



PROFESSION & PRACTICE

War of the Tech Titans: We Must Be Included

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The aging population is driving major investments in health monitoring services. The usual Google, Apple and Amazon lineup now [includes Comcast](#), which is looking to parlay its cable services position into health detection.¹

The big money is currently focused on helping seniors live longer independently in their homes. Apple has added fall tracking and heart health to its smartwatches. Other tech titans are assembling their own lists of features that will appeal to our aging boomers.

Comcast's foray will include the use of ambient sensors, which is a nice way of saying it will track your every movement. For seniors living on their own, this can include detecting falls, frequent trips to the bathroom and how long someone has been in bed.

The advances in health care technology are something I have been monitoring for years. I continue to believe there will [come a day](#) in the not-too-distant future when the way patients walk, stand or move will demonstrate they need chiropractic care.²

Think this is far-fetched? Consider the recently announced [smartphone app](#) that detects fluid behind the eardrum of a child with an earache using the phone's microphone and speaker.³



Just over a year ago, I shared [several initiatives](#) that brought us closer to this reality through the use of smartphone apps. This included a Bluetooth-connected molecular sensor, as well as evolutions in making data more sharable.⁴

The recent Comcast revealing anticipates pilot services as early as the end of this year, "with potential commercial release in 2020." Its army of home-installation technicians puts Comcast in a very enviable position, particularly for less tech-savvy consumers.

But the challenge to chiropractic is not one of technology, but preparedness.

While health monitoring software may ultimately be linked to patients' personal health records, few DCs are prepared to access those records in a timely manner – if at all. The concept of using this type of technology to enhance patient care is not even a consideration for most of us.

To maintain our position as viable health providers, we must be willing to look outside our normal routines and begin to see what the near future holds. Working relationships with medical specialists and hospitals will help to increase our chances of inclusion. Isolation is no longer an advantage.

Sooner or later, you will have to make the technology jump. This may involve a healthy investment in software, as well as a significant change in how you practice. Now might be a good time to begin contributing to a "technology fund" so when the time comes, you can make the required investment to ensure your inclusion.

A new era in health care delivery is fast approaching. Multiple monitoring devices will work in concert to produce data that will initiate both care and coverage. Patient choice will likely be confined to those who can utilize that data to deliver care that demonstrates results.

The results side is where chiropractic will shine. The concern is that not every DC will be ready to flourish in this new health care reality. Food for thought.

References

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 3. "First Smartphone App That Can Hear Ear Infections in Children." Science Daily, May 15, 2019.
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