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Scott Herbst, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Provider Solutions, WEDI board member 2015, provided the following responses for this WEDI Member Spotlight.

Please share some history about your organization. How did it begin?

Availity was founded in 2001 by Florida Blue and Humana with the goal of making it easier for health plans to engage with providers in the state of Florida. Today, Availity is owned by Florida Blue, Humana, HCSC, Anthem, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. As one of the nation's largest health care information networks, Availity is active in 26 Blue markets with a minimum of 60 percent of payers in those markets, has more than 900,000 active providers, and manages more than 2 billion transactions annually through the Availity Web Portal. Over the past decade, Availity has built a portfolio of revenue cycle management solutions with a continued focus on improving collaboration between health plans and providers. Most recently, Availity acquired RevPoint, a patient-access solution helping providers manage the impact of high-deductible plans and increased patient financial responsibility.

Today Availity is an industry-leading, HITRUST-certified health IT company that delivers solutions to make it easier for physician practices, hospitals, health plans, and government payers to share information about critical moments in care, maximizing revenue opportunities and saving millions in administrative expenses every year.

What is your primary solution/service/product?

Availity integrates and manages administrative, clinical, and financial data needed to fuel real-time coordination between stakeholders in both fee-for-service and value-based care environments. Working with providers, health plans, and technology vendors, Availity simplifies and speeds real-time information sharing to reduce waste while improving operational and financial performance.

Our solution portfolio:

Availity Patient Access is a dynamic, interactive collection tool that focuses on the pre- and point-of-service workflow (the upfront qualification of a patient). This solution enables guided registration, delivering accurate patient account status *before* services are rendered.

Availity Revenue Cycle Management is a powerful reporting and intelligent analytics solution that pinpoints trends affecting revenue cycle allowing insight into the business. This solution speeds up claims and payments by automatically validating patient eligibility and benefits, auditing claims in real time for errors, tracking and reporting on claim status, and integrating with practice management, hospital information, or EMR systems.

[Availity Web Portal](#) is a tool for individual transactions and inquiries, providing real-time access to information from multiple health plans, helps fill information gaps, reduces claim errors, and facilitates accurate payments.

[Advanced Clearinghouse](#) provides connectivity to exchange high volumes of claim- and payment-related transactions. We have a comprehensive network of physician practices, hospitals, and health plans to quickly and efficiently exchange claims, remittances, eligibility and benefits, and claim status information.

How does your solution/service/product help improve the healthcare system?

Availity reduces waste

By enabling electronic information sharing, Availity solutions help health care organizations reduce unnecessary labor costs – and opportunities for error – associated with manual communications such as mail, phone calls, and faxes. As an example, Availity automates more than 660 million eligibility and benefits transactions each year. At a savings of $5.56 over manual eligibility and benefits checks (CAQH, 2014 U.S. Healthcare Efficiency Index), Availity reduces its clients' expenses by an estimated $3.7 billion annually. When cost reduction estimates are extended to all the other interactions Availity automates, the savings figure easily doubles and is estimated to triple with the depth of automation enabled through Availity's trusted industry relationships.

Availity improves operational and financial performance

Beyond the basic, but important step of enabling electronic information sharing, Availity solutions arm clients with real-time capabilities and value-added business insights that help improve operational and financial performance. A pioneer in real-time data exchange, Availity empowers its clients with the most current and accurate information available. By reducing data latency that limits opportunities for providers and health plans to spot and address concerns quickly and proactively, Availity helps clients avoid issues that drive operational expenses and affect financial performance. Our clients have seen a 3-4% average adjudicated claim denial rate against the 10% industry average.

Who are your customers?

Availity serves the health care industry as a whole; working health systems, multi-facility hospitals, physician groups, billing services, health plans, technology vendors, PM systems, specialty groups, and more.

What differentiates your organization from others?

Collaboration and an unwavering commitment to reducing waste and improving client operational and financial performance make Availity unique. We build collaborative relationships with providers, health plans, and technology vendors that are grounded in problem-solving. Our position as a trusted partner to diverse health care groups enables us to unite parties with different perspectives and develop innovative solutions that deliver real value.

Availity's consultative approach to solving complex problems faced by our clients also sets us apart. We take the time to develop a clear understanding of their needs, challenges, and future goals, and then draw on the expertise of professionals within our organization to deliver customized solutions. Our service commitment is based on understanding, anticipating, and meeting diverse and changing needs.

What major projects is your organization currently working on?

Availity's vision is to become the nation's largest, most trusted source for clinical and administrative real-time health information. We are currently focusing on initiatives that help improve the health care system.

Complex and challenging trends in health care – particularly around payment models – are fueling an industry need for innovative information solutions in both the provider and the health plan markets. This is particularly true given the complexity of payment systems and evolving payment models that require new information types and automated information delivery within the workflow. Availity is capitalizing on these opportunities with its established foundation and unique competitive advantages and has invested to position the company for expanded market leadership.

- Availity offers an innovative risk adjustment workflow solution for digital payer and provider collaboration. **Revenue Program Management** 1.0 (RPM) attacks the inefficiencies and frustration currently associated with gathering and managing quality and risk related information about patients. Today, as health plans work to improve the timeliness and accuracy of health care condition information for accurate coding, quality data for physician alignment, and member care coordination, multiple representatives on their behalf often visit a single provider's office seeking the same medical information. This causes poor data acquisition at a high cost for health plans and frustrates providers.

Why did you become a WEDI member?

WEDI is a natural fit for Availity. We both strive to make the health care system more efficient and cost-effective. We have a deep-rooted interest in improving the quality of health care through technology and communication among all key stakeholders. Since Availity was founded, and is still owned by health plans, and serves over 900,000 active providers, we have a direct link into the challenges that face all aspects of the health care industry. We believe WEDI and its members can make a difference in health care and appreciate the opportunity to participate.

What do you find to be the most beneficial part of your membership?

Availity values the opportunity to participate in workshops, public forums, and various groups that affect positive change in the health care system. We gain insight from the educational materials that we incorporate into our strategies, thus improving the administrative efficiency, quality, and cost-effectiveness of health care information.

What are some emerging trends you see in the overall industry that your organization provides thought leadership on?

Consumerism is an emerging trend that we can address. The growing popularity of high-deductible health plans is shifting more financial responsibility to the patients causing providers to lose revenue. We provide thought leadership through an [original research study](#) and strategies on how to address and increase upfront patient collections.

We also see the shift from fee-for-service to fee-for-value as another emerging trend. We've conducted original research that provides insight into what providers and health plans see as market disruption as the industry begins to migrate to value-based payment models.