Google takes another US health care group to the cloud

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Google is expanding its operations in health with a cloud computing deal with HCA Helathcare.

Google on Wednesday built on its push to modernize the medical system with a deal to put cloud computing power to work for US-based HCA

Healthcare.

Google Cloud will create a "secure and dynamic" analytics platform for HCA, which has some 186 hospitals and 2,000 medical centers and clinics spread about the US and Britain, according to the companies.

"Next-generation care demands data science-informed [decision support](#) so we can more sharply focus on safe, efficient and effective patient care," HCA chief executive Sam Hazen said in a joint release.

The alliance comes as the pandemic has accelerated a trend toward tending to tasks remotely, including when it comes to doctors consulting with patients.

HCA Healthcare doctors and nurses rack up some 32 million encounters with patients each year, according to the group.

And, like many others, they often rely on mobile devices.

Google is to provide caregivers with workflow tools, analysis, and alerts to respond quickly and insightfully to patients, according to the companies.

The internet titan is to also help improve systems for running support operations such as supply chains and human resources.

"The cloud can be an accelerant for innovation in health, particularly in driving data interoperability, which is critical in streamlining operations and providing better quality of care to improve patient outcomes," said Google Cloud chief Thomas Kurian.

Financial terms of the multi-year partnership were not disclosed.

Google and HCA said that security will be in place to protect health data, which has strict protections under US law.

The partnership is likely to catch the eye of US officials, some of whom expressed concern in 2019 after Google announced an alliance with US health systems non-profit Ascension.

A US congressional committee at that time asked to be briefed on a freshly unveiled Google project to modernize healthcare while giving the internet titan access to millions of people's medical data.

The project was code-named "Nightingale," evidently in tribute to Florence Nightingale, whose nursing work during the Crimean War in the 1850s is credited with turning such work into a profession.

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