

Health:Further: Climbing Past 11%, Part 1 | Chad Blackburn | eDoc4U

by David Shifrin | Jul 18, 2017

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For many Americans, going to the doctor is equivalent to being sick. Why go to the trouble of scheduling an appointment, undergoing lab work, and shuffling your work schedule around when you feel great? Don't you have better things to do? Turns out the majority of Medicare patients subscribe to this line of thinking. They may have their own reasoning, but the net result is an underconsumption of annual wellness visits.

In the hopes of incentivizing preventive action, the ACA included annual wellness visits in Medicare plans, meaning they require no copay for patients. This introduces problems on the provider side. Reimbursement is hard, compliance issues come into play, and annual wellness visits have the potential to be a high volume service that over occupies staff.

eDoc4U's technology is designed to mitigate this issue. As VP of Business Development Chad Blackburn emphasized, "Our mission is to change the statistic that only 11% of Medicare patients have ever received an annual wellness visit." eDoc4U combines technology and human interaction in the form of physician extenders who offer wellness visits. After these visits, patients leave with a care plan that allows them to "act as quarterbacks for their own personal care."

The program likewise supports the provider side, making preventative medicine a good business. Specifically, the program generates revenue through completion of each patient's preventative action items outlined in the care plan. So far, the company has seen high patient engagement levels. They make it easy for patients to take full advantage of their Medicare plans, proving that,

when properly incentivized, patients and providers are willing to take preventative steps.

"We all know that the healthcare system is tough to navigate. Everyone can benefit from having someone help them put together a game plan to manage their health because at the end of the day, it's really the individual's responsibility."

eDoc4U also provides a good lesson in entrepreneurship. Blackburn explained that the company initially worked in employee wellness but only recently recognized that annual wellness visit technology constituted the real growth opportunity. As a result, eDoc4U became "a new venture in an older company." Currently undergoing rebranding, eDoc4U demonstrates the importance of listening to the market and pivoting accordingly.

Even in the face of regulatory and legal uncertainty, Blackburn and the rest of the eDoc4U team remains optimistic. Ultimately, they believe they are on the right side of history in supporting the transition from fee-for-service to value-based care, a transition that Blackburn insists is here to stay.