



Personalizing Digitization in Healthcare

PatientWisdom
We hear you.



Gregory Makoul

Founder and CEO, PatientWisdom Inc.

It's well known that being a good listener makes a person more successful in any profession. In healthcare, it plays a particularly important role as hearing out patients helps clinicians better understand how to provide truly patient-centered care.

Dr. Gregory Makoul strongly believes in the power of listening and aptly tagged 'We hear you' for his concept PatientWisdom—a solution that makes it easy for patients to share what matters to them and runs analytics to turn patient perspectives into actionable insights at the N=1 and population levels.

The Founder and CEO of PatientWisdom, Inc. sees the practical combination of digital and personal communication as the key for turning transactions into relationships in the age of consumerism and value-based health care.

The Journey

The idea to start PatientWisdom roots back almost 30 years when Greg completed his Ph.D. in Communication at Northwestern University and joined the faculty at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "It quickly became clear that most physicians-in-training and physicians-in-practice had very little understanding of how patients experienced health and illness. I started giving patients video cameras and asked them to share what their lives were like. These patient narrative videos were incredibly powerful," recalled Greg. They have been used across the US and in many countries to help providers focus on the patient perspective.

Greg added, "Patient, provider, and community member perspectives are valuable, yet mostly unheard." Recognizing the value of listening, Greg and his team worked with health system partners to develop a suite of three digital solutions – PatientWisdom®, ProviderWisdom®, and CommunityWisdom® – all of which use the same logic and underlying software platform, called Wisdomics®.

"In each case, we capture real-world perspectives via our mobile-responsive digital solutions and distill the information into meaningful, actionable insights to help health organizations become more responsive and successful. We are convinced that we can help health organizations literally transform the experience and delivery of care by listening to the people involved – individually and at scale. This combination of digital plus personal is the key to winning in the age of consumerism, personalization, and value-based care."

The Current Market

Reflecting on the current healthcare market, Greg noted that the marketplace is tremendously fragmented, and that many health organizations are struggling with the promise of strategy and the reality of culture as there is often a gap in organizational readiness. Greg suggested, "The way to win in a crowded, fragmented marketplace is to offer a compelling platform that drives value for stakeholders. While there are lots of great ideas and point solutions out there, they can feel like another rock in the backpack if not well integrated and coordinated. Our Wisdomics platform does this for health organizations who have prioritized the voice of patients, providers, and community members."

The Promise of AI

When queried about the impact technology has been making on the healthcare system, Greg said, "There is no question that AI and machine learning have made great strides in areas such as pattern recognition and imaging interpretation. They are also gaining traction in terms of automating some basic elements of communication and decision support. I'm particularly excited about advances in data science and analytics: Healthcare is awash with data – the key is to turn it into useful information that can empower stakeholders."

The Success Story

Asked about success stories so far, Gregory said, "I will never forget what we heard the very first time we asked a patient for feedback on PatientWisdom. She said, 'By using PatientWisdom, I'm giving a gift to my doctor and to myself. My doctor has an easy way to learn what's important to me, so I get better care.' And that's the point. We're making it easy for patients to share what matters to them, and making it easy for clinicians to do better without taking longer – it takes only 15 seconds to review the inSIGHT summary that we create and display in the electronic health record so every member of the care team has an at-a-glance view of clinically relevant, non-clinical data."

Greg advises start-ups and entrepreneurs to always start with identifying the problem to be solved, not only when shaping a company or product/service, but as a touchstone in every decision. "Believe in your vision, but don't be afraid to test it by seeing through your stakeholders' eyes. And recognize that when people tell you it's a rollercoaster, they don't simply mean that there are highs and lows – they mean that you'll likely feel both high and low points every single day. Make sure you're ready for that."