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Waukesha native develops iPhone application to cut health costs

The Business Journal of Milwaukee - by [Corrinne Hess](#)

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A Waukesha native is getting national attention for an iPhone application he has developed to help consumers cut health care costs.

Dr. Peter Hudson, a 1983 graduate of Waukesha South High School and a Denver-area emergency room doctor, launched iTriage in March 2009. The free smartphone application allows users to check their symptoms, research diseases and procedures and find locations for treatment from a database of 1.2 million hospitals and clinics across the country.

iTriage is even able to tell a person what an emergency room wait time is at various locations, with updates every 15 minutes.

The application had more than 2 million page views in the last month and has captured the attention of the Obama administration.

“The timing of this has been extraordinary,” Hudson said, adding that he expects to see 2,000 percent revenue growth in 2010 over

last year.

Hudson declined to reveal what his annual revenue was in 2009.

On June 2, Hudson was one of 17 people asked to demonstrate their health care technology during a community health data forum hosted by the Institute of Medicine and the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.

When Hudson launched Healthagen, a health care information software company, with partner Dr. Wayne Guerra in 2008, he couldn't have imagined the direction national health care reform was headed.

“We've all been in business before and seen small, incremental growth, but this has been amazing,” he said. “I think this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of opportunities we can tap into.”

Consumers can access iTriage's library of medical symptoms, diseases and procedures — oftentimes being able to watch a video of how a procedure is done — and receive a recommendation on the appropriate level of care required.

The results are integrated with geolocation technology to provide users with specific information on the most relevant treatment facilities.

iTriage has a national directory of emergency departments, urgent care facilities, retail clinics, federally qualified health centers and pharmacies. Quality reports from HealthGrades on hospitals and physicians can also be downloaded and e-mailed directly to a users' iPhone.

“We’re just focused on helping people navigate what is typically very frustrating,” Hudson said. “We’ve figured out how to do it in real time, wherever they may be.”

While the application is free to users, the company makes money by partnering with health care systems and medical groups to promote them. For example, if an urgent care center just purchased a new X-ray machine and a user is searching for treatment for pneumonia, iTriage would list all of the available treatment centers in the area, but also highlight the new equipment at the partner center.

So far, Healthagen has partnered with about 400 hospitals in about 25 states. Hudson is currently working on a contract with a Wisconsin health care provider, but declined to identify the hospital system.

Joanne Reimer, of Oak Creek, has used iTriage twice; first, to diagnose her husband’s kidney stones and then to do research on fibromyalgia and lupus, conditions doctors believed her daughter might have.

Reimer, 54, said reading about the conditions and watching videos about treatment gave her peace of mind that she didn’t get from surfing the Internet.

“iTriage is like an encyclopedia in the palm of your hand,” Reimer said.

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