Resuscitating the House Call: A New Take on an Old Approach

In the 1930s, house calls made up 40 percent of doctor's visits in the U.S. Since the 1980s, however, medical care has moved almost completely into the clinical setting, creating more efficient environments for providers and patients. Today, technology could reverse that trend by enabling patients' healthcare needs to be met, once again, at home, while keeping a level of efficiency and effectiveness that works for providers as well.

MediSeen, a Toronto-based startup, is leading the effort to revive this retro concept. Their innovative software platform empowers healthcare providers to offer more accessible, personalized care to patients in the comfort of their homes while reducing the strain on overcrowded hospitals.

We spoke with MediSeen founder and CEO Daniel Warner to learn more about his company, its vision for bringing back the house call, and how MedHealth helped support his company's expansion into new markets.

Why did you start MediSeen?

In 2014, I was on the founding team of SnapSaves, a mobile coupon startup, which was acquired by Groupon. As part of the sale, my family and I moved to Chicago to help scale the application as a new division of Groupon. Startup stress and my genetics eventually caught up with me—I was unexpectedly diagnosed with Crohn's disease on a visit back to Toronto and admitted to the hospital with my first severe flare up a week later. Using blood transfusions, iron infusions, and all kinds of medication, my healthcare providers put me back together over the course of nearly a month as an inpatient.

It was during my 26 nights under medical observation that I found myself looking repeatedly out my hospital room window at University Avenue—a busy strip in downtown Toronto, bustling with world-class care and innovation—and wondering why I was here for so long. Didn't someone else need this hospital bed more than me? Why couldn't my care be delivered at home rather than in the hospital? Aren't emergency rooms for emergencies?

I had a lot of time to think about it. When I finally became an outpatient, I was equally overwhelmed by the amount of time I had to spend scheduling appointments, commuting to and from hospitals and clinics, and sitting in waiting rooms. It felt like a full-time job—meanwhile, I was on disability leave from my real job!

The Canadian and U.S. health systems are buckling under patient duress. I knew there had to be a better way to deliver and receive care. That was when the idea for MediSeen was born.

So, what exactly is MediSeen?

MediSeen is a HIPAA- and PHIPA-compliant mobile management platform that enables healthcare providers to build, scale, and digitize home healthcare practices. Through one portal, accessible through the Web and mobile applications, they can manage patient bookings, records, charts, schedules, and billing.

We think of MediSeen as truly empowering for both patients and providers. We know that a clinical setting is not always available or the most appropriate or accessible place to receive care, especially for people with conditions that limit their ability to get there. Creating more access points for care in a community—including the patient's home—results in more affordable, personalized care.

How does MediSeen make care more patient centered?

We built a practical, easy-to-use technology, based on the feedback from more than 1,000 patients and providers, Our technology helps nurture real relationships. We deliver directly to patients, but we're not "Uber-izing" healthcare. Our patients always know who is coming to see them. The app allows them to learn a lot about their providers, personally and professionally, including details like where they went to school, what languages they speak, and what their specialities are. We are finding that when patients really know and develop a bond with their providers, they are more engaged in their healthcare.

MEDISEEN

Fast Facts

Founded: 2016

Headquarters: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Company Stage: Seed—Some early revenue and customers. Still testing, developing, and optimizing.

Mission: MediSeen is on a mission to revive the house call as the primary point of care by enabling healthcare providers to deliver care in their community.

Website: mediseen.co

MedHealth

How has MedHealth and its annual summit helped your startup?

MedHealth has helped create a passionate cross-border ecosystem—which is critical. While our healthcare systems may have different plumbing, Michigan and Ontario residents still experience similar problems in accessing quality healthcare. When we—a Toronto-based company—attended the 2018 MedHealth Summit, we were able to see the true potential for our technology in Michigan and better understand the new market. In fact, it suddenly made so much sense that we're opening up a satellite office at TechTown Detroit and plan to hire a program lead to support our efforts in Michigan and the Midwest. It's a great opportunity to be more involved in the Michigan digital health community, to learn from our peers, and to build more momentum.

What's next for MediSeen?

Recently, we were accepted into the Ontario Bioscience Innovation Organization's Capital Access Advisory Program, which helps Ontario-based digital health companies scale and raise funding. We also were accepted into the Canadian Technology Accelerator—an initiative that helps Canadian companies expand into U.S. markets.

As a result, we have opened a satellite office in New York and are actively meeting with venture capitalists and health system leaders in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. We plan to do the same in Detroit with the help of MedHealth and TechTown Detroit. It's our ambition to form partnerships with health systems, garner U.S. venture capital support, and empower as many healthcare providers as possible to help patients in their communities. We believe MediSeen will play a vital role in thinking outside clinical walls to solve healthcare's most pressing problems.

MedHealth