

HealthOpX: Breaking Down Healthcare Barriers for Patients Who Use Languages Other Than English

Navigating healthcare can be complex and confusing, even for the most informed patients. It requires a high degree of health literacy to find the right entry point, maneuver through fragmented specialists, ask the right questions, and get helpful answers to make informed decisions. And for people who use languages other than English, this process can become even more disorienting and detrimental, especially for their health.

That's where HealthOpX comes in.

HealthOpX believes there is a better way to help patients who use languages other than English navigate healthcare by creating a more integrated network among patients, community organizations, and doctors—all supported through affordable technology. We talked with chief executive officer and cofounder of HealthOpX, Wesley Ma, to learn more about his company's mission and how MedHealth helped support its growth.

What is HealthOpX and what was the motivation for creating this company?

HealthOpX is a mobile and Web-based platform that helps patients who use languages other than English navigate the healthcare system and address their social determinants of health.

Both the other cofounder of HealthOpX and I are second-generation Americans. Growing up, we experienced firsthand what it was like to take our parents to their healthcare appointments and serve as translators to help them navigate the system. Unfortunately, not much has changed since that time. So, we wanted to create a solution based on our personal experiences. That's how HealthOpX was born.

Tell me more about your technology. How does it work?

Patients can use our mobile application to access a number of resources that can help them improve their social determinants of health. For example, a person facing food insecurity could receive information on food drives or get support navigating the healthcare system within the application.

The Web application even allows community organizations, such as churches and nonprofits, or family members to coordinate services and care for patients as caretakers. If a patient does not have a mobile device or smartphone, caretakers can receive all notifications for them or be sent text alerts. All of the data from the mobile and Web applications feeds into a machine-learning algorithm that calculates cost savings for health systems and insurers, with the ultimate goal of reimbursing community-based organizations for services.

The application also supports health systems by providing them with a translation/interpretation management mechanism to improve case management and coordination.

Who are your customers?

Health systems and insurance companies are our paying customers, and they typically access our technology through the Web application. Patients and community organizations can access our technology for free.



Fast Facts

Founded: May 2018

Headquarters: East Lansing, Michigan

Company Stage: Seed

Mission: To help patients who use languages other than English navigate the healthcare system

Website: Healthopx.com



How has being involved with MedHealth helped your startup?

In 2019, I went to the MedHealth Summit by recommendation of colleagues at the Michigan State University Conquer Accelerator program. I happened to sit near someone from the American Heart Association (AHA), and we struck up a conversation. When I told them about HealthOpX, we found that we both shared similar goals around community wellness and making a sustainable impact on healthcare for those who are underserved.

We kept the conversation going after the event and, eventually, fostered a strategic partnership. Since then, the AHA has introduced us to health systems that could benefit from our technology and is helping us get data to power our artificial intelligence machine-learning algorithm.

Actually, it seems fitting that we're having this conversation in February because it's also [American Heart Month](#). We're thankful to be working with the AHA to reduce health disparities that can cause heart disease.

What's next for HealthOpX?

We are piloting a new project to test accessibility and improve quality of care for patients in Flint by making our application available to the Genesee County Free Medical Clinic and Latinos United for Flint. We are also working with the University of Michigan–Flint to get institutional review board approval so we can collaborate on a research study.

HealthOpX was also selected as a [Halcyon Incubator fellow](#) and will be heading to Washington, D.C., this month to participate in the program with other social entrepreneurs. We will be the Healthworx fellow of the cohort, receiving mentoring from CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield.

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

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. because he was a leader in bringing people together. I think he would have appreciated our effort to provide mutual aid. I wish we could have discussed how to continue building resilient communities.

