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Top 3 Pain Points in the Health Industry

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Startup Weekend Health + Fitness Edition: June 12 to 14, 2015.
[Tickets on sale here.](#)

From left to right, Dr. Bobby Green of Flatiron Health, an attendee asking a question, Derek Flanzraich of Greatist, Michael Kopko of Oscar Health Insurance, Fon Powell of SALT LLC, and Calvin Hwang of CityMD. (Photos by Frank Fukuchi)

We had a full house at the latest Startup Weekend NYCs: Health and Fitness Edition panel, lead by Amanda Goboud and Kimberly



Hall. This event attracted entrepreneurs looking to network, VCs looking to assess disruptive technology, and professionals in the healthcare industry looking to tap into the healthcare startup world.

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The panel discussion could be summarized in one word:

DATA

While there are many problems and inefficiencies in the health and wellness industry, the biggest of them seems to stem from data, which brings us to our first healthcare pain point.

Portability and transmissibility of patient data

- Information often gets lost or is in a useless form (e.g. filed on paper, illegible). In other words, important data is often unstructured and therefore unusable.
- Data in health care can be complicated and proprietary. Companies are hiring engineers to extract data, normalize it, and add it to a single common database. Companies still struggle to pull data from many sources and require engineers to weed through and develop common data models.
- There are massive privacy, regulatory, and security issues in medical data. There are currently no laws about data sharing in the healthcare industry. This means large healthcare institutes are not sharing data and there is still a competitive threat to share data.

The second pain point in the health industry that we heard about was about communication:

Clinicians are not able to communicate easily with one another



- We have largely uncoordinated health systems databases, make it hard to share information!
- It is currently difficult to build integrated holistic patient care in a disintegrated health care industry where hospital system policy, government, and insurance companies all have diverging interests.
- We don't have a patient focused healthcare system because companies are more interested in both protecting themselves and growing within their own system.

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The final healthcare pain point starts with, as with any industry, cost and time. The healthcare and fitness industries are booming with monitoring and predictive tools that will help consumers assess their own health. How can these tools integrate into the healthcare system and help individuals prevent long term health complications?

Slow adoption of preventive monitoring and predictive tools by the healthcare industry

- There are many diagnostic tools and monitoring technologies that will allow us to make more informed patient care decisions earlier on. Insurance companies and health care systems are slowly adopting these technologies. How can we speed up this process?
- While prevention has higher initial costs, it saves money long term. Unfortunately, insurance companies don't want to pay for unnecessary treatments, even though they may prevent future and higher costing treatments.



- Datasets can now provide inferences into how future complications can be prevented. Datasets can help predict and prevent unintended hospitalizations.
- There is a small subset of the patient population that incur significant costs for insurance companies. Most of their investment goes to these critical cases. High costs are caused in part by the tremendous *lack of health care coordination* for the most sick patient, who require the most attention. How can we fix this?
- FDA doesn't have the manpower to regulate apps. Average FDA clearance time is 1 year!!

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Take away: People need to realize that they own their own data. When they visit a health professional, they have the right to ask for it. We need to shift the focus from business to consumer. Treatment and prevention lies in the hands of the individual. Companies are now working harder than ever to empower individuals to take control of their own health through prevention techniques, monitoring tools, and the availability of health data.

Startup Weekend NYC health and Fitness edition is coming up this weekend. We now know that **data needs to be consolidated** (made both useful and useable), **used to help individuals** (prevention / prediction), and **go into the right hands** (clinicians work together in a more holistic way). Take these problems and bring them to Startup Weekend!

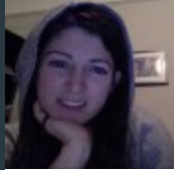
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Need more ideas? Panelists also listed inspiring telehealth and early detection companies such as Noom, a weight loss



tool, BluesStar, the first diabetes prevention tool approved by insurance companies, and ihealth, a wireless prevention tools that sync that with mobile platforms. Other great examples are Fitbit, Teledoc, and Daybreaker.

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