

From Storytelling to HIPAA Compliant Texting, Shark Tank Winners Excel at Creating Connections in Long-Term Care

By Joanne Kaldy

Held virtually this year, the 2021 AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine Shark Tank competition was inspirational and intriguing. After prerecorded presentations by the four finalists and virtual questioning by the judges and audience members, MemoryWell (www.memorywell.com) was the Judges Choice winner, and Hucu.ai (www.hucu.ai) took the Audience Choice honor.

MemoryWell

MemoryWell grew out of founder and CEO Jay Newton-Small's experience with her father when he entered long-term care and she wanted to ensure that the staff understood him. She wrote his story down, and the poignant, powerful narrative helped caregivers to really get to know him. Ms. Newton-Small realized many great stories were being lost and needed to be captured and told. The result was MemoryWell.

The web-based platform creates connections, whether with paid caregivers or grandchildren and others. "We build bonds and empathy, start conversations, and preserve history," she explained. "I am excited to be part of this program, and I look forward to the opportunity to get to know AMDA and its members," Ms. Newton-Small said. "We often hear from physicians how important these stories are and how they change relationships with patients." This is a perfect fit for the world of person-centered care, personalized medicine, and value-based care, she suggested. She added, "We can identify social determinants of health issues for each individual and help providers get ahead of these and better align interventions."

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— Jay Newton-Small,
MemoryWell

Ms. Newton-Small said, "Winning AMDA's Shark Tank is huge for MemoryWell! The validation by such an esteemed panel of experts and the exposure in the AMDA community is amazing. It really shows, I think, how important person-centered care has become, especially in this moment of COVID-19."

Hucu.ai

Hucu.ai is a streamlined HIPAA-compliant communication platform that enables everyone to spend less time on communication challenges and more time caring for patients. It is a person-centered messaging hub that organizes communication, stratifies and visualizes patient risk, and engages the workforce so they spend more time caring and less time chasing each other. The website and mobile app, which allow everyone on a care team to organize their communications around individual patients, may span the care continuum to include hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and home care.

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Hucu.ai

"The AMDA audience is so important to us. They have been on the front lines throughout this pandemic, and we are pleased to be able to present them with something that can save them time and eliminate many communication-related worries and hassles," said cofounder Asif Khan, MBA.

Other Finalists

The other two finalists also have demonstrated creative and practical problem-solving with their innovative products.

- iTreatMD provides a single universal tool to create a clinician note using evidence-based best practices as a guide. These notes then may be automatically sent to any interoperable electronic medical record (EMR), hospital, skilled nursing facility, or referring clinician. This point-of-care app is easy to use, powerful, and secure (its universal tool resides on a cloud-based workflow platform). "I'm a clinician and saw many patients in nursing homes. When I had to visit multiple facilities, I had to use different EMRs to document my visits. I spent a lot of time and energy

getting my progress notes into the system," said iTreatMD cofounder George Krucik, MD, MBA. He noted, "Our application is an important improvement that can simplify documentation and save clinicians huge amounts of time and frustration. It frees them for more direct patient care and solves the age-old problem of having to deal with multiple EMRs."

- Meal Lifter has a product that makes dining easier for those challenged with feeding themselves. "We're on a mission to give everyone the ability to eat independently, with ease and dignity," said company founder Anne Royer. In many ways, Meal Lifter was an innovation of love. She explains that her mother-in-law had Parkinson's disease, and, as her disease progressed, it was increasingly difficult for her to feed herself. Ms. Royer said, "She was so embarrassed, and she was losing weight. We wanted to do something to make her life

better. We developed an aid to enable people to eat easier and better by increasing the visibility of the dinner plate and reducing the arm and hand movement required to feed oneself," she said. The product, simple but innovative, has gained attention from organizations and individuals who care for people with Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and other conditions that make it challenging for people to feed themselves. It also saves staff time, said Ms. Royer, which is particularly significant during crises such as this pandemic, when facilities are short-staffed and caregivers are overburdened.

Liz Jensen, RN, MSN, RN-BC, chair of the Society's Innovations Platform Advisory Council, moderated the Shark Tank program. She told *Caring*, "Both of our winners represent how elegant, innovative design can transform a complex problem. We are honored to support them on their journey and look forward to working with future innovators." ✂

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