

CoHealth: Improving Patient Care Through Better Information, Care Coordination, and Technology

Inspired by cofounder Zack Fisch-Rothbart's aftercare patient experience, Rob Iaboni, CoHealth's director of strategic partnerships, shares how his company puts patients at the center of their health by providing better access to information and better coordination of care.

What was the impetus for creating CoHealth?

I joined CoHealth two years ago because Zack Fisch-Rothbart's story resonated with me. Several years ago, Zack broke his leg in three places while playing a game of ultimate frisbee. Though he received great care at the hospital, he had problems with the transition back home. Before Zack was discharged, his nurse gave him a lot of important aftercare information, but Zack—being medicated and stressed—didn't have the medical literacy or the capacity needed to process that information at that time.

Ultimately, Zack developed a preventable complication and had to be rushed back to the hospital, where he was hours away from losing his leg. Even though he had been provided information on this potential problem, it was not in a way that was easy to understand or remember.

Though Zack came through this experience in the end, it's a powerful reminder of how fragmented our healthcare system is and how it leaves patients to navigate their own care. CoHealth was founded to address this issue by building a tool that puts the patient at the center of their care journey.

What does CoHealth do? Who do you work with?

CoHealth created a digital patient relationship platform—for use on any mobile device—that allows patients to access important healthcare information in one place. We partner with healthcare providers to build out hundreds of customized care pathways for users. The platform can remind patients to take their medication, have their blood pressure checked, and manage and track important items that are tailored to their unique experience.

CoHealth partners with healthcare providers and organizations of all types in both Canada and the United States (U.S.), including primary, acute, and home care providers. In the U.S., we work with providers to build platforms that assist patients in finding services and payers in their network, making it easy to find the care they need. We also have started partnering with larger organizations, such as medical device and pharmaceutical companies.

How does CoHealth help improve patient experiences?

Healthcare is lagging when it comes to customer experience and satisfaction. Not only does the CoHealth tool help users navigate and coordinate their own care, but it also collects good data. It allows patients to offer feedback immediately, enabling providers to better meet patient needs by refining how care is provided.

How has MedHealth and its annual summit helped your business?

We attended the MedHealth Summit in 2018. It was our first time attending an event like this, and we were excited to come to Detroit because it is so close to Toronto. The summit helped the CoHealth team learn more about the U.S. health system, allowed us to meet with many different companies, and facilitated valuable one-on-one conversations with providers. Since attending, we have been partnering with Henry Ford Health System to refine our product and make it more viable for the U.S. market.



Fast Facts

Founded: 2016

Headquarters: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Company Stage: Primarily seed, but moving more toward the revenue and growth stage

Mission: Our mission is to connect the dots in healthcare. That means using empathy and understanding to help patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers make better decisions in the pursuit of quality-based, patient-oriented care.

Website: cohealthapp.com



What's next for CoHealth?

CoHealth is a small company with 11 full-time employees, so it is important for us to continue building strategic partnerships with providers and healthcare organizations. We have seen rapid growth across North America and have developed strategic partnerships with Medtronic—the largest medical technology company in the world. We have also partnered with one of the largest banks in Canada to help us sell to providers that do business with the bank.

We also continue to work on building out the best value platform for patients. Our goal is to improve patient experiences and outcomes, and we will stay focused on putting them at the center of their care.

What advice would you give to other startups trying to get their innovations in front of major funders or buyers?

In the healthcare market, there is resistance to small companies, which can be frustrating. My advice is this—if you know you have a product that can improve healthcare, be confident and keep pushing. We were rejected by 62 hospitals before we had one say yes. Additionally, get advisors and mentors who know your space and be open to receiving as much advice as possible. Even though the rate at which you expand may be slow, when you improve things for even one person, it's so rewarding.

If you could meet any entrepreneur or business leader—dead or alive—who would it be and why?

I would have to go with Steve Jobs. During an interview, Jobs noted that many people in his career told him that he needed to give customers what they want. His response, which he credited to Henry Ford, was that “people don't know what they want until you show it to them.” Jobs was doing something that people were telling him he was foolish for doing—building expensive computers that were focused on design and prioritized user experience. Now, Apple is one of the biggest companies in the world when it comes to computer sales. Though many people will push you to go in different directions, stay focused. You may just win the race.

