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THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Midmark chief medical officer embraces the future

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Midmark Corp. is one of the largest companies in the Dayton region. The maker of medical, dental and veterinary healthcare equipment also is a cutting-edge business.

Dr. Thomas Schwieterman, Midmark's chief medical officer, recently spoke to me about health care and Midmark.

How would you assess the health care environment in the Dayton region?

Dayton is a region rich in opportunity to impact health care nationally. With several well-run healthcare delivery systems, some nationally-recognized educational institutions, a top-level research facility at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, several national healthcare solutions manufacturers and a deep history of innovation and technological development, all the pieces are present in the area to make a positive impact on improving patient outcomes at lower costs.

I have had many positive experiences with the opportunities to tour local companies and institutions and meet with their innovators. I found there are projects on new micro-sensors to more effectively diagnose disease, impressive platforms in machine learning and artificial intelligence and cutting-edge medical care delivery occurring within our midst. Perhaps our biggest gap is effectively communicating many of the great things that are happening locally.

What improvements can be done locally?

Many local organizations and companies are very tightly focused on what the leadership needs to do individually to compete effectively. The dramatic transformation in the market is driving transformation in the boardroom and executive suites – all



Dr. Tom Schwieterman, chief medical officer at Midmark Corp.

organizations are trying to solve new unmet needs. However, I find it both comforting and valuable when I can learn from other organizations about the challenges they are facing and how they plan to address each of those challenges.

One option is to establish a forum that facilitates dialogue and communication among organizations to share problems, insights and solutions on a regular basis. ... The problems in health care, whether in medical, dentistry or animal health, are so big they will require collaboration among all stakeholders.

What's the biggest change happening in health care?

The biggest change in health care is the pace of change itself. In prior years, change occurred at a manageable pace that enabled organizations to adapt over time. Today, the pace has accelerated to a point where rapid innovation is not just a business advantage, but a business imperative. At Midmark, we've been working to improve our internal operations

with new agile methods to ensure we can meet the needs of our customers and their rapid pace of innovation.

In terms of healthcare delivery, as Midmark's chief medical officer, I see the continuing alignment between patients, payers and providers as the biggest and perhaps most welcome change. The importance of all stakeholders driving to improved outcomes at lower costs as a unified goal is quite new to health care and engenders optimism for our collective future.

Describe a recent innovation undertaken by your organization.

Midmark is invested in improving workflow whereby costs can be more closely managed and patients enjoy a positive experience. We've been hard at work at our real-time locating system (RTLS) subsidiary, improving our technology so our customers can focus on the job they are tasked with – providing excellent clinical care. Our staff and asset locating technology works in the background to make everything run better. One of the best examples is at the University of Minnesota Fairview Clinic, where RTLS technology has eliminated waiting rooms, improved workflow efficiency and created a better patient experience.

What initiatives does your company have in store for 2019?

Midmark has gained a strong position in the market as a leading exam room, dental operator and veterinary clinic design company. This year, Midmark is investing in our digital platforms that improve product performance, regulatory compliance and clinical care delivery itself.

For Midmark, 2019 will also include a renewed focus on product innovation. We are transforming how we develop products so our marketing and engineering teammates can more rapidly progress.