For Immediate Release

Avantas Announces Smart Square – The Next Generation of Scheduling Software

Omaha, Neb. – Avantas, a service organization providing best-practices work strategies to health care organizations, recently announced the release of Smart Square – a patent-pending suite of automated nurse scheduling software tools invented by a team of health professionals including full-time professional staffers, advanced degree mathematicians, human resource strategists, nursing leaders and some of the best, most experienced software developers in the nation.

Development of the next generation software began just over a year ago in December of 2006. After months of searching for the right software and finding nothing that supported their work strategies, Avantas decided to enter into the field of software development to create a custom solution for the health care industry.

Lorane Kinney, Avantas Chief Executive Officer, said, "We just weren't happy with the scheduling software that was currently available. It wasn't living up to our expectations and we knew it wasn't the best fit for our clients needs."

Avantas' development partner for Smart Square is Sandhills Technologies, which has created hosted software tools for multiple industries including telecommunications companies, call centers, and collegiate athletics. Sandhills has received multiple patents for their proprietary application platform which serves as the system that powers Smart Square.

Avantas took Smart Square live for the first time in the client environment in June 2007 at three of the hospitals within SSM Health Care- St. Louis. SSM Health Care is one of the nation's largest catholic health care systems based in St. Louis, Mo. Smart Square was live within all seven St. Louis hospitals by October 2007.

"Smart Square has allowed SSM Health Care - St. Louis to fully automate our nursing scheduling processes. The goal is to free our nurse supervisors to concentrate on patient care and let Smart Square do the heavy lifting for the staff scheduling. Because this scheduling software was developed specifically for health care by health care professionals, it has been extremely easy to work with and flexible enough to fit our

needs," said Debbie Walkenhorst, Regional Vice President Human Resources, SSM Health Care- St. Louis.

Alegent Health, a nine hospital not-for-profit health care organization based in Omaha, Neb. also began using Smart Square last fall. And, Mountain States Health Alliance, a 14- hospital system in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, recently signed an eight year contract to use Smart Square in a majority of their hospitals. Implementation of the software began in October and the first hospitals will go live with the software on February 25.

Angela Harkleroad, IT Planning Coordinator for Mountain States Health Alliance, said, "The Avantas project team has made this implementation very easy. We were faced with a tight timeframe to roll out the first phase of the project and we have hit our dates thus far due to their diligence and professionalism. We are very excited about the program and look forward to a beneficial, ongoing relationship."

Smart Square – believed to be one of the only fully web-hosted scheduling software solutions currently available – offers easy user access through a standard web browser and requires no internal servers or work-station specific software. Users have the ability to work within the system from anywhere and at anytime that they have Internet access. System management and maintenance is handled by Avantas, therefore lowering the need for technical support and operating costs.

Chris Fox, Vice President of Growth and Innovation at Avantas, said, "Since Smart Square is entirely web-based and hosted, our clients don't need to invest in any additional expensive hardware or servers, and the support of their IT professionals is minimal. This offers a profound advantage given that most health care organizations are dealing with limited IT resources and competing priority projects."

Smart Square boasts an open architecture, which means it can be completely customized to support each organization's data needs, including staff profiles, patient census, and worked hours. Another unique feature of Smart Square is the enterprise-wide approach it takes to intuitively solve staffing and scheduling issues versus the unit based approach that most competitive scheduling software takes.

But what really sets Smart Square apart are the business logic tools it utilizes to identify the amount of staff needed and then auto-recruit and deploy staff where they can best be used. The Avantas Predictive Model – a proprietary forecasting tool – forms the engine of Smart Square. This powerful supply and demand instrument eliminates the mystery of staffing by using regression analysis to consider dozens of indices, such as historical census and staffing levels and Centers for Disease Control announcements, specifically chosen for their relevance to each individual organization. Patient caregivers are secured well in advance in sufficient numbers to fill forecasted vacancies. It then allows staff to be deployed at the last possible moment, according to emerging patient demand, which guarantees the right person at the right place at the right time.

Fox said, "Our Avantas Predictive Model ensures that hospitals are not left to react in the moment to fill nursing needs. Accurate forecasts of future shifts provide hospitals with the ability to secure the right supply of staff that they normally wouldn't begin to acquire until getting actual patient census in the hours leading up to a shift."

Smart Square also integrates i-Choice®, a patent-pending, web-based self-scheduling software that is a customizable shift-matching program also using the Avantas Predictive Model. It posts available shifts weeks in advance within the software to be viewed and scheduled by each organization's nursing float pool. Individual shift incentives can be set in parallel with patient need, so they decrease as needs are met through member sign-up, encouraging a proactive approach to scheduling shifts and improving the efficiency of overall bonus pay distribution.

In addition, Smart Square includes a high-tech telephony and call center application. Automated calling and messaging tools are built-in to the application. Based on the nurse's preference, he or she can be emailed, text messaged or voice mailed about available shifts. Then, upon acceptance, they will be notified where they should report to just prior to the shift via the same telephony method.

An automated call list generator looks at the skill set and hours needed and builds a list of nurses to call based on who logically fits the current need. This valuable feature presents a more efficient and effective manner of seeking nurses to fill open shifts rather than the standard alphabetical list that has been historically used as the first point of reference.

"This is goose bumps stuff," Kinney said when describing the excitement surrounding Smart Square. "Recently we were doing a demo of Smart Square for a potential client. We started the meeting by asking them to tell us what their dream world of managing schedules would look like, which kicked off a one hour discussion of everything they wanted in scheduling software. We then showed them what Smart Square could do and there was not one problem that Smart Square didn't solve for them. We compare it to the difference between driving a Model T versus a Porsche."

Fox added, "If staffing was easy, nurse managers wouldn't be spending a majority of their time trying to put the pieces of that puzzle together every day. The nursing shortage has added challenges to an already complex process that will remain difficult for the foreseeable future. With Smart Square, we've created flexible, automated tools that will allow health care organizations to adapt to the challenges of an environment that is continually changing and give nursing leaders back some of their valuable time to focus on priorities like patient care."

About Avantas
With home offices in Omaha, Nebraska, Avantas has offered best practice work strategies since 1998. Interdisciplinary experts in Nursing, Clinical Quality, Human Resources, Law, Finance, Statistical Analysis and Mathematics continuously expand and enhance Avantas Work Strategies. All Avantas services are built around our mission of excellence in work strategy management. You can find us on the web at www.avantas.biz.