

Bucking the 2014 Healthcare Trends

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A quick Google search of 2014 trending topics in healthcare will introduce you to a not-too-surprising barrage of themes covering the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (the “ACA”, or “Obamacare”), wearable devices and the secure access and storage of Big Data records. However, the issue of patient care is a melody that inextricably twists and winds its way throughout almost every 2014 healthcare trend. Regardless of the topic being policy, technology or finances, what seems to be the underlying emphasis is the issue of ensuring care for the individual patient.

In some ways – this seems obvious. Isn’t individual health care the POINT of a health care system? Don’t we develop devices, build patient care units, and fight for affordable and accessible health care for the benefit of an individual patient?

Perhaps, indeed, improved patient care is the goal. It is unquestionably the call to action that decorates legislative policy, for which activists advocate and patients clamor. Perhaps it is the motivation for improved patient care that has led the health industry to where it is today, grounded in the idea creating access to healthcare for all.

Yet, a close inspection of healthcare in the U.S. and abroad shows the impact of finance, politics and power thickly spread across most health care contexts. In fact, some might argue that although the facade of patient care is what gets the spotlight, improving patient care is at the bottom of many priority lists in the health care context that is being led by a somewhat archaic mentality of Frederick Taylor (1917) who developed the principles of scientific management. Taylor believed that for an organization to thrive, there existed a “best way” to complete each task, that each task should be performed by the “best worker” and workers should be closely supervised by managers who use reward and punishment as motivators whose overarching task of management is to plan and control.

What Does This Mean to Medicine and Improved Patient Care?

It means that although people speak appraisingly of improved health care for patients, the processes, leaders and policies framing patient care are restricting patients from truly receiving the patient care they deserve. The framework in which medical practitioners are having to treat patients is restrictive in terms of the services and tools they are allowed to use to ensure excellent patient care. In a recent article, SG Chief Medical officer of the Schumacher Group, West Division



stated, "Caring for the individual will not change much, and it hasn't changed much for a long time – we do the best we can, wherever we are, with whatever we have."

Unfortunately, this raw and unfiltered perception is a guiding mentality in an industry that must focus on bottom line dollars, cost-savings, medical policy and the big business of medicine. There is talk and publicity touting improved patient care, yet little is actually changing in practice in the health care industry. One simple strategy to revitalize an industry that has stagnated is to embrace new companies that provide technology and services that speak to the demands of medical professionals, patient advocates, patients and decision-makers who need to integrate new technologies that have proven results and can lower medical costs.

An issue that has been plaguing the healthcare system for decades is that of uncontrolled blood-glucose in surgical and critical care settings. Uncontrolled blood sugar can lead to increased cases of patient morbidity, increased hospital costs, and in the most devastating situations, increased cases of patient mortality. In homecare situations, individuals who must monitor and measure blood glucose on a daily basis have fought for a non-invasive method for blood glucose measurement, yet after decades still have no access to this technology even though the technology exists. TecMed, Inc. is an intellectual property company striving to make these blood-glucose monitoring systems available to both patients in hospital care units and at home. The technology for change is available. The struggle is overcoming organizational systems to implement and create access to the technology. 2014 Google trends tout improved patient care. TecMed can not only create the opportunity for exceptional patient care, their technology answers the mandated demands of legislation, hospital administrators and medical professionals.

This begs the question of why this technology isn't commercially available today. If recognized medical practitioners, researchers, decision-makers and policy makers know there is technology accessible and ready to be brought to market that would not only promote the "big business" of medicine with lower medical costs and improved it only makes sense TecMed, Inc. gets another look. If the underlying foundation of the healthcare system is to improve patient care, it's high time we start to make business decisions that finally support our patients.