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Cardinal Health's Carl Hall: Take a consultative approach to reduce healthcare variation

By Kelly Gooch

Carl Hall serves as vice president and general manager for Pre-source® Products and Services at Dublin, Ohio-based Cardinal Health.

In this special Speaker Series, *Becker's* caught up with Mr. Hall to discuss one thing health systems should reduce, the healthcare supply chain and Cardinal Health's goals for this year.

Mr. Hall will speak on a panel at Becker's Hospital Review 10th Annual Meeting titled "How to reduce variations in care and optimize clinical performance" at 11:25 a.m. April 3. Learn more about the event here.

Question: What is the biggest evolution you've seen among the hospitals/health systems you work with over the last two to three years?

Carl Hall: In today's value-based care landscape, with increasing pressures to reduce costs, leaders are looking for more visibility into what they are spending and how they can save money while ensuring quality of care remains the same. An effect of this

emphasis on value is the convergence of supply chain and perioperative decision-making, as customers are taking a holistic view to total cost of care. A procedural supply chain is increasingly important with the consolidation we see on the provider side: Customers need help organizing and making decisions around supply procurement and delivery and are leaning more heavily on peer best-demonstrated practices and benchmarking.

Q: Most people understand innovation as starting something new. The lesser discussed side of innovation is when you stop something. What is one thing health systems would benefit from stopping, quitting or banning?

CH: Health systems can benefit by reducing needless variation, which can develop over time and be caused by industry consolidation, contractual or equipment constraints and clinical practice variation. The key here is a consultative approach among hospital executives and physicians. Reducing

variation helps to enhance the quality of care – leaving clinicians more time to spend on patient care – and reduces costs by taking advantage of scale where possible. Because it can be difficult to find the right balance between cost and clinical requirements, there is a need for solutions that identify savings opportunities beyond traditional supply cost. We see a huge interest in reducing variation in care across providers and within our customer base, and we see our role in this quest as a consultative partner to bring opportunities forward from a supply perspective. Ultimately, standardization initiatives that look to reduce process and product variation help to maximize value of an organization's resources and spend throughout the delivery of care.

Q: What do innovators/entrepreneurs from outside healthcare need to better understand about hospital and health system leaders?

CH: Supply chain touches every corner of healthcare. Because of that, partnership across clinical and operational stakeholders is key to success. Not only is it important for clinical leaders to understand operational challenges that impact delivery of care, but we see that supply chain decision-makers are relying on clinical data and insights to drive change. As a result, innovation and change in health systems needs to address a breadth of operational challenges in order to help every

person throughout the organization perform at their highest level of capability. Data science that helps hospital and health system leaders connect the dots from supply chain through delivery of care is highly desirable in today's healthcare landscape. At the end of the day, efficiency is currency in healthcare. We deliver value to our customers by helping them get the most out of their organization's resources – and that starts in the supply chain.

Q: What one strategic initiative will demand the most of your time and energy in 2019?

CH: We are continuing to commit to an insights-driven approach that helps our customers achieve predictable success through greater visibility, short- and long-term planning and thoughtful execution at scale. With actionable insights and broad implementation support, we are seeking to give our customers broader purview over their business to empower management. Our scale, data and tenure enable us to expertly calibrate supply and clinical practice to enhance the delivery of high-quality care, and we are committed to employing this data to provide targeted recommendations. To that end, we will continue expanding our data-driven solutions that enable customers to understand and track savings and streamline product procurement and delivery mode, all with the goal of driving clinical and operational efficiencies.