

Oct 3, 2017

Narus Health Forms Partnership with Lucent Health

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Nashville entrepreneur Michael Burcham has inked a new partnership that could double the workforce for his 2-year-old health care company by the end of the year.

Burcham's Narus Health is joining forces with Nashville-based Lucent Health Solutions, a third-party administrator that helps employers manage employee benefit plans and process insurance claims.

Narus' telemedicine services will be offered to employees of companies that are contracted with Lucent, said Burcham, in turn reducing costs for self-insured employers.

Burcham said the partnership will allow the two companies to grow together as they expand services to new markets. Lucent has acquired claim administrators in California and Wisconsin, and Burcham said he expects Lucent to continue to grow.

"We are expanding to compliment them (Lucent) so that when they expand into a market with a group of employers we will expand into that same market," Burcham said. "If you watch us over the next year you will see our growth really dovetail and align with each other."

Narus connects doctors and patients through technology to provide around-the-clock care and reduce costs, Burcham said. The company provides customers access to its care management portal called Compassion, which uses data to link them to the appropriate provider by phone, video or mobile app.

Narus currently has about 20 employees, and Burcham said that number should double by December. He also expects even more growth in 2018.

Lucent President and CEO Brett Rodewald, whose company has about 350 employees in various markets, said the partnership will allow Lucent to participate in a patient's journey from the beginning of a claim to its end.

"Our goal is to be involved from the birth of a claim so that we can better impact the quality of care — and Narus impacts the quality of care," Rodewald said.

Burcham said Narus' approach to patient care also can help companies attract younger, tech-minded employees that would rather text with a health care professional than wait in a doctor's office.

"What attracted me to this partnership was that Lucent was excelling in providing a value to an employer that was hard to find in a traditional way," Burcham said. "We are building out a business to take care of the employee and their family. You put the two together and now the employer, their workforce and their families all have a high value-add that is unique in the market."

Burcham founded Narus in 2015 after witnessing his close friend Tommy Cato battle cancer. The company initially focused on palliative care but has since expanded its reach to subacute conditions (those with recent onset or somewhat rapid change).

Burcham, the former CEO of the Nashville Entrepreneur Center, has led startup health care companies to success in the past. He sold ParadigmHealth, for \$330 million in 2007, and Theraphysics, for \$100 million in 1998.

Burcham said Narus and Lucent will remain separate companies, but that the relationship could deepen in the future as they continue to work together.

"We each have a distinct competency in what we do," Burcham said. "But there is a whole suite of services and products and ways to help employers and their employees if we make a more formal commitment to one another to build those together."