*Note: This is a machine transcription. Please excuse any punctuation or other weirdness:)*

## Intro:

I was evaluating our insurance premiums for 2023 and they're going up by 7%. This seems to be a constant trend with healthcare insurance and hits especially hard with the price of most everything on the rise.

One of the 2023 trends or should be trends I believe is patient engagement and self advocacy. Not always is the information you get from your health insurance company reliable or maybe you are not sure about the recommendation of care you have been provided and need to be that advocate.

Knowing your options to make healthcare more affordable and efficient is key, whether it is through healthcare disruptors or basic knowledge and taking advantage of current trends to support your healthcare needs is essential, especially as we move into the new year. We've got this!

## Get Savvy…Demystifying Healthcare – 30 second commercial

*Are you tired of the high cost of healthcare? Are you overwhelmed trying to navigate a complicated healthcare system?*

*Welcome to Get Savvy…Demystifying Healthcare weekly podcast where we take complicated healthcare topics and make them simple.*

*Imagine if you could stop feeling paralyzed with fear and frustration and instead be empowered to make smart healthcare decisions for you and your family.*

*Get Savvy with your host, Sandy Kibling, a healthcare professional changing how healthcare knowledge is shared.*

# Podcast

Today we are going to discuss patient engagement and self advocacy, and we're going to look at the top healthcare trends for 2023.

We'll discuss wearable technology, telehealth and artificial intelligence. For patient engagement and self advocacy...with our healthcare evolving and the complexity and frustration of navigating the system, patient engagement is essential.

It is time to take a proactive approach to care rather than a reactive one. Patient engagement and self advocacy can lead to better clinical outcomes and improve quality of life.

One way of being able to do this more effectively is understanding what is out there with the latest trends and better understanding of healthcare disruptors which are defined as companies, individuals and or technology changing how Healthcare is accessed, the affordability and efficiency.

In Episode 4 I talked specifically about health care disruptors and provided some relevant examples. I will link to that episode in the show notes.

Also, understanding more about the top healthcare trends for 2023 can be helpful.

## What we will discuss:

- Patient Engagement and Self Advocacy
- Top Healthcare trends in 2023
  - Wearable Technology
  - Telehealth
  - Artificial Intelligence

Let's get into it.

## Trend #1 - Wearable Technology

While not new, we are seeing an evolution of wearables. Wearables are Fitbits, smartwatches to name a few examples. Adopting wearable healthcare technologies is one of the trends that continues to take the healthcare industry by storm.

It allows you to better manage your health by tracking sleep patterns, steps and exercise goals, blood oxygen and heart rate to name a few. We are also seeing more options of vitals to track and enhance communication with your provider.

Continuous health monitoring through health wearables enables personalized data-driven care where the provider and you can take that proactive approach, which can play a critical role in disease prevention, early detection and even assist in a crisis.

Let's review a few stories where wearables had an impact.

## Consumer Stories

**Heather** didn't think she had to worry about her health. She was young, athletic, and had no previous medical conditions. After putting her kids to bed one night, she was sitting on the couch with her husband when she heard a beep on her Apple Watch. She looked down to see a notification saying her heart rate was above 120 beats per minute.

She thought there was something wrong with her watch because she couldn't feel her heart racing and didn't feel like anything was wrong at all. In 2017 the Apple Watch added the heart high heart rate notifications to the watch, which lets users know when their heart spikes above a certain level.

Heather's heart rate continued to rise throughout the night, but she still didn't feel any symptoms. The next morning, her husband insisted that she make a precautionary visit to the urgent care clinic.

Doctors diagnosed her with hyperthyroidism, a condition where the thyroid gland produces excess thyroxine hormone.

 If left untreated, it could lead to life threatening complications. Heather noted she is not someone who checks her heart rate randomly and probably would not have detected her condition without her Apple Watch.

**Torab** was staying with friends just outside of Oslo, Norway, where he lives. He wore his Apple Watch to bed that night so he could test a sleep app, but then things started to get blurry.

He has no memory of his fall later that night and doesn't remember getting back into bed. Torab notes that he was lying in bed, having terrible pain in his head and touched his face and felt blood.

He drifted in and out of consciousness until he awoke to a lit room and three policemen standing above him. Sometime after 4 AM he'd gotten up and experienced a sudden drop in blood pressure and fainted and landed face first on the floor.

His collapse triggered the fall detection feature on the Apple Watch, which automatically notifies emergency services if it doesn't perceive any movement after a minute of detecting a hard fall.

After getting the alert, the local police contacted his wife, who was able to give them the full address of where her husband was staying. The police could use the GPS coordinates of where Torab was, but they couldn't see exactly which apartment he was in.

Their paramedics immediately took him to nearby hospital. Thankfully, he was able to get the help he needed.

Now, on a side note, these stories happen to feature discuss an Apple Watch, and I'm not advocating for Apple versus Fitbit, or Fitbit versus Kore. There are many options out there. What matters is that you find the wearable device that works best for you.

So back to the stories, there are some pretty powerful stories of wearables and the support they can provide.

I think another point to consider is the apps that go with it wearables. Are they compatible with your device and are they easy to use?

This is important because these are used for, as we've learned from these stories, the collection of important patient data in emergencies when a patient is unable to communicate or is rendered unconscious. Health apps can serve as valuable tools for healthcare professionals such as doctors and paramedics to quickly and accurately get important patient information such as blood types, allergies, etc, and treat the patient without losing precious time.

They also provide the 24/7 monitoring for noncritical patients who may be sent home by physicians and are advised to come back if they develop certain symptoms well.

This needs to be monitored and many times it is impossible for family members to monitor them night and day. It is, however, possible for wearables like smartwatches to keep track of the patient symptoms 24/7 in real time and notify emergency contacts or paramedics in case such a situation arises.

Communication is key while diagnosing a patient and a doctor, no matter how good he or she may be, will never be able to properly diagnose a patient unless a proper history is obtained. Wearable technology often helps to solve this problem. This helps in the proper diagnosis of the patient's condition and helps save both time and money.

# Future Trends of Wearables:

**Hearables** are designed for use with the ears, often referred to as pods. Smart hearables are a type of hearable that has additional features and functionality beyond just audio playback. They usually have some form of connectivity such as Bluetooth nd often include other sensors and components such as heart rate monitors and microphones.

This allows you to track fitness data, stream music or podcast wirelessly, make phone calls, and even provide language translation services.

**Smartwatches** now smartwatches we discussed earlier and theyhave their benefits, but one point I would add is cost can be a barrier. I'd recommend checking out the Kore watch spelled with a K...Kore  which consumer reviews rated at a 9.9 at the time of this recording, with the retail price of $60 to $80. I'll link to it in the show notes if you want to check it out.

**Smart Patches** a smart patch is a wearable device that can be attached to the skin and used to monitor various health parameters or deliver medication. These devices are usually thin and flexible, making them comfortable to wear for long periods of time.

Smart patches usually contain a number of sensors that monitor physiological parameters such as heart rate, body temperature, and blood oxygen levels. The sensors can also be used to detect changes over time and alert you if there's anything abnormal going on with your body.

The patch may also contain a tiny microchip that can release drugs into your system gradually overtime. For example, it could deliver insulin to diabetics who require regular doses throughout the day or night. In addition to monitoring health parameters and delivering drugs, smart patches can also be used for other purposes, such as tracking activity levels or remotely monitoring an elderly person's health status from afar using an app on your phone or computer.

**Smart clothing** also known as connected clothing or wearable technology. Our garments that have integrated electronics and sensors woven into the fabric. The electronics are usually powered by batteries or small generator that converts body heat into electricity.

The sensors are can be used to track a variety of biometric data such as heart rate, respiration and skin temperature.

**Smart implantable's** are devices that are implanted into the body and interact with the body's tissues and organs to monitor, diagnose or treat medical conditions. These devices are typically made from biocompatible materials such as titanium, stainless steel, or polymers.

Smart implantable can be passive or active. Passive smart inflatables do not have any electronics and rely on the body's own energy to function. Active smart implantable's have. Electronics and use battery power to function. So some really cool stuff on the horizon for wearables.

## Trend #2 - Telehealth

If there's one good thing that came from COVID is the buy in for telehealth. It provides consumer safe and more access to care and is helped providers reach people in rural areas or those who struggle with access to transportation to get the care they need.

Recently CMS Medicare for 2023 has finalized a number of policies related to telehealth services including making several telehealth services that were temporary doing during COVID now extended through 2023.

The importance of this is your providers offices follows Medicare guidelines and are typically reimbursed through CMS Medicare fee schedule. So now they know they will be able to continue to offer these services to you.

The benefits:
- Improved access to and quality of healthcare with access to remote practitioners, you're no longer limited to healthcare services within a driving distance of your home. This is especially beneficial for people who live in rural areas with limited quality of care.

- Decreast costs  sometimes, but not always, telehealth appointments are less expensive than in person visits. You also save money on fuel cost.

- Fewer missed appointments a study was done showing the overall no show rate for in person visits was 9% prior to the pandemic. Once telehealth was implemented, those rates have dropped to 5.8 %. It allows more flexibility for patients and clinicians. Generally in person office visits have to be done within certain office hours. This limits access for working professionals or those who have schedules that don't allow them to make appointments during these hours.

- Patient and staff safety  telehealth appointments are especially beneficial for high risk patients who may be at an increased risk of contracting infections like COVID, they can continue their care from the comfort of their home without worrying about exposure.

- Home care adding this option for caring for elderly loved ones by using telehealth service services is a huge benefit, and in fact, I believe we'll continue to see an evolution of telehealth options in 2023.

## Trend #3 - Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence, and big data combined with the computing power of the cloud gives healthcare a great opportunity to get smarter about what people need.

It helps increase the efficiency and productivity of care delivery besides enabling clinicians and medical practitioners to spend more time in direct patient care without burnout.

Whether it is about supporting improvements in patient care outcomes, access to healthcare services or patient experience, artificial intelligence or AI is expanding and we will see significant options in 2023

Here's some examples.

**Chatbots** an AI program that stimulates and interprets human communication, written or spoken, allowing people to communicate with digital devices as if they were conversing with real people.

These are the popups you usually see that come up on a website or your smart device. Chatbots offer immediate conversational responses and connecting becomes quite simple for patients. They can save money on a avoidable trips to the medical practitioner.

Payients can get directed to care and additional resources when executed effectively. Chatbots can even aid healthcare providers to exceed patients expectations while improving patient outcomes.

**Robotic Surgeries** AI technology in the form of collaborative robots has brought about a revolution in the field of surgery. The revolution can be seen in terms of their speed and preciseness when making fine incisions. Generally the result of this surgery, especially in new or complex process, can change with surgeon skills.

AI utilization can minimize case to case variations, improving the efficiency of even the most skilled surgeons. At the same time, as AI machines are precise, they mitigate the probability of shutters or any accidental movements during surgery.

**Virtual nursing assistants** AI systems allow virtual nursing assistants to be available 24/7. from interacting with patients to directing them to the most effective and best care setting, Virtual nursing assistants could save 20 billion annually for the healthcare industry.

They can monitor patients, answer their questions, and offer quick answers in real time. Today, most of the applications of virtual nursing assistants enable regular and consistent communication between healthcare providers and patients.

As this happens hopefully there are fewer chances of unnecessary hospital visits or hospital readmission. AI powered virtual assistants provide personalized experiences to patients, helping them detect their illness based on the symptoms. Besides scheduling doctor appointments and monitoring their health status, a virtual nursing assistant guides you through the course of the treatment.

This application of AI may be adopted to enhance patient engagement and perfect their self management skills to prevent severe conditions from worsening. Care Angel is one example as the first virtual nurse assistant globally, which can provide wellness checks through AI and voice.

I hope this information has been beneficial to you, and if so, please share with others who you believe it may help.

I appreciate it. In our next episode, we are going to discuss how to price your procedure, whether it is an upcoming total knee surgery or tonsillectomy. By knowing the price of your procedure, you can confirm your out of pocket expenses and budget accordingly.

Until then, Get savvy.