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Parent Assist Link Solutions – Bridging the Gap for Parents Needing Information, Tools and Programs for Early Intervention



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“It is really a community-based effort, and the first step there is everyone being informed.” Arvind Vasudevan

CEOCFO: *Mr. Vasudevan, what is the concept behind Parent Assist Link Solutions?*

Mr. Vasudevan: What we try to do is bridge gaps between seekers of intervention care and providers of early intervention care. We are a software company that is working to bridge the information systems and also create and develop awareness tools for early intervention programs.

Early intervention is kind of a blanket term for a specific section of care. The Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act provides for children from the ages of zero to five. During those early five years, if the child is found to be deficient to functional categories by specialists, they are eligible for, more or less, fully subsidized care to get them up to parity with a normally developing child.

CEOCFO: *Is that federal? Is that run by the states?*

Mr. Vasudevan: It is a federal program that is administered by the states. As you can imagine, that results in a bunch of different systems by state and locality, which really just becomes overwhelming to navigate. I know, speaking from my own experience, when I was a kid I was diagnosed with ADD, we really did not know what resources were out there and were available. Therefore, it went unaddressed for the longest time, beyond medication, which is not necessarily the right approach.

CEOCFO: *How does the Parent Assist Link work?*

Mr. Vasudevan: We have two streams of products. One is information and awareness tools, which work through federal grants and partner organizations. We basically set up websites and text Chatbots, where you input some generic information. You may have some concerns about their mental disability or delay, so you input your child’s general age and you will get some warning signs, activities, and suggested milestones

and what have you, in order to benchmark the child, help them grow, and whatever may be necessary. Then from there, if you potentially suspect a developmental disability or problem, you are able to directly refer your child for an evaluation, which is also a subsidized activity, to see where they are in their development.

The other product line that we have is an information system that is designed to bridge all of the different interactions a child might have with practitioners and specialists, and collect records, similar to case management tools and medical records. There are much more qualitative tools that are used, such as child development indexes and the actual tools that practitioner at those ages use to record information. This is a real need, because many states just do not have one central repository for this kind of information. Some of it will be set up in the Department of Child Services, the Department of Family Services, and some are in the offices of Disability and Veterans Affairs for some reason. America: a great hodge podge of cultures and set ups.

CEOFCO: *You said you are setting up websites. Are you setting them up for government agencies?*

Mr. Vasudevan: Currently, our approach is partnering with schools, bidding with government agencies under their discretionary funds. Generally speaking, we try to find a partner organization, as I mentioned, apply for a grant, because this is really also federally subsidized under many NIMH grants, National Institute for Mental Health grants.

Bottom line, we look for a partner organization, and then we set up the bots and websites on their current set of services. For example, we were trying to partner with this organization in Florida, we are just hoping to get the funding order. The plan is to set up a Chatbot with their local area code and embed a little website Chatbot in their own public facing website. That way, that school or that organization can refer any kids come in that they might suspect of having this issue to a trusted information repository.

CEOFCO: *What about the younger children who are not in school? How might they learn about what you have to offer?*

Mr. Vasudevan: That is a great question. This is really where we are trying to approach a bunch of Women, Infants and Children (WIC) centers and get the phone chatbots out. At that age, it is really the parents and the people who interact most closely with the child who might be able to make that determination, at first, and to go and refer. However, after the referral, and this is really the great part of the program, all that care is subsidized and on-site where the child feels most comfortable. As from the age of zero to three, the child is generally in the home or in the care of others. Then from three to five, when they are in preschool, it is generally administered through the schools, through the more traditional Special Ed that we have all seen.

CEOFCO: *Do you see a reluctance in parents to label their child in some way, or do you see that parents are going to understand the need for help, and that will overcome any*

trepidation they might have about making a record of concerns about their child?

Mr. Vasudevan: We put that thought into the system. No one wants to be completely dismissive or negative of their child's latent ability or what have you. We wanted to create a more non-judgmental format. You are just giving a birthdate, no actual identifying information, nothing like that. We do not even store it until you are sure that you want to make that affirmative referral to the early intervention agency.

It is basically just a simple place where you can get some information that you trust, where you do not necessarily want to go and make that label, as you mentioned. It is nothing against any of those labels individually, but just do not want to be so conclusive. You want to make sure that you are exploring every avenue.

CEOFCO: What have you learned so far about the challenges in getting this up and running, and getting the various potential parties interested?

Mr. Vasudevan: First and foremost, especially with the parent facing tools, it is really a trust exercise. I am lucky in that we have found some people who see our vision, have seen the problems, and are willing to give us a shot. As we go, we are just hoping to build that reputation of trusted friend.

CEOFCO: Are most people aware that this type of program even exists?

Mr. Vasudevan: I would say no, especially when it comes to conditions like ADHD, dyslexia, and milder cases of autism. It is really only the extreme cases, where the parent is in the hospital, like for example when a child is born with cerebral palsy, and care starts immediately. That is really no fault of the parent, because if they are not an expert, how are they going to know, and in the current medical system doctors do not really spend enough time with kids to make that determination. It is really a community-based effort, and the first step there is everyone being informed.

CEOFCO: Are you able to work with some of the autism organizations or other specific groups, or is that a little too complicated, especially in the beginning?

Mr. Vasudevan: We actually co-developed our Chatbot with the parent organization here in New Jersey. We had been corresponding with the outreach director at this organization in order to develop this. I could totally see an overlap, especially considering that many of these behaviors really result in an initial diagnosis of something on the spectrum. However, at the moment we have not really had not had much luck with our outreach, mostly because our name is not really out there yet. That is really what we are working on. Just kind of slow, steady, and trust affirmation.

CEOFCO: According to your site Parent Assist Link Solutions incorporate Blockchain. How so, and why is that important?

Mr. Vasudevan: The Blockchain really comes into that web information platform product that we talked about. That product is more targeted towards state and local governments in order to centralize their records when it comes to early intervention care.

Blockchain really comes in when it comes to document verification and tracking. We have designed a very isolated system that takes signatures and signed documents for every step of the way, because every care activity and every procedure require a release. We store these documents on a timeline unique to each individual or child, so that way we have an irrefutable paper trail of their care. This becomes useful, especially in older age.

For example, a friend of mine was not able to get autism accommodations for the bar exam to become a lawyer, because her paper trail only started in high school. This was because she was diagnosed in India when she had been little. Therefore, this just kind of solves all of the problems that exist for the next step, higher education, really.

CEOCFO: What have you learned from past business ventures?

Mr. Vasudevan: Before this, I was primarily involved in Med A-Z, which was the EMR product that my father had started. What I really learned from there is the information security element of it. That is really the discipline that went into building that platform, making sure that everything is in accordance with federal guidance, HIPAA compliant interoperable, so that way files could be taken from state to state if needed, or brought to a provider, or what have you. Many of these same guiding principles are what went into the design of Parent Assist's products.

CEOCFO: Are you seeking funding, investment, or partnerships, as you continue to evolve and roll out the product?

Mr. Vasudevan: We are open to, pretty much, anything and everything that you just stated there. We have been seeking funding. We are currently pre-revenue, but honestly, with recent developments we are hoping to change that soon. Beyond that, we are also very open to partnering with any kind of organization that specializes in early intervention care.

We are currently targeting, as I mentioned, those WIC centers and each of the state autism and early intervention groups. They do each have a state convention group with many concerned parents voicing their issues with the care they have received and how things can be improved. Generally, those gatherings are also very informative, just because you get a lot of suggestions from the minutes, live very, very actionable items.

CEOCFO: What might people not recognize about Parent Assist Link Solutions? What should people understand that may not be obvious about how Parent Assist Link Solutions is meaningful and important?

Mr. Vasudevan: The main thing that people underestimate is the depth of the problem, that so few people are aware of these programs at a time when they can make such a huge difference. That is basically the main thing. Our mission is very much to make people aware of one, the problem, and two, the solution in hand.