



## Medecision: Transforming Healthcare in the Age of the Coronavirus

*Rick Koloski, group senior vice president of engineering and architecture at the healthcare firm Medecision, discusses how enterprise agility has helped the business respond to COVID-19—and prepare for what’s next.*

In the healthcare sector, change tends to happen at a glacial pace. In addition to regulatory and privacy-related challenges, adopting innovative technologies often means weighing potential benefits against short-term risks to patients. Even as a new wave of telemedicine and wearable health devices suggests an impending sea change in the way patients access and experience care, the industry has been among the slowest to adopt new technology.

COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the speed at which the healthcare sector innovates. In a matter of months, healthcare providers have leapt ahead to provide remote checkups or stand up AI-driven helplines designed to manage an unprecedented spike in demand. In a moment when all eyes are on healthcare leaders to meet a historic crisis with an equally powerful response, stakeholders ranging from hospitals to diagnostic laboratories are accelerating their own long-gestating transformations.

But true change doesn’t happen without adopting new approaches to work. One key element is enterprise agility — an approach to systems, processes and operations that allows businesses to nimbly respond to change. It encompasses both digital transformation and culture shift, pulling together data from multiple disciplines and enabling new forms of collaboration.

“At the enterprise scale, bringing agile thinking should include product engineering, finance and a number of other disciplines,” says Rick Koloski, group senior vice president of engineering and ar-

chitecture at Medecision. “Informing those areas and making the whole enterprise resilient to the new pace of change means going from the canonically popular model of agile software development to true enterprise agility.”

As an integrated health management solutions provider supporting virtual care and digital health, Medecision sits at the center of many of the trends reshaping healthcare. Its flagship offering, Aerial, is an integrated, cloud-based platform that unifies the vast streams of data endemic to the industry (everything from lab results to insurance claims). It then applies predictive analytics to support better decision-making, both in terms of business management and overall patient experience, which drives improved health outcomes.

For consumers, this creates new opportunities to take a more active and informed role in their personal health. For healthcare providers, it means gaining visibility across the care-management spectrum — and implementation of an agile, adaptable methodology.

“In the same way that a technology company might utilize various collaborative and workflow solutions, Aerial helps our clients manage the interactions involved in care delivery,” Koloski says. “As a care manager, you can see not only upcoming appointments, but also video and text interactions in a unified way. That’s the same thing in terms of our implementation of enterprise agility.”

In the COVID-19 era, the platform's agile workflow infrastructure has enabled care managers and community case workers to assist patients remotely, while also building support plans and tracking reimbursement from Medicare or Medicaid. As a result, at-risk populations have been able to stay home with their families during the pandemic, keeping them out of hospitals and other potential hotspots.

"Faced with a global health crisis, the industry at large has had to accelerate the pace of change," says Nanne Finis, RN MS and chief nurse executive at workforce management firm Kronos. "Organizations are forced to work across their own environments to rapidly deploy and execute change, which comes in the form of personnel staffing, scheduling, benefit payment and resource planning, as well as environmental changes in the way work is done — all of which has to be communicated and exponentially repurposed to address a dire need in this extraordinary time."

In its own operations, Medecision has put agile principles into action both before and during the pandemic. Partnering with strategic consultants such as [Cprime](#) and using solutions from Atlassian, the company has trained and certified stakeholders in not only engineering, but also finance, customer service and a number of other business units as part of an effort to scale agile across the organization.

In doing so, it has automated key processes, broken down silos and enabled new modes of collaboration. While aspects of agile (like face-to-face communication) have been challenged during the pandemic, Medecision's use of Atlassian solutions has enabled cross-functional planning even as it transitions teams to operate remotely.

An agile approach has also helped the business set itself up to thrive in the post-COVID-19 world. While no one knows what the future holds, Koloski predicts that virtual doctor's visits will become even more popular, with fewer hurdles for patients hoping to take advantage of telehealth. Meanwhile, secure, HIPAA-compliant solutions for information-sharing may make the healthcare sector more

digital, bringing it in line with the paperless experience found commonly in banking and travel. While these trends were present in healthcare prior to the viral outbreak, the current crisis has spurred their acceptance, making it a watershed moment for businesses like Medecision.

"Our virtual health engagement offerings have been under development for years, but adoption had been slow. People had muscle memory about walking into urgent care facilities or their primary care provider's office," Koloski says. "With COVID-19, the barrier to adoption has been removed, and our solutions are being used in new and innovative ways. In a positive sense, it's been game-changing for how people receive healthcare."

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