



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Award-winning partnership proves Vocantas CallAssure effective tool for chronic disease management**

*Thrombosis unit at The Ottawa Hospital purchases system to reduce workload, improve patient care, minimize wait times in emergency rooms*

OTTAWA, ON, CANADA - April 28, 2009 - Vocantas Inc., a developer of automated telephone outreach solutions, today announced the sale of its CallAssure solution to The Ottawa Hospital to manage patients in its Thrombosis Program. This comes as a new study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* shows that CallAssure was effective in helping The Ottawa Hospital keep thrombosis patients in the proper dosing range an impressive 80 percent of the time. In addition the clinic experienced a 33 percent reduction in staff workload. The purchase and full-time deployment of CallAssure may ultimately allow The Ottawa Hospital Thrombosis Program to efficiently and effectively manage the blood thinners of more than 10,000 patients in the region in this manner.

Thrombosis is a chronic disease characterized by the development of clots in blood vessels. Patients must maintain an optimal level of a blood-thinning agent in their bodies, and so require regular blood testing that can indicate the need for possible and sometimes frequent, adjustments to their dosage of blood thinner. The very high level of human interaction required to schedule testing, and reschedule when patients fail to show up, and then to communicate the test results and any dosage change has meant that optimal disease management is often beyond what healthcare systems can afford. Patients without family doctors must often resort to hospital emergency rooms for their testing, and then they must wait there, often for hours, for the test results and dosage details.

Dr. Marc Rodger, Head of the Thrombosis Program at The Ottawa Hospital, recognized the benefits derived by implementing the system. "CallAssure has the potential to positively impact both the patient and the system," said Dr. Rodger, who is also a senior scientist at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and an associate professor of medicine at the University of Ottawa. "By enabling us to effectively and efficiently monitor patients remotely, the number of patients we can safely service is increased, improving the quality of care we can deliver to them."

"In addition, our skilled clinical resources can be put to better use by devoting time to patient care rather than spending unproductive time trying to reach patients by telephone."

Working closely with Dr. Marc Rodger and others at The Ottawa Hospital, Vocantas used CallAssure to better manage chronic diseases, by alerting patients of upcoming test requirements and any changes to their care plan. By successfully integrating with dosing technology, CallAssure informed patients immediately when their medication dosage is adjusted.

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Patients who were part of the CallAssure technology trial at The Ottawa Hospital were enthusiastic about their experience. "The automated system has made my care more efficient," said Rick Dokomos of Ottawa. "Traveling for three months of the year, as I do, I can rely on the system to contact me about dosing and testing and not have to worry about it - now I can enjoy life."

Other patients have credited the system with keeping them from harm by ensuring their dosing regimen remains on track. "This is my lifeline," said Dianna Siteman, also of Ottawa. "If I don't take my medication properly, I can get into a lot of problems. I think it's great and it's going to help a lot of people."

The challenge of effectively managing chronic disease has been highlighted both here in Canada and in the United States. The 2007 National Physician Survey reported that 80 percent of doctors in Canada said that patients with chronic diseases place the biggest demand on their time. In its 2008 report, the Ontario Health Quality Council reported that nearly 8,000 lives could be saved if the province better monitored and treated patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Meanwhile, south of the border, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability, accounting for 70 percent of all deaths in the U.S., which is 1.7 million each year.

These compelling challenges are behind the application of CallAssure to help manage chronic diseases. CallAssure was first developed and evaluated in collaboration with Dr. Alan Forster, an internal medicine specialist at The Ottawa Hospital, a scientist at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and an associate professor of medicine at the University of Ottawa. He is a leading expert in patient safety and he has worked with Vocantas for four years to develop and evaluate CallAssure, an automated patient survey system that uses speech-enabled computer telephony to enable clinics and hospitals to more easily monitor patients to improve care, reduce workload and minimize wait times in local emergency rooms. For this collaborative work, Vocantas received the 2009 Technology Commercialization Partnership award presented by Ottawa's Lead Economic Development Corporation (OCRI).

"The Ottawa Hospital has decided to deploy CallAssure as part of an ongoing care plan, a routine part of the patient's care," said Gary T. Hannah, founder and president of Vocantas. "Since the evaluation of the technology, both patients and clinicians have come to depend on the system to keep the care plan on track and to free up skilled people who can now devote their attention to patient care, where it belongs."

"In the process, adoption of a technology solution to manage chronic diseases has the potential to impact grand-scale issues like emergency room waiting times and enrolment capabilities for life-saving programs such as those run by the thrombosis unit."



## About Vocantas

Vocantas is a developer of interactive voice response systems (IVRS) that use advanced computer telephony and speech technology to provide its customers with cost-effective customer outreach solutions. The company's easy-to-use, turn-key solutions offer customizable core features and optional enhancements that integrate seamlessly with existing systems. Its products have particular application in the healthcare, education, utilities and customer service environments where they have been proven to increase efficiencies while minimizing operational costs. For more information, please visit [www.vocantas.com](http://www.vocantas.com).

## About The Ottawa Hospital and its Thrombosis Program

The Ottawa Hospital is a multi-campus, academic health sciences centre serving the 1.2 million residents of Ottawa and Eastern Ontario, both in English and French. The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and the University of Ottawa are important partners in health research and education. The Ottawa Hospital's Thrombosis Program focuses on management of 1) pulmonary embolism (clot in the lung) and deep vein thrombosis (clot in the leg) and 2) blood thinner management. The Program offers safe, efficient and novel management strategies that permit the delivery of quality cost effective care to the Champlain LHIN. The Program is active in clinical research and delivers practice changing knowledge generation. For more information visit <http://www.ottawahospital.on.ca>.

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