

# CAPG HEALTH

The Official Magazine of the California Association of Physician Groups

Legislative Profile  
**Sen. Darrell Steinberg**

**Patient-Centered Care**

**The Healthcare Revolution  
Will Not Be Televised,  
It Will Be Online**

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## CAPG HEALTH

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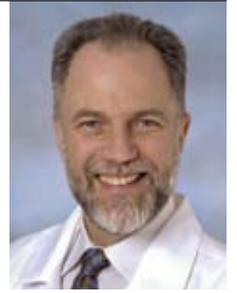
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# The Healthcare Revolution Will Not Be Televised, It Will Be Online

By Neal Kaufman, M.D., M.P.H., CEO and Founder, DPS Health

A revolution is needed in health-care. The seeds have already been planted, but to this point, most of us have only been able to see the leading edge of these changes. It is hard to see that small advances in the industry are happening, but as is usually the case during a paradigm shift, it is only obvious after it has happened.

## CAUSE AND EFFECT

The roots of this revolution come from the changing causes of morbidity and mortality. As little as 40 years ago, most people died from sudden and massive heart attacks or infections such as pneumonia. Advances in medicine now mean most of us will die late in a disease process from a chronic illness such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease. This increase in the prevalence of chronic diseases means a fundamental shift in the role physicians play in improving patients' health.

To treat or prevent these chronic, lifestyle-driven diseases, quality medical care will only be part of the solution. Advanced medicine will have to be coupled with

behavior modification to have a major impact on our lifespan. But, herein lies another important aspect of the healthcare revolution; we no longer strive to simply increase lifespan, but also performance span, or how long we live healthy and active lives.

One of the strongest factors that will drive this revolution is an increase in financial incentives to support patients' health-promoting behaviors. This has already begun to appear in the form of pay-for-performance, consumer-directed healthcare, increased capitation/shared risk and payment for episodes of care.

## NEW FOCUS OF HEALTHCARE

With this new focus of healthcare, providers will be expected to coordinate care for a panel of patients who live with incurable chronic conditions. Doctors will have to collaborate with their patients because treating these diseases requires more than medication; treatment must also focus on improving patient behaviors. Providers will

need to put emphasis on supporting patients as they adopt and sustain health-promoting habits.

Regrettably, given the significant time constraints of a busy medical practice, healthcare providers often do not have the time to adequately support all aspects of a successful behavior change intervention. To be successful, patients must not only understand their condition, but also obtain the skills to set goals, solve problems, monitor outcomes and overcome barriers to action.

Online tools can extend the medical practice and provide this support through cost-effective programs that help clinicians guide their patients to better manage their conditions. The best Internet self-management education and support programs are rich in pertinent content, provide engaging interactive elements and offer a tailored, personalized learning experience. They contain self-assessment tools and ways for the individual to monitor performance and changes in biologic measurements such as weight, blood pressure and blood sugar.

## EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD PERAFIT

National Jewish Medical and Research Center, building on more than 20 years of experience with telephonic and behavioral change programs, has launched a unique weight-loss program that relies on customized personal coaching, Internet education and support and wireless activity monitors and scales.

**I**n an effort to prevent diabetes by helping individuals lose weight, the University of Pittsburgh, under a federal research grant from the National Institutes of Health, developed a weight-management approach, the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). The DPP proved that overweight and sedentary adults could be counseled to eat better, be more active and lose enough weight to improve their long-term health.

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Members of the Colorado Public Employees' Retirement Association will be the first customers to benefit from the program.

**CHRONIC DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, developed by the Division of Family and Community Medicine in the School of Medicine at Stanford University, is a workshop given for two-and-a-half hours, once a week for six weeks, in community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries and hospitals. People with different chronic health problems attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are nonhealth professionals with chronic diseases themselves. Subjects who took the program, when compared to those who did not, demonstrated significant improvements in exercise, cognitive symptom management, communication with physicians, self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, disability and social/role activities limitations.

**DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM**

In an effort to prevent diabetes by helping individuals lose weight, the University of Pittsburgh, under a federal research grant from the National Institutes of Health, developed a weight-management approach,

the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). The DPP proved that overweight and sedentary adults could be counseled to eat better, be more active and lose enough weight to improve their long-term health. The challenge was bringing the benefits of the DPP to enough patients at an affordable cost. To accomplish this, researchers translated the DPP to an online environment that effectively delivers the benefits of the DPP to a broad population.

**VIRTUAL LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT**

University of Pittsburgh researchers, working with DPS Health, developed the Virtual Lifestyle Management (VLM) service, the online translation of the proven DPP protocols. The service increases clinician efficiency by automating learning, planning, self-

monitoring and encouragement, and provides support through personalized electronic coaching. Patients improve their physical activity and nutrition habits and sustain these new behaviors to live longer, healthier lives. Organizations as diverse as Monarch HealthCare, an IPA in Orange County; Motion Picture Television Fund, a healthcare provider in Los Angeles; and Government Employees Hospital Association, a health plan in Kansas City, are currently using the VLM with their patients and employees.

These are just some of the many examples of how the healthcare revolution has already begun. The paradigm shift in the type of conditions physicians treat, combined with the patient's need for greater support, mean we must find efficient ways to interact and deliver the care needed so everyone can live longer, healthier lives.

*Neal Kaufman, M.D., M.P.H., founder and Chief Executive Officer of Los Angeles-based DPS Health, a CAPG affiliate sponsor, can be reached at neal.kaufman@dpshealth.com or online at www.dpshealth.com. ■*

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