DARTNet Pairs Technology and Research to Advance Medical Knowledge

The DARTNet Institute (DI) has facilitated partnerships between practice-based research networks, academic health centers, clinicians, and patients. The institute leverages existing electronic data and the expansion of patient or staff-reported data for research, quality improvement, and safety.

CBSA President & CEO, Jennifer Jones Paton, asked Wilson Pace, DARTNet's Chief Medical Officer, CBSA's Key Questions for Life Sciences Innovators.

Far right: Wilson Pace, MD, DARTNet's Chief Medical Officer, testifies and presents the institute's research findings for the Colorado Candor Act

Q: Tell us about your company or organization.

A: The DARTNet Institute (DI) is a nonprofit created eight years ago that supports collaboration between practice-based research networks, academic health centers, clinicians, patients and other interested parties in the use of existing electronic data and the expansion of patient or staff reported data for research, quality improvement and safety. DI operates in the technology and research sectors of health care. Policy making and direction is provided by a Board of Directors made of clinicians, researchers, informaticians and business individuals. DARTNet employs or contracts individuals from around the country.

Q: Describe your team culture in three words. How does your culture shape what your company or organization produces or offers?

A: Open, friendly, sharing.
The culture is one of open sharing of all activities between all members of the organization. Teams are fluid based on the short and long term needs of the project. All work is considered on a weekly "sprint" basis.

Q: What are you working on right now?

A: Our current projects directly impact individuals' health and medical safety. DARTNet:
1. Acts as a federally recognized Patient Safety Organization. We are working with novel medication risk scores that we believe will predict increased risk for falls, pneumonia, dementia and death based on medication, disease and lab combinations.

2. Serves as partner in a large pragmatic trial comparing inhaled corticosteroids as part of rescue therapy for people with asthma. Funded by PCORI.
3. Manages the data for a large observational study of risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Funded by the CDC.
4. Supports data management for a large, primarily observational set of studies related to blood transfusion safety. Funded by NHLBI.
5. Supports data management for a series of studies related to interventions for new onset schizophrenia. Funded by NIMH.
6. Stabilizes a clinical decision support platform to provide POC decision support and population health management for 70+ clinical conditions in primary care practices.
7. Works with five different health care organizations to improve COPD care, including analysis of EHR data and the addition of patient reported data linked to clinical decision support tools.

These activities encompass data from more than 10 million people across the U.S.

"DARTNet focuses on research and methods to advance medical knowledge and improve the use of that knowledge in the direct care of individuals"

Q: How will your work save or change lives?

A: DARTNet focuses on research and methods to advance medical knowledge and improve the use of that knowledge in the direct care of individuals.

Our safety work will decrease iatrogenic causes of illness/harm, our decision support work will make more people receive the current treatment at the correct time and our research will find new interventions and safer approaches to care ranging from primary care to specialty care.

Q: How has COVID-19 impacted your company or organization?

A: Several research projects have been pushed out due to the disruptions to so many health care organization's operations. There are numerous new projects that have been proposed that DARTNet would be included in if funded. Since we work remotely across the country, we were not impacted by the virus directly. We have had individual employees that have had to deal with child care/school and significant other disruptions like every business.

Q: CBSA champions a collaborative life sciences ecosystem because we are #stongertogether. How has being an active participant in our life sciences community supported your success?

A: Fitzsimons Innovation Community has been very helpful in creating a corporate "home" for DARTNet. We have had various conversations with others in the building and shared some data ideas. Overall, DARTNet's primary partners are academic health centers across the country.

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