

How Health2047 nurtures innovation on medicine's biggest challenges

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Silicon Valley-based Health2047—the wholly-owned innovation subsidiary of the AMA created to overcome systemic dysfunction in the U.S. health care—is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

As the AMA began to sharpen numerous small, disconnected AMA goals into bigger, more focused goals, these larger aspirations often required technical components of more industrial scale. Thus, as the AMA set large strategic goals within its existing walls, it was also believed that an independently operating, for-profit company creating innovative, system-level solutions focused on the patient-physician interaction would complement and enhance what was happening within the AMA.

Health2047 is an “innovation shop that feels like Silicon Valley, but connected to an iconic organization that is focused exclusively on health care,” AMA Executive Vice President and CEO James L. Madara, MD, said in a recent podcast, “Transforming Healthcare from the Inside Out.” The episode is part of Health2047’s podcast series “So You Want to Transform Healthcare.”

During the podcast, Dr. Madara—who along with Doug Given, MD, PhD, initiated the idea that led to Health2047’s creation—and Health2047 CEO Lawrence Cohen, PhD, discussed more about how the company was founded, the dynamic between the AMA and Health2047, companies that Health2047 has already helped get off the ground, and what the future holds.

Health2047 is focused on chronic disease, data interoperability, radical productivity and health care values—all areas that support the AMA’s goals involving chronic disease, ridding barriers for health care delivery and lifelong education for physicians.

The organizations have two different cultures, but over the years they have developed an understanding of each other’s language and they have created relationships based on trust, Dr. Madara said.

Real-world impact

To date, Health2047 has helped launch nine new companies. Some of the ideas came from within Health2047 and other ideas were ones people brought to the company. Health2047 was able to help provide expertise and help find capital to help fund the projects.

One example is First Mile Care, a company that has rethought chronic care management. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Diabetes Prevention Program has been shown to reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes by 58%. But expanding on the idea to reach more people has proved a challenge. First Mile care is scaling up the prevention platform that includes a physician prescribing the program and conducting the program in the patient's community. Cohen said the company is now entering a growth phase.

A second example is Zing Health, which offers a Medicare Advantage plan built around community and health outcomes. The company uses technology to directly connect patients with physicians, taking social context, local health care system nuances and a customer's unique health care barriers into account. Physicians brought the idea, which focuses on underserved populations, to Health2047.

Health2047's goal is to transform the health care system so it meets the needs of physicians and patients come mid-century. The year 2047 will be the AMA's 200th anniversary.

Dr. Madara, board chair for Health 2047, said in the coming years they hope to achieve their goal of freeing up physicians' time. Now, for every one hour that physicians spend face to face with a patient, they spend two hours doing administrative work. Dr. Madara said the goal is flip that ratio. They also hope to continue to prevent and combat chronic disease through new innovations.

"One aspiration is to make enough progress so you can think of medicine in a different way, financially," he said. "Right now, it's all about cost ... there is no revenue ledger and the revenue ledger should be that if you prevent diabetes, if you take care of chronic disease, if you get people back to work and employment in an efficient way by preventing disease in the future, you can measure that as an increase" in the gross domestic product.

Other episodes of "So You Want to Transform Health Care" touch on democratizing clinical trials, innovative approaches to obesity prevention, and more. Subscribe in Apple Podcasts or the podcast platform you prefer.