Why this tech firm from California's wine country opened a Nashville office

Most of the California-based firms that have been opening Nashville offices in recent years hail from the tech hotbeds of Silicon Valley and San Francisco. Drive north about an hour to Santa Rosa, though, and you'll find the home base of i2i Systems, the latest California company to identify Nashville as a good spot for a satellite hub.

"Needless to say it's not a health care technology mecca," Justin Neece, i2i's president and chief operations officer who will helm the Nashville office, said of the company's home in wine country.

Still, in 16 years CEO Janice Nicholson has grown the population health management technology company, which employs about 32 people at its California headquarters, into one that serves 65,000 users in 35 states, according to a news release. With a growing number of the company's clients — both health care providers and payers — based east of the Mississippi, the time has come to set up a hub in this part of the country.

Plus, he continued, for a health-tech company like i2i, Nashville is "not a hard sell."

"When I joined the conversation was pretty easy because everyone does know that Nashville is a hub for health care," Neece said.

(This is actually the second time in recent years Neece has helmed a Nashville office for a health-tech company based elsewhere; in 2014, I wrote about his leadership of IngagePatient's expansion in the Nashville area. That company, which Neece left to work with Maryland-based GetWellNetwork before joining i2i, has since merged with a Raleigh-based firm and scaled down its Nashville-area operations, Neece said.)

Plans are still in development for the new office, but Neece said it will likely scale up to eight to 10 employees over the next 12 months.

The company uses clinical and claims data to identify gaps in care; i2i then provides support to plug those gaps and help improve outcomes, Neece said.

Eleanor Kennedy covers Nashville's health care and technology industries.