



Podcast Transcript

Risk Never Sleeps

Episode 60

Rich Temple

Ed Gaudet: Welcome to the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, in which we learn about the people that are on the front lines, delivering and protecting patient care. I'm Ed Gaudet, the host of our program, and today, I am pleased to have Rich Temple, VP/CIO at Deborah Heart and Lung Center. Welcome to the program. Tell us about your current role in the organization.

Rich Temple: Sure, I'll be happy to. Ed, thank you for having me today. My name is Rich Temple. I'm the vice president, chief information officer, and also the HIPAA security officer for Deborah Heart and Lung Center. We're an 89-bed specialty hospital in the wilds of southern New Jersey, and yes, there are wilds here in New Jersey, no matter what people may think, I see them out my window. One of the things that's unique about us, other than the fact that we have really outstanding quality scores in our cardiovascular specialty areas, is that we are one of three hospital systems in the country that don't balance bill patients. There's Saint Jude's, the Shriners, and there us. And what makes that so appealing is that it's really imbued into everybody's DNA that this is what we do. We, there's no, we say there's no price tag on life, and we take care of everybody, and we give them all excellent care if they're in a position of needing our services. Throughout my career, I've always been involved in healthcare in some form of fashion. I started out as a bill collector, actually, believe it or not, for overdue hospital bills. And then, I was presented with the opportunity to acquaint myself with the world of computers. I'm dating myself here in a big way, and I got to inject technology, programming, and data modeling into a solution that would identify third party in a coverage information for hospitals who might not have had it.



Rich Temple (cont'd): It was run automated. It ran, processed thousands of records on tapes back in the day. And I never looked back. I just went on from there, you know. I think healthcare is like the Hotel California. You can check out any time you like, but...

Ed Gaudet: I love that reference. So that's the first I love it. Okay.

Rich Temple: You're in, and I've sort of come at it from different angles. Over the course of my decades in the business, I was a provider. I was a vendor, that I was a consultant provider, then a consultant, and now I'm back on the provider side again, so real exciting stuff. Like I said, it's very, I don't, I have no desire to get out of it, but it really does suck you in and just consume you because it's just something which is so impactful and ever-changing and ever-fascinating.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, and that shared mission is unlike any other industry. We're all patients, we all know patients, and it becomes personal. And having that shared mission between providers and the ecosystem, whether you're a vendor or your post-acute or your consultant, or providing some level of service or product to healthcare, it really matters, and it's unlike any other industry I've ever worked in.

Rich Temple: It really does. That's, everyone who is working their magic here within healthcare has to be able to wake up in the morning knowing that they made a difference in some way, positively in somebody's life the day before.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. And I noticed, like you said, you'd spent time as a vendor over a decade. You were at McKesson for a while. How does that prepare you, and what perspective did that bring you, basically, or give you when working on the other side?

Rich Temple: One of the nice things about having been on the vendor side originally is I got to experience the worlds and cultures of many different health systems throughout my career. I wasn't stuck in one particular place. I didn't see just one thing. I got to touch a lot of different places, and I got to touch a lot of places in many different types of settings. What kinds of problems were we here to solve? Was it a revenue cycle issue?



Rich Temple (cont'd): Was it clinical optimization? Was it even doing a search and selection for a new EHR? That was a big thing back in the day, and I guess, to some extent still is. So there were so many different types of work that needed to be done in so many different types of places. Being a vendor and being a consultant really opened my eyes and imbued me with, I think, a sense as to perhaps what might work where under different, different types of circumstances.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's great. Give you the agility and resilience, right, to look at the problems and several different ways, not just one, for sure, yeah. What, how did you get into healthcare initially?

Rich Temple: Well, back in college, I started out as a computer science major, and then I took a programming class. I did well in that, and then I, the next class they gave me was machine language sublanguage.

Ed Gaudet: Similar.

Rich Temple: I did that for all of two weeks. I had no idea what they were talking about. So I went and got a poli sci degree and went to grad school, but never got far away from the idea of technology. But healthcare and technology fused in my mind because I had gotten a job working in hospital collections, and then I had the opportunity to work for a company called HMS, which was the company where they would maintain databases of third-party insurance information. And we get tapes from different hospitals that were extracts of their system and pulling that together. And I just, I never turned back. That was, that became my world, and I, my cocoon, and I stayed in it.

Ed Gaudet: Cool. So as you think about the next couple of years, what are your top couple of three, 3 to 5 priorities that you're focused on over the next 24 months?

Rich Temple: We got lots of priorities. I've been very, very busy times and very, very challenging times. A couple off the top are patient engagement. Consumerism really has hit the healthcare space. We've been talking about it for a long time.



Rich Temple (cont'd): We've seen it hit in incremental ways, but it's really hitting now, and we have to be able to provide a mechanism for patients and their families to reach out to us in ways that go beyond picking up a telephone and waiting on hold and being bounced around. So we're, you know, I hate to, I think the terms digital front door is sometimes overused, but I think it is, in some cases, largely pertinent here. But even just finding ways of optimizing the workflows, you know, they call in, maybe you can route them, and you could route them to a text conversation, let them fill out their forms online or from their cell phones or whatever, and just make their lives so much easier. So when they do arrive here, it's less traumatic and less stress-inducing for them. They got everything they need done, done. We took care of them. We didn't make them say the same information five different times. That's, that sort of thing. So that's what big one for us, is really making our patients want to do business with us and making sure that as we have a need to communicate with them, that we're doing it in just the way they want us to do it, not over-communicating or under communicating that the Goldilocks version of communication just right.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Rich Temple: So we want that. So that's patient engagement is a big one. Of course, the AI artificial intelligence is a big one too, and that's the tricky one because it's so new. Everyone is trying to dip their toe in the water on this. But we want to be able to find use cases for AI that are going to be viable, that makes sense, that are ethical, that provide accurate information, they don't have bias, they promote equity, and certainly fully protect the privacy of security and privacy of individual patients. So we're looking at a number of different potential use cases, both from a clinical perspective as well as from an operational perspective, things that we could do to streamline and automate tasks. Staffing continues to be a challenge in healthcare, not just us, everybody. And to the extent that we're able to do more things with technology through automation, we're not looking to reduce staff, but we're looking to have staff work on the kinds of things that are uniquely suited for a human to do, so that's a real big one for us. And also taking advantage of all of the potentially great things that could happen with AI, even something like being able to have AI analyze medical images and maybe see something or see something, or recognize a pattern that could lead to something that maybe a radiologist wouldn't be able to see because it was so microscopic or so very similar.



Ed Gaudet: Right.

Rich Temple: That type of thing. And I would be lying, of course, if I didn't also say that cybersecurity.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, there it is.

Rich Temple: Center of everything we do. We live in a very, very crazy.

Ed Gaudet: Thank you, Rich.

Rich Temple: I know you. You knew that was coming, right?

Ed Gaudet: I was hoping.

Rich Temple: Exactly. How do we continue to keep our users educated on phishing scams, on other scams, on social engineering? How do we also make sure that our network engineers here at Deborah are being able to harden our front door as much as possible? So people who, bad guys can't even knock at the front door, and they attempt to we know who they are. How do we stay ahead of that curve? So it does all end, as we've all heard a lot. It only takes one person making an errant click, and really bad things can happen. There's a very big human component to our cybersecurity program, but it's also a program is also a component that's looking at managed detection potential remediation plan. So, looking at the what's wrong with this picture for behavioral heuristics or gee, this machine never sent anything overseas before. Why is it doing it now? That sort of thing.

Ed Gaudet: Anything you've learned about getting clinicians to have better hygiene, cyber hygiene around security, or anything you can share with listeners?



Rich Temple: I think the world around us has contributed meaningfully toward allowing physicians to do that. The fact that you have to do multi-factor authentication for almost everything helps. We have extensive education in terms of phishing scams in terms of count to ten before you click on anything, be slow and contemplative, and deliberative as you're going through your emails. Just don't look at everything and react to everything, and some of that's sinking in. And the physicians hear enough about what happens out there. If there is a ransomware attack or if their data gets compromised, there's enough real-world body of work out there that they've heard about that they've gotten better. So is there room for improvement? There certainly is, not just with physicians, with everybody, but we're finding people are improving.

Ed Gaudet: That's good.

Rich Temple: We recently, my department, I was one of the folks there with my department hosted a booth at a nursing fair for a couple of different days. And we went through, and we showed people a fake fish and a fake phishing email and said, find all the things that are wrong with it. And I was amazed at how well people really engaged on this. So we always have our work cut out for us, because the bad guys are always one step ahead of us, and we have to react to them. But I'm feeling like the general awareness and the general receptivity to making small operational sacrifices to keep everything locked down and avoid compromises. I think that's really there. That's getting a lot better.

Ed Gaudet: That's great. You've got a lot on your plate. What keeps you up at night?

Rich Temple: Well, that does. We've had incidents fairly close to home, and it really does. Not that any of us didn't know the consequences and the egregious inconvenience and the egregious potential safety concerns that can happen that when there's an attack. But having it hit close to home, I think, just reinforces that all the more. So, yeah, we're acutely aware that the bad guys are buzzing around, and we just want to be extra careful.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. Tough couple of years for folks during the pandemic. What are you personally or professionally most proud of?



Rich Temple: We came out the other side. I think that's a winner. We were able to react at warp speed when the pandemic hit, and things that would take a much longer time to be evaluated and to be analyzed and to be reviewed and vetted. We didn't have a choice of cases, and we were able to bring telehealth live almost immediately. We had a very small program before we made it much bigger when we had to, and we just did it. Everybody rolled up their sleeves and got it done, and everybody did it in as safe a way as you possibly could in the environment that we're in. Everybody was on board. Everybody gave the extra yard. We really pulled together as an organization and I'm immensely, immensely proud of that. We did that. I'm immensely proud that I was part of that and I could help. It was a very tough time, but it also made you realize that, hey, we can't do this. When adversity knocks on our door, we can do what we have to do to get through.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, no, I think it was incredible to watch the industry respond that way and make decisions at a pace that just is not, it's just not usual for healthcare, especially as it relates to technology.

Rich Temple: Not used to that.

Ed Gaudet: No, not used to that.

Rich Temple: Yeah, so that was cool.

Ed Gaudet: That's the bar now.

Rich Temple: That's the that is the bar. Well, you can't turn this around in 24 hours.

Ed Gaudet: It's a good point, though. I mean, did you take back from that experience and make changes to decision-making from then?

Rich Temple: Somewhat, yeah. I think a lot of what we did to get from point A to point B as our world was collapsing around us, we blazed through and we had to. I think now that I wouldn't say things are perfectly stable, but now the things are more stable.

Rich Temple (cont'd): I think we're and to our credit too, we've learned a few things in terms of how to move things along, but we also now have the opportunity again to do more due diligence on things and do wise due diligence. So we're not, I think we're less likely to go down rabbit holes. We realize that a lot of this is urgent, and some of what we're doing now still really stems from the consequences of what happened during the pandemic. So we want to learn, we want to learn from what we're able to accomplish on very, very short notice, but we also don't, we don't want to revert. We don't want to revert to just blasting everything through. We still have to make sure we're balancing the need to move with the need for due diligence.

Ed Gaudet: Yes, exactly. Yeah, no, it's a great point. Outside of healthcare and outside of IT, what are you most passionate about? What would you be doing if you weren't doing this job?

Rich Temple: Probably going to a lot of concerts. I'm a big live music person.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, me too.

Rich Temple: Oh, really? Yeah, right.

Ed Gaudet: All right, so do tell. What was the last concert you went?

Rich Temple: The last concert I went to was the Squirrel Nut Zippers in Philadelphia.

Ed Gaudet: I saw that. I love the Squirrel Nut Zippers. Yes.

Rich Temple: Oh my gosh, wow. That's great.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, yeah.

Rich Temple: I run the gamut. I like a lot of alternative stuff, but I also go into blues clubs and jazz clubs, and.



Ed Gaudet: Oh, me too.

Rich Temple: I do a little bit of mosh pit action for a guy in his advanced years.

Ed Gaudet: Me too.

Rich Temple: We're, we're we're holding up our industry here.

Ed Gaudet: I used to hang out at the equivalent of the CBGB in Boston called the Rathskeller.

Rich Temple: Oh, I've been there. Yeah, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: So I spent a lot of time there, and I have the bruises.

Rich Temple: Oh, yeah, I hung out. I'm a New Yorker; I actually hung out at CBGB, so.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, very cool, very cool. Yeah, I saw some great bands, like for the first time, the Pixies before they were even launched. R.E.M. just incredible opportunities. That's great that you got into the mosh pit and you've slam danced, as we used to call it. Yeah. That's fantastic.

Rich Temple: The more colorful side of my corporate persona, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Me too. I also, I like, I love jazz and I love rock and all types of different music and alternative. I've seen The Cure and The Smiths and a huge, huge fan, but I'm but one of my first loves are these guys. Yeah, yeah.

Rich Temple: I know, I recognize that.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, there you go. There you, like, yeah. So I, and I've been following with the, when they came together with John Mayer and the Dead and Company and I saw that.



Rich Temple: I saw that a couple of times.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, did you? Oh yeah. Yeah.

Rich Temple: Fairly recently, you did. Oh yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Awesome. Yeah. How about goose? Do you know Goose, the next generation of Phish?

Rich Temple: I don't, actually.

Ed Gaudet: Know. Yeah, they're a jam band. They're fantastic. Check them out. Yeah.

Rich Temple: Check that out.

Ed Gaudet: Absolutely.

Rich Temple: ... Playing Ping Pong. Do you know them?

Ed Gaudet: Who's that? Pigeons Playing Ping Pong. Yes, of course.

Rich Temple: They're great.

Ed Gaudet: I saw them at Levitate, local show, local festival here in South Boston. South of Boston.

Rich Temple: Oh, well. How cool.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's very cool.

Rich Temple: We got some overlap there.



Ed Gaudet: We do, we do, yeah. My my kids are my source now for new music. So there's, they just turn me on to Noah Kahan. Do you know Noah Kahan?

Rich Temple: I'm going to be seeing Noah Kahan at a festival down in Atlanta, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: I know the festival, yeah.

Rich Temple: I was just sent ... Yeah, I just got, I got tickets.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, that's fantastic. My kids have seen him several times, and, yeah, big, big fan. Like when he was just coming up in small, small venues, and he's really.

Rich Temple: He kind of came out of nowhere.

Ed Gaudet: He did. He came out of nowhere. And I remember having my youngest daughter; she just graduated from Stevens Institute. Talk about New Jersey, Hoboken, yeah. And so she's like, ah, I got this new guy. I really like him, Noah Kahan. I listened to him like, it's pretty good, actually. He's got this troubadour sound contemporary. And she started going to shows, and she's like, dad, I want to go to more shows, like go to the show. Seriously, like, go to the show. You should prioritize it now because you're never going to get the time back. And she's been following him around. I think she's gone to like ten, ten shows.

Rich Temple: She's seriously into it.

Ed Gaudet: That's cool to watch too. But no, that's great.

Rich Temple: Next generation following the Next Star is great.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, so that's good. I was just out in Salt Lake City, and I went to see the Tabernacle Choir during rehearsal. Have you ever been? Yeah, it was really. Oh, it was just majestic, it was. And they were, it was, the music obviously was just amazing.



Ed Gaudet (cont'd): It just, like, just spine-tingling. But watching them practice in the process, calibrating the choir with the orchestra, and ah, it's just fantastic.

Rich Temple: None of those things happen by accident.

Ed Gaudet: No.

Rich Temple: You got to see the sausage being made.

Ed Gaudet: Yes, and I've never seen it being made at that level before. It was really, really cool. So if you could go back in time, what would you tell your 20-year-old self?

Rich Temple: I'd say be myself. 25 was a long time ago for me, actually.

Ed Gaudet: So there was a time when you weren't yourself, Rich. Come on.

Rich Temple: Exactly.

Ed Gaudet: I don't believe that.

Rich Temple: Sometimes you are. Sometimes you have to adopt a bit of a corporate persona just to be able to get through the day. And I think that's okay to do, to conform to expectations of corporate decorum. But don't hesitate having people see the real you.

Ed Gaudet: Yes.

Rich Temple: I mean, show enthusiasm. I think enthusiasm is contagious. Let people know who you are without, there obviously limits on that, but yeah, by and large, don't be an automaton. If there's something a little quirky about you, embrace it and just remain, always be professional. Always make sure that your work is speaking for itself. Have fun in the office as much as you can.



Ed Gaudet: Be Chris Logan.

Rich Temple: Oh yeah, there's a good example. He's very shy.

Ed Gaudet: Mutual fans of Chris Logan's. Yeah, well, I have to ask you this question. I'd be remiss. This is the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. What's the riskiest thing you've ever done?

Rich Temple: Oh, boy. Okay. I've done a lot of silly things. I think stage diving because we're while we're on that topic; I actually tried that.

Ed Gaudet: That's pretty risky.

Rich Temple: I tried that at a concert in Cleveland. I was watching everybody and I said, I want to try that. And I ran up on the stage, and I jumped through the air. And what a rush of flying through the air. And everybody caught me and passed me around and then looked down. I was like, this is great. I'm going to go do it again. So I ran back up on the stage. I jumped into the crowd, and the next thing I knew, I was lying on the ground with a splitting headache. I don't think anybody caught me. Oh, I think that was ...

Ed Gaudet: No, oh, I've never had that happen. But I have dived in, and that rush of that moment where you realize. If someone doesn't catch me, I'm in trouble. Like this, and then when it happens, it's amazing. Like that feeling of getting passed around.

Rich Temple: I hadn't, it hadn't occurred to me that I might not get caught, but from that point forward, it did.

Ed Gaudet: It was probably the last time you did.

Rich Temple: Yes, it was. It was a rush to be able to feel that, but, oh well.

Ed Gaudet: Speaking of rush, you're on an album, you're on an island. What are the top five albums you would bring with you?

Rich Temple: Oh, boy.

Ed Gaudet: It doesn't have to be one.

Rich Temple: I'd have to have an early Clash album. I think.

Ed Gaudet: The green, the first one?

Rich Temple: Could be good.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, that's great.

Rich Temple: Great album, Stiff Little Fingers.

Ed Gaudet: I know Stiff Little Fingers, yeah.

Rich Temple: I adored when I was young.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah. That's good.

Rich Temple: Their, possibly my favorite album of all time, got very little recognition, it was an album by a singer-songwriter called Tony Ok called Life in the Food Chain. It is the most that all, the most musically brilliant off-the-wall album you've ever heard. And yes, there was an urban legend that he had recorded it right after he got out of a mental institution, and I think we're all saying he must have been on an HMO. I think he was discharged prematurely because he still had a little bit of it. It's an urban legend. I don't think it's true, but there's so much mania on this album and there's so many lyrics. The lyric sheet has got to be longer than anything you've ever heard. It is a classic and it really never got the due that it deserved, but I'd want to have that.



Rich Temple (cont'd): There are times that just have to sit down and listen to that album end to end. What else would I, wow, there's so many. I probably need to have some New Orleans brass band music.

Ed Gaudet: Oh good.

Rich Temple: Band, I like that.

Ed Gaudet: Good.

Rich Temple: That's. Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Those are good. Those are good albums. I'll join you on your.

Rich Temple: There you go.

Ed Gaudet: How about movies? You're into movies?

Rich Temple: I am. Movies: Airplane! Oh, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: I'm on with you. Now, I'm with you. Definitely.

Rich Temple: Exactly, Airplane or any John Waters movie.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, yeah. John Waters. So great. Yeah.

Rich Temple: Yes.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, yeah. I found myself and my brother constantly quoting Airplane and other movies of that genre.



Rich Temple: One of those. It's so totally quotable. Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Last question before we wrap up, what advice do you have folks that are coming into IT, coming into healthcare, maybe pursuing a cyber profession, cybersecurity profession?

Rich Temple: Please do it. I know there's such a there's such a need for cybersecurity professionals. I think of it through the prism of healthcare, but it's not merely for healthcare. There's such a need and there just aren't enough people coming through. Stick with it. Think it, think of it as something fascinating. I think oftentimes the world of cybersecurity can feel like it's a very forbidding world. And you have to know all these acronyms, and you have to have the sophisticated engineering background to do that, and that's true for some professions within cybersecurity. But a lot of it is really social in nature, and a lot of it is educating people, and a lot of it is just building good user hygiene and helping people achieve that. So don't be intimidated by cybersecurity. Recognize there's a real need for you. Your skills are in demand and your skills, the skills that are required, I think are much more diverse and not necessarily as technically complex as one might think. So don't give up the ghost, do it, and get into healthcare, because healthcare is something that we talked about at the outset is just so impactful.

Ed Gaudet: So impactful.

Rich Temple: Get in here. What you're doing makes such a difference. You're saving lives. Even if you're not laying hands on patients. You are saving lives because you're helping those who are. And it's immensely gratifying, and do it.

Ed Gaudet: That's excellent. Excellent advice. No, that's terrific, Rich. I'm Ed Gaudet, the host of the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, and we've been talking to Rich Temple, the VP and CIO of Deborah Heart and Lung Center. Rich, been fantastic to have you on the program. Thank you so much, sir.

Rich Temple: Thank you for having me.



Ed Gaudet: And if you are on the front lines delivering patient care or protecting patient safety, remember, stay vigilant because Risk Never Sleeps.



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