

How a Brentwood company aims to modernize an 'antiquated' part of being a doctor

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Preferral closed a \$1 million round of funding in December.

A Brentwood-based health-tech company is working to streamline the medical-referral process and has some big-name investors lending help.

Preferral closed a \$1 million round of funding last month, attracting the likes of Voyent Partners founder Fred Goad, The Gordon Group founder Joel Gordon, Landman Imaging founder Jeff Landman and venture capitalist Byron Smith, according to CEO Jim Aylward.



COURTESY OF MEDCENTERDISPLAY
Jim Aylward is CEO of Preferral.

The company was founded in 2014 by now Chief Technology Officer Jon Gautsch while he was attending The University of Notre Dame. He noticed his father, an orthopedic surgeon, still received referrals from doctors via the phone or fax machine.

Gautsch began writing code for software that would allow primary physicians to search specialists, match insurance plans, set appointments and remind patients of their appointments.

Preferral hired Aylward as CEO in May and officially launched in almost 20 local practices in September.

Aylward said Preferral, which is building its proof of concept in Nashville and currently has five employees, makes the referral process faster and more accurate.

“Before I became CEO I went to demos out in the field and saw people’s reactions. They were blown away,” Aylward said. “We are replacing an antiquated system. Nothing has changed in 20 years in something as critical as our health care.”

He said the system now enables specialists to request patients with specific ailments and notifies primary physicians if the patient attends their appointment.

Aylward said he hopes to deploy the platform into new markets within the next year.

Aylward has been the CEO of local technology companies in the past. He led Brentwood-based health care technology firm MedCenterDisplay during its acquisition by Cincinnati-based PatientPoint. Before that, he was CEO when Sy.Med Development Inc. was sold to Nashville-based HealthStream in 2012.

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