

Atlanta SPIN

Software & Systems Process Improvement Network

The Atlanta SPINnaker

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Obama, ARRA and Healthcare IT (HIT): Can Improvements in Technology Really Improve Health?" A Panel Discussion



Didi Davis
President Serendipity Health



Ken Bradley
VP Strategic Planning Navicure



Paul Stinson
President, and Founder
Telos Consulting Group

Last month's Atlanta SPIN meeting was a series of mini presentations all centered around a common theme, how technology can improve healthcare processes (hopefully improving the quality of care given to patients in the process) and how the companies represented improved their own internal processes. Our speakers were Didi Davis from Serendipity Health, Ken Bradley from Navicure, Inc., Paul Stinson from Telos Consulting Group and Tony Gerena from Greenway Medical. If you were fortunate enough

to attend this presentation, thank you very much for coming out! If not, in addition to this article, please remember that you can download the presentation by visiting <http://www.atlantaspin.org/meetinginfo.htm> and downloading your own copy. You can also visit <http://www.atlantaspin.org/announcements/200911.html> to view a copy of the abstract and short bios of all the speakers.

The first presentation was a short overview

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Next Meeting - December 9, 2009 — 6:00 PM

Atlanta SPIN Inaugural Mixer Event



The 57th Fighter Group Restaurant

3829 Clairmont Road
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 234-0057

Door prizes include:

- Tickets to a Gladiators game
- Free round of golf for 4
- Massage
- Stationary

Obama, ARRA and Healthcare IT (HIT): Can Improvements in Technology Really Improve Health?" (Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

of medical terminology and some background information given by Didi Davis. She described what Congress has done in the past, for example the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 that established national standards for electronic health care transactions and national identifiers for providers, health insurance plans, and employers. She described what Congress did recently with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in the form of \$19 billion dollars worth of investment and incentives in Healthcare Information Technology (HIT). Currently there are rewards for using HIT to make a medical practice more efficient but eventually time will run out and those rewards will turn into penalties for those who have not improved their practices.

The second presentation was given by Tony Gerena from Greenway Medical. Greenway develops electronic healthcare record (EHR) software that allows doctor offices to make patient records electronic and, hopefully in the near future, possible to share with other medical facilities almost immediately. This allows your medical records to follow you around the country and improve your quality of care when you move or are involved in an emergency situation away from home. This concept is often referred to as interoperability. Tony also shared an example of how he improved the development process at Greenway to improve quality, lower costs and increase the speed in which new versions are released. Some of the problems his company faced where release cycles that were too long, testing schedules that were too long and

customer upgrades that were too costly or caused too high of a support call volume. By implementing a strategy of virtualizing servers, creating automated testing, and reworking the development lifecycle, Tony and Greenway's team were able to reduce release cycles to 4-6 months. They also can bring new virtual servers on line in 5 minutes. QA cycles have been reduced from 2 months to 4 weeks. This example highlights the efficiencies technology can bring to both healthcare companies and healthcare practices.

The third presentation was given by Ken Bradley from Navicure, Inc. Navicure transmits claims from the doctor's office to insurance companies as well as the 'accept' or 'reject' messages back to the doctor's office. This electronic claim filing is faster and more efficient than filing on paper and sending it through the mail. Ken gave an overview of two case studies. The first highlighted how Navicure improved the processes of a practice by providing electronic claim filing and online analysis tools. These processes prevent claim rejection and make sure payments are made by the insurance companies for services. Navicure was able to decrease the time it takes to get a claim paid from 53 days to 35 days within 6 months of service. Ken also discussed how internal process improvement, in the form of tool development, decreased development and QA time. Navicure parses text reports from insurance companies and these text reports frequently change. Before the creation of this development tool parser, development would take 45 hours and testing would take another 25 hours. Now, with the tools created, it takes 4.5 hours of development and 2.5 hours to test. These examples highlight how technology in healthcare can improve processes and promote efficiency.

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Obama, ARRA and Healthcare IT (HIT): Can Improvements in Technology Really Improve Health? (Continued)

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The last presentation was given by Paul Stinson who talked about his achievements and experiences while at Sage Software. Sage's healthcare division offers software solutions for HER, radiology image review and software that helps medical facilities manager their practice. This software allows practices to be efficient and streamlined in their daily operations. Paul also talked about how he used process improvement to increase productivity, quality and earnings before deduction of interest, taxes, and amortization expenses (EBITA). During his presentation, Paul laid out his plan in seven major steps, each designed to accomplish a specific task. First was to implement software to use for requirements management. Next, Sage developed a Work Management System to track product development. Third, they used a remote monitoring system to communicate with remote installations at client locations and to help automate upgrades. Paul also stressed the value of creating automated test scripts, and additionally created a cross-functional team to study and focus on new government regulations that would affect his company. Lastly, Paul switched the development team from a waterfall process to an

agile process and created a project management office. The results were very impressive. Percentage of work orders returned to development by QA dropped from 9% to 2% on a per project basis. Support requests generated per customer per month dropped from 5 to 2. In addition to all this, revenue increased dramatically while the number of full time employees inched lower.

After finishing the presentations, our panelists stayed late answering questions from our audience. One of the questions was "If I'm not in the healthcare industry now, how do I make the transition into that industry and become competitive for all the jobs becoming available? ". Didi suggested looking into the curriculum of community colleges. Many are adding additional courses because of all the healthcare stimulus money. They already have classes in medical billing and coding which are important to understand for many of the positions opening. Tony also suggested volunteering at your local clinic to see how a practice is run and what is involved in the daily routines to gain valuable experience.

Atlanta SPIN would like to again thank all of our panelists for sharing their experiences and insight. Thanks again to everyone who attended!

Call for Suggestions on Articles and Presentations

We regularly seek articles and related information that would be of interest to our readers and members. If you have a suggestion for an article please let us know by sending an email to "newsletter@atlantaspin.com". Or better yet, if you would like to contribute an article of interest to our group, please contact us at the same email address and let's talk about it.

Each month, the Atlanta SPIN meetings and newsletters

strive to deliver real world practical approaches that can strengthen one's abilities to succeed in the evolving and often challenging domain of software and systems development. Your feedback and ideas on the programs and supporting newsletter articles is vital and appreciated; it will help us to continue to deliver the valuable information you need for your personal career growth. We want to hear from you!

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Contributor to this issue:
Feature article: Stephen Burlingame

Other SPIN Contributors**And our many Contributing Members!****Process Improvement Sites:****Software Engineering Information Repository**

<https://seir.sei.cmu.edu/seir/>, has over 30,000 registered users and is a forum used to contribute and exchange information about software engineering improvement activities, including CMMI.

The CMMI Process Improvement Yahoo! discussion group

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cmmi_process_improvement/ is a forum used to contribute and exchange ideas about CMMI-based improvement.

BSCW Shared Workspace <https://bscw.sei.cmu.edu/pub/bscw.cgi/0/79783> is a forum used to contribute and exchange CMMI-related materials.

Information courtesy of SEI Customer Relations. Find out more about SEI Membership online at
www.sei.cmu.edu/membership customer-relationships@sei.cmu.edu

About Atlanta SPIN, Incorporated

www.atlantaspin.org

The Atlanta SPIN organization was chartered in 1994. This group has been a force for software process improvement in the Atlanta area since then. The organization has a growing membership list that currently numbers 850+ members. The group typically meets every third Wednesday of the month. Our meetings typically attract audiences of 40 – 50 people. These meetings provide a forum for like-minded people, interested in learning from others and sharing their own experiences. There is time allowed before and after the meeting for networking among the participants, including a review from the audience of any job openings that are available. The Board, through its work with Sponsors, ensures that food and drinks are also available at no cost to the membership. Atlanta SPIN is a 501C3 non-profit corporation. Your contributions may be tax deductible and qualify for corporate matching contributions from your company.