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IU School of Informatics graduate students complete Care Unit Analysis for Mental Illness.

Mental Health Care Unit Analysis describes requirements for technology-enabled patient engagement that will improve operating efficiency and outcomes.
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ANN ARBOR, MICH, (May 6, 2013) – White Pine Systems, LLC (dba SPINN), a leading provider of patient engagement solutions, and IU School of Informatics at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) announced today that a team of students in the Graduate School of Health Informatics has completed the **Mental Health Care Unit (MHCU) analysis**. The MHCU analysis explores the challenges of treating people with addiction and mental illness and considers how online and mobile patient relationship management tools can improve outcomes and lower cost in community-based mental and addiction health programs.

Following a model that has been used by White Pine for the past six years for several health conditions, the MHCU analysis serves as a high-level requirements document for a new Care Unit module built on White Pine's **SPINN patient relationship platform**. The new Mental Health Care Unit will be offered to behavioral health providers across the nation.

In the United States, one in five people suffer from mental illness. That is about 57.7 million people every year. One-fourth of all social security disability payments are for people with mental illness and almost half of Medicaid beneficiaries who have disabilities have a mental illness.

Mental and addiction health treatment works. Treatment of bipolar disorder, major depression, panic disorder, OCD and schizophrenia have been shown to improve health at rates that compare favorably to treatment of asthma & diabetes, cardiovascular disease and heart disease, yet fewer than one third of people with mental illness receive treatment. In some states, fewer than 10 percent of the people who need addiction treatment receive it, mostly as a result of limited access to care and stigma.

Recognizing the potential for online and mobile technology to help meet this need by expanding access to care and reducing stigma, *Centerstone of Indiana* and *Recovery Consultants of Atlanta (RCA)* asked White Pine and the School of Informatics to conduct the MHCU analysis. Centerstone, the nation's largest nonprofit community-based behavioral health provider serves about 80,000 people per year, mostly in Tennessee and Indiana. Recovery Consultants of Atlanta (RCA) is a faith-based, peer-led recovery community organization founded in 1999 offering peer-led support services that help sustain recovery among members of Atlanta's inner-city recovery community.

“This is our third Care Unit project with White Pine and the School of Informatics,” said Linda Grove-Paul, Vice President for Addiction and Innovation Services at Centerstone of Indiana. “In the fall of 2011, we heard about White Pine’s success helping clinicians and patients in physical health. So we asked White Pine to conduct a Care Unit Analysis for substance abuse. We were so impressed with the process and product that we applied for and received a grant from the Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to configure and deploy a Substance Abuse Care Unit using White Pine’s SPINN Patient Relationship Platform. That system is now live and showing tremendous value in improved operating efficiency and health outcomes. Since many of our people are coming out of prison, we followed that with a request for a Vocational Rehabilitation Care Unit to help people coming out of prison find jobs, which has now been funded by the Department of Labor and will be launched this summer. The next area we needed to address is mental illness, so we gave White Pine a call.”

“We heard about Centerstone’s success with the Substance Abuse Care Unit and called White Pine to see if they could help us with our population in Atlanta,” said Cassandra Collins, RCA’s Executive Director. “As a major urban center with a large homeless population, we simply can’t help all of those who need and want our services. Also, many of our people experience mental illness, so we know that the Substance Abuse Care Unit alone will not be enough for our community. This MHCU analysis is helping us figure out just how to address that.”

“We are honored to have this opportunity to work with these leading organizations in this important work,” said Doug Dormer, White Pine’s founder and CEO. “Mental illness poses unique challenges and opportunities. One of the most important areas is around literacy levels and attention capacity. For example, the solutions we designed for people with substance abuse follows the **Recovery Oriented System of Care**, the emerging standard of care for addiction treatment. For the Substance Abuse Care Unit, we assumed that people would have at least an 8th grade reading level and the ability to independently answer 23 questions before meeting with a recovery coach. We quickly learned that both the reading level and attention capacity were unreasonable assumptions for many people with mental illness who often have a much lower reading level and attention capacity. Through the MHCU analysis, we came up with a configuration of tools that use info graphics—pictures instead of words—and doles the discussion out in bite-sized chunks that are easier to digest. This is truly innovative work that has true promise of contributing to the Triple Aim.”

“This is the 9th semester we have worked with White Pine following their Care Unit Method,” said Dr. Josette Jones, Associate Professor of Health Informatics in the School of Informatics at IUPUI. Each semester, we have two teams of graduate students participate in these projects. So far, the teams have conducted analyses for Care Units including diabetes, hypertension, pregnancy, breast cancer, substance abuse, palliative health and Parkinson’s disease. Our students tell us this is one of the best projects in their graduate studies.”

The MHCU team included:

Jenica Singh
Nitin Bhosale
Rebecca McKing
Tiffany Fisher

About White Pine Systems, LLC

White Pine Systems, LLC is a privately held company based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Its flagship product, *SPINN*, the *Secure Personal Information and Notification Network*, is a low cost, fully configurable, private-labeled, patient relationship platform that engages patients and families and connects them to physicians, hospitals and other healthcare providers with new tools that increase rates of adoption and use, leading to increased satisfaction for all stakeholders, improved health outcomes and lower cost.

Built to connect with the Microsoft® HealthVault™ personal health information platform, SPINN bridges the gap between EMR systems used by providers and emerging PHR platforms to achieve the promise of patient and family-centered chronic disease management. SPINN connects family, guardians and healthcare providers through their own secure personal health network to deliver the right information any time, any place.

For more information, please visit www.SPINNpnr.com or Jonathan Smolowe at 267-627-2332.

About Indiana University School of Informatics at IUPUI

The Indiana University School of Informatics was established in 2000 as one of the first schools in the nation dedicated to education and research in informatics. Informatics is the study and application of information technology to the arts and sciences to resolve practical issues facing individuals, organizations and society every day. The School offers an array of B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. programs. The IU School of Informatics is located on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. For additional information, please visit www.informatics.iupui.edu or Dr. Josette Jones at 317-274-8059 / jofjones@iupui.edu

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