Dialysis Facility Compare Star Ratings Draw First Challenge To CMS Quality Measures Under Data Quality Act

Skewed geographic distribution of star ratings demonstrates program’s flaws, says Dialysis Patient Citizens

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16, 2014 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Dialysis Patient Citizens has filed the first challenge to a CMS quality program under the Data Quality Act, contending that the agency’s Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC) star ratings methodology fails to satisfy federal requirements for objectivity and utility by presenting information to the public.

"We felt this challenge was necessary in light of CMS’ continued refusal to acknowledge that their quality ratings are distorted by socio-demographic factors," said Jackson Williams, Director of Government Affairs for Dialysis Patient Citizens. "As is the case with Medicare Advantage star ratings and the hospital readmissions penalty, a clear geographic pattern is evident: New England, the Upper Midwest and Pacific regions score the highest, and the South and Greater Appalachia score the worst. However, the pattern with DFC is more exaggerated than in other quality programs, probably because dialysis facilities draw patients from more concentrated service areas."

The Data Quality Act, enacted in 2001, spawned guidelines governing how each federal agency compiles its data. Dialysis Patient Citizens’ complaint argues that the DFC star ratings fail the HHS Guidelines’ objectivity requirement in that they are heavily biased by the underlying population health of the area served by a dialysis facility, as evidenced by 69 percent of West Virginia dialysis facilities garnering 1- or 2-star ratings, double the national average. At the other extreme, 74 percent of Hawaii’s facilities earned 4- or 5-star ratings. West Virginia and Hawaii are generally recognized as America’s unhealthiest and healthiest state, respectively. A regression analysis found that 24 percent of the variation among states’ proportions of 1- and 2-star facilities is explained by the life expectancy of the state’s overall population.

Dialysis Patient Citizens’ complaint also argues that the DFC star ratings fail the utility requirement by contradicting the public’s understanding of what "one-star" and "two-star" symbols mean. CMS has assigned those ratings to the 30 percent of facilities that rank the lowest, while conceding that a one-star rating does not mean a patient “will receive poor care from a facility.” Dialysis Patient Citizens cites the work of health care transparency expert Judy Hibbard in arguing that CMS’ refusal to apply the "inherent meaning" that consumers associate with 1- and 2-star ratings will result in patients being alarmed rather than informed.

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The Australian economy is facing a major transformation, moving from growth led by investment in resources projects to broader-based drivers of activity in non-resources sectors.” These words are taken from the Comprehensive Growth Strategy report presented by the Australian government at the recent G20 meeting in Brisbane. I wonder how seriously the government really takes them. Australian... Dec. 19, 2014 07:00 AM EST Reads: 360

Our expectations for buying all sorts of consumer goods has gone through a radical transformation we now take for granted. Why should we not expect this same level of service from IT businesses? We accept the status quo for how software delivery exists today but would reject it without hesitation if it were applied to pretty much any other online consumer experience. Take pizza delivery as an exa... Dec. 19, 2014 01:00 AM EST Reads: 2,588

This is the final installment of the six-part series Microservices and PaaS. It seems like forever since I attended Adrian Cockcroft's meetup focusing on microservices. It's actually only been a couple of months, but much has happened since then: countless articles, meetups, and conference sessions focusing on microservices have been delivered, many meetings and design efforts at companies moving ... Dec. 18, 2014 08:00 PM EST Reads: 877

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Windstream “Silver Sponsor” of Cloud Expo NY
By Elizabeth White
SYSC-CON Events announced today that Windstream, a leading provider of advanced network and cloud communications, has been named “Silver Sponsor” of SYS-CON’s 16th International Cloud Expo®, which will take place on June 9–11, 2015, at the Javits Center in New York, NY. Windstream (Nasdaq: WIN), a FORTUNE 500 and S&P 500 company, is a leading provider of advanced network communications, including cloud computing and managed services, to businesses nationwide. The company also offers broadband, p...
The cloud is becoming the de-facto way for enterprises to leverage common infrastructure while innovating and one of the biggest obstacles facing public cloud computing is security. In his session at 15th Cloud Expo, Jeff Alliber, a global marketing executive at Verizon, discussed how the best place for web security is in the cloud. Benefits include: Functions as the first layer of defense Easy operation – CNAME change Implement an integrated solution Best architecture for addressing network-... Dec. 19, 2014 07:30 AM EST Reads: 988 read more & respond »

**Slides: Chris Gray 'The Evolution of 'IoT'**

By Elizabeth White

The Internet of Things is not new. Historically, smart businesses have used its basic concept of leveraging data to drive better decision making and have capitalized on those insights to realize additional revenue opportunities. So, what has changed to make the Internet of Things one of the hottest topics in tech? In his session at @ThingsExpo, Chris Gray, Director, Embedded and Internet of Things, discussed the underlying factors that are driving the economics of intelligent systems. Discover ... Dec. 19, 2014 06:30 AM EST Reads: 2,102 read more & respond »

**IBM's New "Bluemix Dedicated" Platform**

By Yehim Deniz

ARMONK, N.Y., Nov. 20, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced that it is bringing a greater level of control, security and flexibility to cloud-based application development and delivery with a single-tenant version of Bluemix, IBM's... Dec. 19, 2014 05:00 AM EST Reads: 1,925 read more & respond »

**IDenticard to Exhibit at Cloud Expo 2015 NY**

By Liz McMillan

SYS-CON Events announced today that IDenticard will exhibit at SYS-CON's 16th International Cloud Expo®, which will take place on June 9-11, 2015, at the Javits Center in New York City, NY. IDenticard™ is the security division of Brady Corp (NYSE: BRC), a $1.5 billion manufacturer of identification products. We have small-company values with the strength and stability of a major corporation. IDenticard offers local sales, support and service to our customers across the United States and Canada... Dec. 19, 2014 04:00 AM EST Reads: 1,799 read more & respond »

**AIC to Exhibit at Cloud Expo 2015 New York**

By Pat Romanksi

SYS-CON Events announced today that AIC, a leading provider of OEM/ODM server and storage solutions, will exhibit at SYS-CON's 16th International Cloud Expo®, which will take place on June 9-11, 2015, at the Javits Center in New York City, NY. AIC is a leading provider of both standard OTS, off-the-shelf, and OEM/ODM server and storage solutions. With expert in-house design capabilities, validation, manufacturing and production, AIC's broad selection of products are highly flexible and can fit... Dec. 19, 2014 04:00 AM EST Reads: 1,758 read more & respond »

**Slides: ‘OpenStack’ Myles Steinhauser**

By Pat Romanksi

Leysin American School is an exclusive, private boarding school located in Leysin, Switzerland. Leysin selected an OpenStack-powered, private cloud as a service to manage multiple applications and provide development environments for students across the institution. Seeking to meet rigid data sovereignty and data integrity requirements while offering flexible, on-demand cloud resources to users, Leysin identified OpenStack as the clear choice to round out the school’s cloud strategy. Additional... Dec. 19, 2014 02:00 AM EST Reads: 1,868

**Phase 2**

By David Skok

Consumer VCs like to make light of the Founders Fund mantra 'We wanted flying cars, instead we got 140 characters.' For those of us working in the enterprise, it's actually the reverse, 'They promised us 140 characters, instead we got Workday.' Since 2010, SaaS applications were supposed to "consumerize", but as anyone who has used the majority of SaaS applications released prior to 2014 knows,... Dec. 18, 2014 03:00 PM EST Reads: 828

**When to Mix the Blue**

By Srinivasan Sundara Rajan

While the initial usage of the Cloud Platform was clearly for the IaaS offerings, the trend is shifting and the additional revenue models are getting a lot of attention. Most of the analysts like IDC and Gartner have predicted huge growth for Paas in the coming years. IDC predicts Platform as a Service (PaaS) and cloud storage services will be the fastest-growing categories, driven by major upticks in de... Dec. 18, 2014 12:00 PM EST Reads: 1,344

**12 Blogs You Should Have Read in 2014**

By Kathy Thomas

Over the past year we’ve published some great posts on the ActiveState blog, all worth a read (if you haven't already). Phil Whelan (@philwheln), Bernard Golden (@bernardgolden), John Wetherill (@bfcferrycoder), and Troy Topnik (@troytop) have contributed some excellent articles on Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS), DevOps, Docker, Cloud Foundry, virtualization, microservices...the list goes on. So in ca... Dec. 18, 2014 11:36 AM EST Reads: 814

**Blog Roll 2014**

By Peter Silva

It’s that time of year when we gift and re-gift, just like this text from last year. And the perfect opportunity to re-post, re-purpose and re-use all my 2014 blog entries. If you missed any of the 96 attempts including 57 videos, here they are wrapped in one simple entry. I read somewhere that lists in blogs are good. I broke it out by month to see what was happening at the time and let’s be hone... Dec. 18, 2014 10:00 AM EST Reads: 1,054

**The Management Gap with Business Cloud Apps**

By Patrick Carey

SaaS and cloud computing continue to gain real traction in the enterprise – and that trend is sure to continue for a long time to come. But the reality is that, to date, those gaining real benefit from cloud at the enterprise level have been limited largely to isolated pockets; e.g., software development and operations teams leveraging Infrastructure and Platform as a Service (IaaS and Paas) to si... Dec. 18, 2014 09:00 AM EST Reads: 1,022

**Nigeria: Big Challenge & Opportunity**

By Roger Strukhoff

Nigeria has the largest economy in Africa, at more than US$500 billion, and ranks 23rd in the world. A recent re-evaluation of Nigeria’s true economic size doubled the previous estimate, and brought it well ahead of South Africa, which is a member (unlike Nigeria) of the G20 club for political as well as economic reasons. Nigeria's economy can be said to be quite diverse from one point of view... Dec. 18, 2014 06:00 AM EST Reads: 776

**@ThingsExpo World's "Top" M2M Media Brand**

By Elizabeth White

@ThingsExpo has been named the Top 5 Most Influential M2M Brand by Onalytica in the ‘Machine to Machine: Top 100 Influencers and Brands.’ Onalytica analyzed the online debate on M2M by looking at over 85,000 tweets to provide the most influential individuals and brands that drive the discussion. According to Onalytica the “analysis showed a very
Companies in all industries have been moving some aspects of their operations away from traditional IT and data center functions to the cloud - but usually not everything. Doing so can be somewhat scary, for a myriad of reasons, especially if a company’s cloud strategy isn’t locked up, secure and ironed out ahead of time. More often than not, companies are finding their way to the hybrid cloud – c...

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Connecting Cloud and the Data Center

By Paul Diamond

Companies in all industries have been moving some aspects of their operations away from traditional IT and data center functions to the cloud - but usually not everything. Doing so can be somewhat scary, for a myriad of reasons, especially if a company’s cloud strategy isn’t locked up, secure and ironed out ahead of time. More often than not, companies are finding their way to the hybrid cloud – c...
it and let's put some focus on it," explained Dave Wagstaff, VP & Chief Architect, at BSQUARE Corporation, in this SYS-CON.tv interview at @ThingsExpo, held Nov 4-6, 2014, at the Santa Clara Convention Center in Santa Clara, CA.

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Cloud computing is becoming a norm within enterprise IT.

The competition among public cloud providers is red hot, private cloud continues to grab increasing shares of IT budgets, and hybrid cloud strategies are beginning to conquer the enterprise IT world.

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