also allows voice communication and video communication between patients and caregivers.

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Q: Home Health Care News:
Home health care providers face a unique set of challenges today, because they exist outside of a traditional clinical facility setting. What potential solutions in TigerConnect services helps these providers improve communication and enhance patient care?

Brooks: Well, home health providers are far and away the most mobile aspect of our health care system. TigerConnect has always been a mobile-first platform — it’s part of our DNA as a company. It’s our fundamental belief that people aren’t necessarily tethered to a computer and a workstation, so the only way to actually improve the process is through a mobile-first type strategy. TigerConnect allows the home health provider to stay connected to the patient through text, voice, video calls, and it allows families to enter into conversations, such as when a family member is not present at the time.

I believe when people are not in an environment where there’s nursing and care around them all the time, there can be a sense of disconnection. The ability for a patient or family member to communicate back to the home health group certainly assuages a lot of that stress and feeling of being disconnected and provides a vehicle to ask any questions that they may have.

Q: Home Health Care News: TigerConnect sits at the intersection of health care and technology. Why must operators bring health care into the digital age, and what opportunities do you see for them to innovate in 2022 and beyond?

Brooks: This is an area that to me is probably the most exciting aspect of this next phase of health care. We've gone through a tremendous amount of pain over the last decade in digitizing data and information. That has been somewhat of a bitter pill to swallow, but that's been done. We now have massive amounts of information and data that's been aggregated and builds each minute.

What's happened is you have the rise of these mobile phones and you have technologies like TigerConnect, and when you start to merge those with artificial intelligence and machine learning technology, you can understand the data and information that will impact clinical outcomes and clinical decision-making in a way that we've never seen before.

From my vantage point, we're entering one of the single most exciting periods of health care in history. It's the very first time that we're able to crowd-source massive amounts of data and understand it in a way that a human being could never have understood previously, with artificial intelligence and machine learning technology, and then inform better decision-making around that. Tools like TigerConnect deliver that.

I am super excited about this next phase of what's happening in health care. Over the next five to 10 years, people are going to see a remarkable shift in the quality of care that's being delivered in the United States health care system.

Q: Home Health Care News: Finish this sentence:

The home-based care industry in 2022 will be the year of...

“Full connectivity.”