

Driving Improvements in Health Coaching Outcomes Through Physician Collaboration and Coordination

LAURA GREENE: Welcome to Healthsounds, Conversations with Healthcare Innovators. This is Laura Greene for the Healthcare Intelligence Network. Today I am speaking with Dr. Rick Botelho, professor of Family Medicine at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Dr. Botelho is presenting at HIN's webinar "Driving Improvements in Health Coaching Outcomes Through Physician Collaboration and Coordination." Welcome and thanks for joining me today doctor.

DR. RICK BOTELHO, PROFESSOR OF FAMILY MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER: Thank you.

LAURA GREENE: To begin with, as a physician, how has collaborating with health coaches impacted your practice?

DR. RICK BOTELHO: Nothing like as much as I would like. Unfortunately health coaching is fragmented and poorly organized into primary care.

LAURA GREENE: How are your patients responding to this relatively new wave of treatment?

DR. RICK BOTELHO: Well actually patients are extremely interested in health coaching and innovative healthcare plans are developed in different kinds of programs for patients, such as group classes, online learning programs, telephonic support. Some organizations even have departments of health promotion to provide a variety of health coaching opportunities. But unfortunately health coaching is poorly coordinated into primary care.

LAURA GREENE: Thank you doctor. I understand that you're coming out with the next edition of your book entitled, "Motivate Healthy Habits: Helping Yourself and your Patients Change."

DR. RICK BOTELHO: Yes it's a leadership guide for educators, trainers, practitioners, learning organizations and communities.

LAURA GREENE: So where do you think this field of health coaching is heading in terms of working with physicians in primary care settings?

DR. RICK BOTELHO: Well I'm sure most of your listeners have heard of the chronic care model using evidence based guidelines for changing risk behaviors. Yet, these guidelines only work for about 20 percent of patients in primary care. We also need new models of integrating health coaching into primary care that addresses the limitations of evidence based guidelines. Even then we'll not have enough health coaches to meet the needs of our population. In addition to health coaching, we need innovative learning methods for helping patients understand and address their own resistance to changing their own health behaviors.

LAURA GREENE: I see. How can you help individuals overcome their resistance to changing their unhealthy habits?

DR. RICK BOTELHO: Well the learning process of developing what I'm calling personal evidence can help you overcome your own resistance to changing your unhealthy habits. I mean none of us have got perfect health habits. And in order to actually do this we need to go beyond what I'm calling surface change, and surface change involves, increasing our knowledge, having good intentions, like New Year's resolutions, setting goals. If that works, that's fine. But if it doesn't, we have to go a step further to explore what I'm calling deep change. And making deep change can involve a number of different activities. For example, it might involve changing your perceptions about how you perceive the risks, benefits and harms, about your unhealthy habits. It could involve exploring or addressing your differences and your values between what you say and what you actually do.

For example we all say that we value our health but we don't always do it. How do you deal with that discrepancy? And lastly, learning how to lower your emotional resistance in order to develop effective motivation to change? Now these learning processes can help you overcome the limitations of evidence-based guidelines. So we need new ways of dealing with the fact that most of us don't change when we're using evidence-based guidelines.

LAURA GREENE: Thanks doctor. So where do you begin to help your patients improve their health habits?

DR. RICK BOTELHO: Well that's an interesting question because I think we need to start with ourselves. Gandhi said, "be the change you wish to see in the world." And interesting enough, Margaret Moore in her talks also spoke about the need for physicians being role models to their patients in terms of adopting healthier habits. But I would like to expand this idea to the whole healthcare team and staff. Collaborative self guided change learning methods could help you, your colleagues and staff, develop healthier habits. So working in collaboration with your colleagues and staff you can begin to share your learning experiences and support each other in making health improvements. This sort of collaborative learning process can help your leadership group create more of a health promoting culture. And in turn develop a learning organization about how to promote healthy behavior change.

LAURA GREENE: Thanks doctor. What are the benefits of using experience based learning methods to develop such a learning organization?

DR. RICK BOTELHO: Evidence-based guidelines and experience based learning methods represent equal halves of the performance equation. And what I mean by that is when evidence-based guidelines don't work we need to rely on our experiences to work

around them. Now evidence-based guidelines provide the foundation for developing your health coaching programs. Such scientific evidence can raise the floor of your organizational performance, but only personal evidence can break through the ceiling.

LAURA GREENE: How can our listeners learn more about these innovative ideas and new models of care?

DR. RICK BOTELHO: For those of you who are particularly interested in learning more about developing learning organizations, you can download a PDF file of the pre-publication version of this book preface and introduction. And you may want to consider sending this podcast to your colleagues to see if they're interested as well. I'm hoping that it will stimulate you to ask some interesting questions on the conference call and I really look forward to talking to you more on this vitally important topic.

LAURA GREENE: Thank you Dr. Botelho. Those are all the questions I have for you today. Thanks for being with us and we're looking forward to hearing from you during the webinar. To register or get more information about this webinar, please call 1-888-446-3530. This is Laura Greene for the Healthcare Intelligence Network.