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News & Insights

In conversation with Tim Barry, Co-Founder & CEO of VillageMD – Annie Lamont

By [Annie Lamont](#), Managing Partner, Oak HC/FT

What is VillageMD?

VillageMD is a primary care management services company that enables primary care providers (PCPs) to realize the benefit of value-based care delivery. At VillageMD, we strive to be the best partner to PCPs so that they're able to deliver the best care for their patients and in a way that dramatically improves clinical outcomes and experiences, as well as significantly reduces total cost of care.

As a result of the changing economics of healthcare, we help PCPs think about what they can do differently and provide them with a combination of resources, data, technology and intellectual property to solve patient problems.

What are the biggest issues in your

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challenges you are addressing?

The U.S. healthcare system costs 2.5 times other industrialized nations yet still delivers inferior clinical outcomes. This has resulted in many PCPs being forced to do more with less. What VillageMD brings is a different way of thinking about healthcare so PCPs can feel they have the resources available to them, the knowledge about their patients, and a diverse set of processes to heal and see results from a better clinical and financial model.

How does technology play a role in your company?

At the core of our business is a human relationship between a physician and a patient. We believe it is our job to continue to foster that human interaction and service, and technology plays a core role in this.

For example, we identified in one of our markets that we had 1,800 commercial patients under the age of 65 suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder. The risk profile of these patients is nearly two times that of the “average” commercial population. Their access to healthcare, in terms of emergency room visits and hospitalizations, is through the roof. Yet, they still struggle with being able to have access to a defined clinical model that allows for PCPs and behavioral health specialists to partner with them to solve their health problems.

How we first identify these patients, and how we build the digital clinical maps detailing their care delivery, is driven by technology, claim and clinical data, and care delivery know-how. This includes how we schedule patients, talk to patients, see patients and document what’s going on with them – as well how we see all the different issues they face along their healthcare

journey. Technology gives us that insight and points us in the right direction to introduce solutions that enhance this human-to-human interaction.

What attracted you to Chicago? How is Chicago advantageous for startups?

In 1993, I read a journal article from Personnel Psychology titled “The People Make the Place,” which addressed organizations and the importance of people in shaping organizational culture. When you think about Chicago it’s hard not to think about the people as what makes the city an amazing place to live and an exciting environment for startups.

Chicago has an intelligent workforce that is community-driven, knows how to grind and has a level of grit. Chicago is the “City of the Big Shoulders”, after all. In a startup environment you have to have that combination of commitment to a cause greater than yourself; a desire to work hard and a level of intellect that allows you to identify problems before they manifest into something larger. The people of Chicago are truly what make it a great place for startups.

I think the financial community is starting to appreciate that. The capital deployed in Chicago has generally flowed into companies at a more mature stage with higher predictability of revenue and earnings. For startups, this has not always been ideal, but the mayor, city institutions and VCs like Oak HC/FT allow Chicago to have more entrepreneurs step out onto that ledge and know they have the right level of capital and support. Together with a friendly business community, we can make these startups successful.

What attracted me to Chicago was all of that and more. I am originally from a small town in northeast Wisconsin. I had lived in Chicago after graduate school

and then went out to the west coast and, later, Texas. The idea of coming closer to home was important and Chicago was my destination. It's a city I would encourage all people to live in and experience the best blend of what it offers: thriving culture, arts and sports scene (Go Cubs!); a beautiful location; supportive business community; and small-city feel.

What were the defining moments that led you to where you are today?

I have four. Firstly, I am blessed with an amazing family. I grew-up with parents that always encouraged me to dream big and see beyond what is in front of me. I am also ridiculously lucky to have a wife who is supportive and patient and always encouraged me to pursue things I am passionate about.

Next is my first startup, which by many definitions failed. I started a company in my mid-20s and poured every cent into it. We experienced some wonderful ups and some incredibly low lows. We were living in a worst-possible situation any startup could be in: doing well enough to keep going but not well enough to keep going. By many circumstances it was the first time in my life I looked myself in the mirror and said, 'I failed'. But it was an invaluable learning experience – to pour 20 hours into each workday and not come out with a positive outcome. It's humbling and only helps you sharpen what you're doing for the next three or four go-arounds.

As it relates to healthcare and VillageMD, there are two significant defining moments. First is when I started working at Blue Shield of California and helped create a return on investment model for a business case addressing congestive heart failure. The first meeting I

was ever in I fell in love with healthcare.

In that meeting, we talked about different solutions that the best and brightest minds in healthcare all over the country had developed for managing congestive heart failure. Not one solution contemplated the role that the PCP played in a successful outcome. I was surprised to see we were developing solutions that didn't involve the PCP, and only fragmented our healthcare system. That set me on a mission to identify a model bringing the best and brightest solutions to support physicians.

The last defining moment was working with Dr. Clive Fields, VillageMD Co-Founder and Chief Medical Officer, to establish a model for engaging PCPs around the country and working with large physicians groups or solo practitioners to realize that PCPs everywhere are struggling to deliver the kind of care they know is possible for their patients. If they have people working with and for them side by side we can realize better outcomes together.

Where do you hope to be, as an executive, in 5 years?

As an organization, in five years I hope to be working with several thousand PCPs across the country, which means VillageMD will be five years into a decades-long growth model. As an executive over the next five years, there will be a big push for us to build out a leadership team that embodies the same principles and focus on driving results for PCPs. That will allow me to spend more time in the field with PCPs, working with and talking to patients and providers, as well as working with our product development teams to think differently about what VillageMD can do for both providers and patients.

If I weren't a CEO I would be...

Home with my kids. They are truly phenomenal and a lot of fun to be around. The legacy that we leave through those little people is everything to me.

My favorite movie is...

"It's a Wonderful Life"

My favorite musician is...

Dave Matthews

My favorite hobby is...

Playing goalie in hockey

My favorite food is...

Chipotle Sofritas Salad

Do you have any pets?

Beyond my kids, I have a mischievous goldendoodle named Ollie.