

The

# INSIDE STORY<sup>®</sup>

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# EVERYONE NEEDS A HELPING HAND... ESPECIALLY FOR TACKLING CHRONIC CONDITIONS

When it comes to making lifestyle changes to prevent or manage chronic conditions, most of us know the drill—we know what to do, it's the actual doing that's the problem. Behaviour-change experts agree that long-lasting change is most likely when it's self-motivated and based on positive thinking. But just how does a plan member become self-motivated and develop a positive mindset? As we've mentioned (a few times), plan members may need a nudge to budge toward self-reliance. Unfortunately, as the health system exists today, and has existed for decades, it is rare that they would get that nudge.

## The doctor is helpful, but...

Our premise: Canada is poor at preventing and managing chronic disease. The numbers are poor, and they are predicted to get worse. If the family doctor is your plan member's first stop for preventing and managing chronic conditions, it probably shouldn't be their last. For plan members to make important lifestyle changes, they need a more time-consuming, structured approach that involves providing education, motivation, and follow up. However, our traditional doctor/patient model is focused on simply telling us what to do—a disease-treatment focus—rather than actually helping us change behaviour. In addition, the system tends to be reactive rather than prevention-focused.

## The nudge they need in the form of health coaching

Research shows that health education on its own—as well as health education combined with peer support—does not typically lead to lasting behaviour change. However, the addition of support in the form of coaching to increase the patient's skills and confidence in managing their condition and setting realistic goals can be significantly *more effective* than education alone. This may be the case because central to health coaching is instilling the philosophy of self-management—precisely the component that has been shown to be essential for long-term, consistent behaviour change. As the term coach implies, health coaching is the process whereby a *health professional, not specifically a physician*:

- Helps patients to achieve their health goals—whether prevention or management—by motivating and supporting them to take responsibility for their progress.
- Provides support every step of the way from setting realistic goals and overcoming barriers to receiving ongoing follow up.
- Uses a variety of approaches to support patients; health coaching over the phone and Internet has been shown to be not only as effective as in-person coaching but also much more cost effective.

Call it coaching or call it nudging, either way, the outcome is that plan members become self-motivated. And there's more good news, health coaching is becoming more easily accessible. A range of health professionals—including pharmacists, dietitians, nurses, and exercise physiologists—are increasingly involved in health coaching in a variety of settings.

**Research across various countries, including Canada, indicates the length of the average doctor appointment as ranging from five to 15 minutes.<sup>1</sup>**

### *A 2013 study shows that:*

- Canada ranks last among 11 OECD countries in terms of how quickly people can get in to see their regular family doctors.<sup>2</sup>
- Only 31 to 46 per cent of Canadians could get an appointment the same day or the next day.<sup>3</sup>
- Between three and 15 per cent of Canadians do not have a regular doctor or clinic.<sup>4</sup>
- A similar 2010 study found that Canadians report the longest waits for a specialist appointment.<sup>5</sup>

## Health coaching is right around the corner...at the pharmacy

We decided to hit the streets to hear some firsthand accounts of health coaching. Turns out we didn't have to go far, in fact we didn't even make it out of the building because first we met up with GSC's very own Pharmacy Strategy Leader Ned Pojskic.

Before joining GSC, Ned worked at the Ontario Pharmacist Association (OPA) and spearheaded a study done in partnership with GSC to examine the impact of a pharmacist-led hypertension management program. If this sounds familiar, it's because we previously covered the study in *The Inside Story*<sup>®</sup>.

Regarding the impact of pharmacist health coaching from the study, Ned explains, "The OPA/GSC study shows a variety of positive outcomes, for instance, that pharmacist health coaching can improve medication adherence and that the pharmacy setting is a natural focal point for a variety of disease management activities. People are going to the pharmacy to fill their prescriptions, so it is just a logical extension that the pharmacist discusses disease management. Interaction at the pharmacy also allows the pharmacist to promote disease prevention, through efforts such as immunizations. As we know, where there is one chronic condition, there is often soon to be two, so if the pharmacist can help control blood pressure, they may also be helping to reduce cardiovascular issues and diabetes."

### For more details...

To get the full scoop on the study—*The Impact on Community Pharmacist Interventions in Hypertension Management on Patient Outcomes: A Randomized Controlled Trial*—visit the GSC website at [greenshield.ca](http://greenshield.ca) and check out the February 2014 edition of *The Inside Story*.

At the same time, however, pharmacy as a profession is currently undergoing tremendous change as it transitions from a product to a service focus. Some of these changes are putting immense pressure on the traditional pharmacy business model, creating additional time and resource challenges for the delivery of the new services such as health coaching. Until this professional transition process is completed, pharmacies will likely continue to experience challenges in consistently delivering these services to all patients who could benefit from them.

Despite some of these challenges, Ned feels that today pharmacist health coaching is more necessary than ever: "Although the beneficial role of pharmacists in disease management—of hypertension, asthma, diabetes, and high cholesterol—has been well documented for over 30 years, there has more recently been a much greater recognition of the value and impact of these services by payers—both public and private. In part, this is due to the fact that we're facing the perfect storm of factors all pushing the health care system toward change—the aging population, the rising incidence of chronic conditions, the restraints on doctors, the mounting pressures on the health care system from numerous directions, the increasingly complex drug environment...change is a must."

## Is pharmacist health coaching the way of the future—or just a fad?

To answer this question, where better to go for insight than the very place that produces pharmacists. So next we reached out to David Edwards who is the Hallman Director of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Waterloo.

Established in 2008, the School of Pharmacy at the University of Waterloo is relatively new—something that David recognizes as an opportunity: "We are able to imagine what the future is going to be like and continually build our program to fit with that future." David elaborates that a major part of the future is recognizing that "the pharmacist role goes well beyond just dispensing medications; pharmacists are the medication management experts in the health care system. And as medication management experts, there is a major role for pharmacists to play in terms of preventing and managing chronic conditions." Like Ned, David feels that health coaching is a big part of this role—health coaching is here to stay and grow.

Recognizing the significant impact pharmacists can make through health coaching, the University of Waterloo is poised to be a leader. The pharmacy program weaves elements of health coaching into its curriculum. Pharmacy students learn how to help patients understand their condition, set realistic goals, and overcome challenges.

So what's next? Both Ned and David see the pharmacist of the future continuing to engage with patients but in new ways to further emphasize their patient focus. However, this will require developing a business model that makes it possible for pharmacists to provide additional cognitive services and receive reimbursement for their time and expertise.

### The next generation of pharmacists

Leading the way to where pharmacy is headed, the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy:

- Develops the full potential of pharmacists with innovative courses like motivational interviewing and communication built into the curriculum.
- Assesses applicants' communication skills even during the admission process.
- Offers co-operative education so that by the time pharmacy students graduate, they have had 18 months of real-life experience.

## From the pharmacy to the grocery store...

Next it was off to the grocery store to see another type of health care professional that is actively providing health coaching out in the community. Five years ago, Loblaw Companies Limited started offering a range of dietitian services, as well as their Guiding Star program, which rates the degree that foods are nutritious—three stars is the highest possible rating. Now there are 69 dietitians in Loblaw stores across Canada.

Alexis Williams, Senior Director Wellness at Loblaw Companies Limited, explains that there are a wide variety of dietitian services available for people of all ages regarding any nutritional concerns they may have. For example, plan members could take part in a grocery store tour where a dietitian guides them through the aisles educating about healthy food choices.

There is also the option of a nutrition check-up, which involves one-on-one nutritional health coaching with a dietitian. As Alexis elaborates, "Each coaching session is completely personalized. First the dietitian conducts a needs assessment that covers health and diet history, and personal nutrition goals. During the next session, based on the assessment and goals, the dietitian provides personalized nutrition recommendations. Then during follow-up sessions the dietitian monitors progress and provides nutritional support until the person meets their goals."

And how have the dietitian services been received? Alexis says that the feedback has been very positive—people are seeing concrete results. Just like it's effective for pharmacists to provide coaching at the pharmacy, it's proving effective for dietitians to provide coaching at the grocery store. As Alexis explains, "Providing healthy eating education and support right in the grocery store provides people with practical recommendations that they can act on right away—right on the spot as they do their shopping."

### DIETITIAN HEALTH COACHING IN ACTION...



A man with diabetes was told by his doctor that vision issues and leg pain were due to high blood-glucose readings. But what next? Fortunately, a friend recommended he check out the dietitian services at Loblaws.

Working with the dietitian, he explained that he had a family history of diabetes but had never watched what he ate because he didn't fully understand the connection between diet and health. His diet was high in processed foods, and he didn't know how to read labels. With the support of the dietitian, since May 2015 he has:

- Reversed his vision issues and no longer has any leg pain
- Managed his blood sugar so it is now under control
- Started walking, biking, and kayaking regularly without any issues
- Learned to read labels and prepare food from scratch at home
- Began to regularly eat vegetables (and even enjoy them!)
- Lost about 20 pounds

But is dietitian health coaching just a fad? “Health coaching, like motivational interviewing, has always been a big component of dietitian training and is a skill set that dietitians have always had,” explains Alexis. “I think we will see more instances of dietitian health coaching as our profession continues to emphasize taking a client-centred approach. The dietitian’s goal is to take a collaborative approach to help people, not prescriptive—because education and support is what will help people make lifestyle changes that are sustainable.”

## Nudging plan members toward lasting behaviour change

Although our health care system is not currently structured to effectively prevent or manage chronic conditions, health coaching in the community can help nudge plan members toward behaviour change. They can learn to take charge of their own health! All they need is a helping hand... starting at the pharmacy and at the grocery store.

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### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> “Best Advice, Panel Size,” The College of Family Physicians of Canada, 2012. Retrieved February 2016: [http://www.cfpc.ca/Best\\_Advice\\_Panel\\_Size/](http://www.cfpc.ca/Best_Advice_Panel_Size/) and “Effects of interventions aimed at changing the length of primary care physicians’ consultation (Review),” Andrew D Wilson, Susan Childs, Cochrane Library, January 26, 2006. Retrieved February 2016: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>

<sup>2,3,4</sup> “Canadian patients wait longest to see family doctors,” CBC News, January 20, 2014. Retrieved February 2016: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/canadian-patients-wait-longest-to-see-family-doctors-1.2501468>

<sup>5</sup> “Health Care in Canada 2012, A Focus on Wait Times,” Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2012. Retrieved February 2016: [https://secure.cihi.ca/free\\_products/HCIC2012-FullReport-ENweb.pdf](https://secure.cihi.ca/free_products/HCIC2012-FullReport-ENweb.pdf)

# OUT & ABOUT... EVENTS NOT TO MISS

## CAILBA 2016 National Conference and AGM – March 29-31, 2016

Queen’s Landing, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

<http://cailba.com/cailba-2016-national-conference-agm/>

## Benefits & Pension Summit – March 31-April 1, 2016

Sheraton Centre, Toronto, Ontario

<http://www.benefitscanada.com/conferences/benefits-and-pension-summit>

*GSC’s very own David Willows will be speaking, so check it out.*

# COMMUNITY GIVING PROGRAM

HERE'S HOW WE **ADD TO THE GREATER GOOD...**



## Paving the way for a brighter future

### Take a look at how our grant recipients are making a difference

Frontline care—like dental services, vision care, prescription drugs, disease management, and mental health supports—can act as a catalyst for change. That's why the GSC Community Giving Program is focused on supporting organizations and initiatives that provide frontline care for underinsured or uninsured populations. And all grant recipients include a navigator component—this means ongoing positive change as clients are referred to any additional services they may need.



#### **Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation—Family Assertive Community Treatment**

Children dealing with mental and behavioural issues whose parents are also dealing with serious issues often enter the care of the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society. For these children to get the help they need, they are regularly relocated to other communities. The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation's Family Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) program helps the parents and children enhance family functioning so that more children can remain at home. During the program and beyond, a navigator ensures that the families receive ongoing support. GSC funding will directly support the families with transportation, recreational activities, and other services. To learn more, contact [www.wecaf.on.ca](http://www.wecaf.on.ca)

#### **Windsor Residence for Young Men—Youth Mental Health Navigator**

The mission of the Windsor Residence for Young Men is to provide transitional housing support to homeless and at-risk young men with the goal of preparing them for independent living. A main barrier is mental health issues. Accordingly a youth mental health navigator is an essential role to meet with each resident to identify mental health needs, support residents preparing for independent living, connect youth to community resources, provide ongoing support to past residents, and reach out to young men who may need help. GSC funding will make the navigator role possible. To learn more, visit [www.wrym.ca](http://www.wrym.ca), [www.facebook.com/windsorresidenceforyoungmen/](https://www.facebook.com/windsorresidenceforyoungmen/), and <http://twitter.com/WRYMresidence/>

#### **Maryvale Children's Mental Health Centre—Teaching Families Mental Health Strategies and Self Care**

Maryvale is a Windsor children's mental health treatment centre that treats adolescents who are experiencing very serious emotional, psychological, and mental distress. The centre's Teaching Families Mental Health Strategies and Self Care program teaches youth how to better manage their disruptive emotions and helps parents to more effectively support their children. Central to the program is the coach role who not only teaches the strategies but also acts as a navigator by helping the families make connections with community supports like budgeting services, educational help, and respite services. GSC funding will make the coach role possible. For more information, visit [www.maryvale.ca](http://www.maryvale.ca).



## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA JOINS THE PAN-CANADIAN PHARMACEUTICAL ALLIANCE

As part of the federal government's commitment to reducing prescription drug costs and improving access, Canada's federal government joined the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance. The federal government's drug benefits cover First Nations and Inuit, the RCMP, the Canadian Forces, veterans, federal inmates, and refugee claimants.

The Alliance negotiates lower prices on brand-name drugs and also works to reduce the cost of generic drugs. This combined negotiating power results in more savings, increases access to drugs, and improves consistency of pricing and coverage criteria across Canada. Now as a member of the Alliance, the federal government joins Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon.

**What does this mean for your plan?** The price reductions negotiated by the Alliance result in lower costs for both public and private plans. For example, since the Alliance's inception in 2012 it has negotiated reduced prices for 14 generic drugs, as well as established pricing agreements for a number of brand-name drugs. The addition of the federal government provides the Alliance with even stronger buying power, which should result in more savings.

For more information, visit the government of Canada website at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1028339>

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## THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA RELEASES NEXT HEALTHY BRAINS AT WORK REPORT

The Conference Board of Canada released the second report in its four-part research series: *Health Brains at Work*. The report—*Healthy Brains at Work: Employer-Sponsored Mental Health Benefits and Programs*—investigates the prevalence of employer-sponsored benefits and programs in Canada that address employee mental health.

Based on a survey of 239 Canadian employers, the report describes how mental health benefits and programs differ among employers and industries. It discusses the guidelines and standards employers use to implement their mental health strategy, as well as the challenges and barriers employers face when implementing a mental health strategy or policy. It also includes case studies of three organizations that have developed mental health programs and practices.

The first report in the series—*Healthy Brains at Work: The Footprint of Mental Health Conditions*—investigates the prevalence of mental health conditions in Canada's working population and the importance of addressing employee mental health issues. The final two reports will focus on the impact of establishing mental health benefits and workplace programs.

For more information and to download the report, visit The Conference Board of Canada website at: [www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=7707](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=7707)

## WHAT'S UP AT GSC...

### Coming Soon

We're getting a head start on our spring cleaning this year, starting with a brand-new corporate website that is really going to knock your toques off. Using the latest web technology, the site will offer an optimal user experience and a sleek new design. We'll also be adding some great new features—but we can't share those details quite yet—so stay tuned for more info!

### Fitbits!

We're excited to announce the latest addition to our Change4Life™ health management portal—Fitbits! Since their release, Fitbits have been popping up on wrists everywhere, and given their effectiveness in tracking daily activity, they are a natural fit for the Change4Life portal. Now plan members can synch their Fitbits with their Change4Life dashboard to earn points for the activity they track.

### March Haiku

Coach up plan members  
Replacing physicians, no  
But adding new tools

## WINNER OF THE DRAW FOR A FITBIT

Congratulations to J.Rice, of Cameron, Ontario, the winner of our monthly draw for a Fitbit. Through this contest, one name will be drawn each month from plan members who have registered for Plan Member Online Services.



[greenshield.ca](http://greenshield.ca)

<b>London</b>	1.800.265.4429	<b>Vancouver</b>	1.800.665.1494
<b>Toronto</b>	1.800.268.6613	<b>Windsor</b>	1.800.265.5615
<b>Calgary</b>	1.888.962.8533	<b>Montréal</b>	1.855.789.9214
	<b>Customer Service</b>		1.888.711.1119