

# Primary Care Cures

## Episode 115: Dr. Innocent Clement

Ron Barshop:

You know most problems in health care are fixed already. Primary care is already cured on the fringes, reversing burnout, physician shortages, bad business models, forced buyouts, factory medicine, high deductible insurance squeezes the docs and is totally inaccessible to most of the employees. The big squeeze is always on for docs. It's the acceleration of cost, deceleration of reimbursements. I want you to meet those in this show that are making a difference. With us, Ron Barshop, CEO of Beacon Clinics, that's me.

Ron Barshop:

My macro worldview really is based strictly on data, not opinion, and that this was an opportune moment in history for government-funded elimination of independent physician practices. How so? Well, the past eight years have seen more primary cares gobbled up like a Pac-Man than in the 30 years before that. The days of the independent PCP is down to only 30% of all docs. And other practices bought by big systems and private equity now own more than half of all docs, as of 2019. So, that was the crossover year.

Ron Barshop:

Hospitals have two giant lobbies: the American Hospital Association, and its private version, which is American Federation of Hospitals. And they should get a Nobel Prize or something like that because they achieved the Grand Poobah, the unbelievable gold ring, which is \$175-billion grant paid to every hospital in America for this pandemic's losses. Now, we know, because they're reporting on the media what their losses were, and it appears that their losses were about 10% of this massive \$175 billion Marshall Plan, which had virtually zero strings attached. You can't the balance bill, but there's hardly any other strings attached. This act of congressional generosity, if you want to call it that, I would call it kowtowing, known as the second Marshall Plan, cost us 20% more than the original, which kept Europe and Japan in our orbit after World War II. So, for the first Marshall plan in the '50s, we got world peace and trading partners and stability. And this new Marshall Plan gave us nothing, other than doubling the strategic reserves of your favorite local monopoly: your hospitals.

Ron Barshop:

And I've been through the annual reports of the top 20 hospitals, all listed in the U.S. News & World Report, and guess what? They've doubled their strategic reserves. They had plenty of billions of dollars of liquid cash, venture capital, hedge fund, stock and bond money that they could've used to weather this crisis. No, they needed federal tax dollars. So, your senators and my senators and your congressmen and my favorite congressmen have all unanimously funded this final push to take over independents who were crushed by nine weeks of barely any patient volume.

Ron Barshop:

So, the pandemic headlines. Number one, we're going to have a lot more deaths from the ripple effect than we ever got from the pandemic. And number two, this crisis led to 100% takeover of factory medicine and sick care system that we all really equally hate on this show.

Ron Barshop:

Well, today, our guest is really an interesting new evolution. We are pulling back the curtains on June 5th of a company called EVOLVD Health, and it's a multidisciplinary digital health functional medicine platform. A lot of people don't know what functional medicine is, so it's really medicine that gets ahead of the problem before it becomes a problem. And so, there's three areas, and I can't help but believe there's going to be a lot more than three, that they concentrate in with this digital platform: lifestyle, mental, and sexual health. So, it's a 360-degree whole-body approach, and that's why I think it's a lot more than just these three initially. But our guest today, Innocent Clement, is a physician, a functional medicine physician. He's got a master's in public health, an MBA. He's educated at Columbia and Harvard, and he also did a stint at McKenzie. And he also led Kaia Health, which you may have heard of, initiative here in the U.S, and so he was one of those co-founders, as well as now EVOLVD Health, without an "E" at the end. Innocent, welcome to the show.

Innocent Clement:

Thank you so much, welcoming me to the show. I'm excited to also share what EVOLVD Health is all about.

Ron Barshop:

Well, for our listeners who don't know what functional... we have a pretty educated listener, so most of them are going to know what functional health and precision medicine is, but can you just give those that haven't been aware of it what this means when you're getting a functional health doctor on your team?

Innocent Clement:

Absolutely. Thank you again. Yeah. And I'm happy to share some insight into the difference between functional medicine and the conventional medicine. So, again, as you're all aware, the conventional medicine, it's disease-oriented. It also doctor-centered. Everyone is treated the same. And it's specialized. Diagnosis is based on symptoms, early detection of diseases.

Innocent Clement:

But, again, for functional medicine, it's health-oriented, patient-centered. It's holistic. It looks at the underlying cause of diseases. We also look at the biochemical of every individual. So, every individual is unique. And also, there's a preventive approach to it.

Innocent Clement:

So, if you put that side by side, you see that, I mean, again, like I mentioned, it's patient-centered. So, the conventional medicine right now that we have, it's doctor-centered, right? So, we think it's important to be able to empower the patient. What we do here at the functional medicine platform is to empower the patient to make decisions that is related to their health, and then help to optimize them, looking at it from a holistic, 360-degree approach.

Ron Barshop:

So, you're going to give them a care plan, whether they're sick, chronic, acute, or healthy. And the care plan may look like walking more. It may look like more stretching, maybe a yoga class. Maybe it's going to an acupuncturist. What does a care plan look like for let's call it a millennial healthy? And then what would a care plan look like for someone in their 50s or 60s who's healthy? And then let's talk more about the acute cases.

Innocent Clement:

Absolutely. Thank you again for that. It's a very important question. So, looking at it, like I said, again, from a functional medicine approach. So, for us, any person who is using the platform, we're looking at that individual. It's centered on that individual. We're looking at that individual as a unique individual that's completely different from every other individual.

Innocent Clement:

So, the journey, when you get into the EVOLVD platform, the first thing that you do is you probably have to create a profile as a patient. After that, you too will be able to also complete the questionnaires that relates to the area of [inaudible 00:07:10] condition that you're actually... maybe it's [inaudible 00:07:15] condition that actually you are interested in.

Innocent Clement:

So, once you do that, the next step is for you to be able to now talk to a doctor, right? So, that's one of the reason why we call it a multi-disciplinary approach because it gives you that. It's teamwork. So, it's the doctor. We have the dietician. We also have the health coaches that all will be looking at this individuals. But the first step is talk to the doctor, complete this questionnaire. The doctor look at this questionnaire, and look at it and then okay.

Innocent Clement:

You have one hour at least. So, for us, it's an hour with the doctor so that the doctor can get to know you, and understand you, why you're there, and then what you've been dealing with. Because if we look at currently how the conventional medications is now, as it is today, it's very more transactional. There's no patient-doctor relationship. So, functional medicine, it's patient-doctor relationship. It gives you an hour, where you and the doctor and the patient will probably get to know each other. The doctor will get to know you.

Innocent Clement:

And then after that steps, the doctor might order you, or call the functional labs where you might be required to probably... we'll send you the tool, the sample kits to your home where we'll collect samples, and then we'll analyze the samples.

Innocent Clement:

And then you as a patient also, like I said, it's a collaborative effort. The patient would have access to that sample through our platform, through the dashboard, where you can see what the details of the functional labs is.

Innocent Clement:

And then after that, the doctor now would recommend you either meet with a dietician or the health coach based on information the doctor is seeing on the labs.

Innocent Clement:

And then after that, the patient, the doctor, and either the dietician or the health coach would now actually look at this information and be able to provide you what we call a personalized plan. So, the approach is for every individual that is able to actually use technology.

Innocent Clement:

So, currently, we're looking at individuals from the age of 25 to 55, based on some of the analytics that we're looking for. We're looking at using the Google Analytics and some of the tools that we're using. We're seeing a lot of people from the age of 25 to 55.

Ron Barshop:

So, when you chose to get into functional medicine, did you like it because you can be more proactive and get ahead of the problem and actually... there's sort of a belief that, in America, you're going to just devolve, and you're eventually going to get heavy, and you're eventually going to get worse sleep, and you're eventually basically going to become a couch potato. And that's sort of the devolution of the American consumer and the American patient. But functional medicine has a different approach, doesn't it? How do you look at the patient differently, and get them off of that sort of let's call it declining treadmill?

Innocent Clement:

Absolutely. I mean, another great question because, again, you know how patient behavior is something that it's very difficult to change, but for [inaudible 00:10:07] that's why I said it's a collaborative approach: the doctor, the patient, the dietician, the health coach. So, we'll all sit down, look at this, and see how we can better support you, how we can better help you to optimize, and also be able to make you make decisions that would help support you through your healthcare journey. So, it has to be a collaborative approach. It's not really going to... that's why I said a lot of times it's patient-centered. So, patient would really be interested to, okay, looking at this, given that the patient has been dealing with that condition for a while, and then probably he's been looking for a solution, and he hasn't been able to find... or he or she hasn't been able to find something.

Innocent Clement:

So, when they come to us, we said, "Okay... " That's why we spend at least a minimum of one hour to get to know this patient, to be able to say, "Okay, welcome to EVOLVD Health. Yes, you're at the right place. And we're happy to all work together collaboratively and see how we can better support you and optimize you as a patient, to empower you make decisions." So, it must be a collaborative approach. There's no way we, as a provider, that we'll able to make that decision without a patient really willing to buy into it. So...

Ron Barshop:

So, I saw on your offering... so, it's for 99 a month up to roughly under 200 a month, you offer a mental health exam. That's sort of unusual. I'm not used to seeing mental built in, which, again, with all of the stresses built up at all the at-home isolation, I think there's going to be just a huge demand for psychological counseling and mental health. If somebody needs to see a psychiatrist or a psychotherapist after this, you're giving them one exam, it looks like, and a mental health check-up. Is that an extra fee on top of the 99 or 195 a month?

Innocent Clement:

No. So, there's no extra fee. So, the way we have it, we really to allow people to come in and then experience what the platform is offering. So, when they come in, they understand, again, for us, it's to be very transparent so people can see that we don't really want to have any hidden fees or anything. Very transparent. But other labs that we need to do, the patient would have to pay extra, but that, again, can be covered with your insurance, or you use your HSA, FSA card to cover that. But there's no anything extra, aside from that \$99 because that \$99, it's a monthly fee.

Innocent Clement:

And then we have a number of visit that the patient can visit in a year. So, for the \$99, I believe we have five doctors visit, five health coaches visit, and then also dieticians visit, right? So, if there's a need, then we'll probably sit down again with the patient to say, "Okay, you've already exhausted this visit. So, maybe we can probably move you, bump you into the comprehensive plan where you have more visits, which is the \$150, right? 199, I think. And you have more visit there so that you can utilize that.

Innocent Clement:

But the goal for us, again, if you come there to the platform for mental health, then you'll be able to meet with a psychiatrist. And also, again, the psychiatrist is not just looking at you, but, again, you have that one hour with a psychiatrist to be able to evaluate you to understand where you're coming from and see how he or she can better support you as a patient to be able to empower you, again, so that you'll be able to optimize this patient, right?

Innocent Clement:

And then, from that step, the next thing that you have to probably either meet with a... and then after the evaluation, looking at other labs, the biomarkers. Again, maybe there might be the need for us to order functional labs for you, again, to check and see, to ensure that we're not missing anything, right?

Innocent Clement:

So, then you would now recommend that, okay, maybe the psychiatrist who said, "Okay, you have a follow-up visit with a doctor again," which would probably be another 45 minutes. And then after that, you could meet... we would ask or recommend that you schedule an appointment with a therapy that will also provide you with a personalized plan. So, the doctor, the therapy, and any other provider, they would come together and provide you with a personalized plan that would suit you as a unique individual.

Ron Barshop:

So, we were talking about, before the show, you were going to mostly attract the individuals that have the extra spare change to do this, that want access to a functional medicine doctor. Are you licensed in all 50 states right now with your doctors? Or are you in the process of getting credentialed? Or what states can you serve right now?

Innocent Clement:

So, today, we can serve... we have about 10 states that we can serve right now as of today. All our providers are all licensed in all those 10 state. So, we also intend to take advantage of the emergency order that was signed into law by the current president, that doctors are allowed to practice across states line. But again, we're actually ramping up on our recruitment. We're recruiting doctors across the entire U.S. Most of our doctors have license in multiple states. So, it's a very good advantage for us. So, we carefully... Actually, when we're looking... during the hiring process, we identify doctors that have multiple license that can actually practice in other states, aside from where they are residing.

Ron Barshop:

So, you chose physical health, if you will, mental health, but you also chose sexual health, which is an kind of unique offering as well. Why those three areas? Why sexual health?

Innocent Clement:

Absolutely. That is another great question. So, and again, my background as a physician, again, I've seen a lot of that, a lot of patients who are dealing with the sexual health issues. A lot of them only... for men who are dealing with erectile dysfunction, only 30% of them actually go to see a doctor; 70% of them would not even go to see a doctor at all. They would rather go online and look for a solution. The reason for that is because there's a stigma associated with that, either they're also embarrassed to actually even go seek for help.

Innocent Clement:

So, before we actually launched EVOLVD Health, I conducted what we'll call a customer discovery interview to understand what are the patient's pain points, and get some more insight, and see how we can better support them. So, a lot of them, what they said is they want long-term treatment; they just don't want the short term. Because if you look at some other offerings, like Get Roman, for him, it's all... they sell a product. The product is all the Viagra, the Cialis, and all of that. But most of the patients are not happy with that because it's a short term. And you see that anyone who's also dealing with a sexual health issue, there's also a connection that a person could be dealing with a mental health issue as well.

Innocent Clement:

So, those three areas that we're looking at, there's a lot of stigma around them. So, for us, it was to be able to see how we can better support our patients who are dealing with this, either sexual health or mental health or the lifestyle health, and then be able to say, "You know what? You have access to quality care at your convenience, 24/7. You're able to log in, and talk to a doctor when you have a concern or you have questions. EVOLVD Health is open 24/7."

Innocent Clement:

So, the goal is for us to be able to look at those three core areas first. And then maybe, as we go forward, we'll probably be able to add some more areas to that, but right now, the focus is on these three core areas that have a lot of stigma associated with them. People who are dealing with this condition, most of them are embarrassed to actually openly discuss this condition. And, again...

Ron Barshop:

So, most of the functional medicine doctors I know will say, "They'll send me to a chiropractor potentially, a acupuncturist or acupressurist. They'll send me to get some nutraceuticals." Are those all handled by third parties, or do you have your preferred chiropractors and acupuncturists around the country that you refer to? I guess, as a patient, I would pay for that out of my pocket?

Innocent Clement:

Yes. A lot of that... I mean, I think it's something... if you look at that, most of them, either they're either covered by insurance. So, we have that, that you can either use insurance card to cover some of those visit, or for the functional medicine visit you know that, again, that's always an issue when it comes to the insurance, they don't really cover that, but we're also able to provide them with documentation that would help them to get reimbursement of... I mean, again, it might not be 100%, but yes, the expectation is you pay out of pocket. That's the goal for us.

Innocent Clement:

And also, like you said, regarding if we have partners that we can refer to. Yes. What we do is we also bring... again, that's what I call it a multi-disciplinary platform because it's not just the doctors or the dietician or the health coaches. So, we have therapies. We also have... most of our functional doctors who are currently signed up with us, a lot of them are also they have a background in chiropractic. So, we have a few of them on board as well, so we can work with them.

Innocent Clement:

And also, again, if, as a patient, you're not seeing, we're not seeing improvement. We have partners around the country that will can refer. So, we have our academic center that we're partnering with, that we're able to also send a patient there for the evaluation, if we're not really seeing improvement, and given that after all effort to see how we can better support you and get better. And then after a period of time, we're not seeing that improvement, we would now, at that stage and say, "Hey, you definitely need to go see a specialist," and most times will be our partners that we use as our referral centers.

Ron Barshop:

Well, you're certainly coming to this from a very interesting angle, and I hope one that primary care patients get and understand the value of how. Can people find you if they're looking up EVOLVD Health or [inaudible 00:19:28] for you, Innocent?

Innocent Clement:

Yeah. Absolutely. They can Google. You can type EVOLVD Health. We'll probably pop up there. We're on Twitter, EVOLVD Health MD. We're on Instagram EVOLVD Health Inc. we're also on LinkedIn, EVOLVD Health. And then on Facebook, EVOLVD Health MD as well. So...

Ron Barshop:

And EVOLVD does not have an "E" at the end. So, E-V-O-L-D. "D" as in Valentine's day. No "E" in the middle.

Innocent Clement:

Yes. Absolutely. [crosstalk 00:19:59]. It was intentional to [inaudible 00:19:59]. Yes.

Ron Barshop:

Okay. And if you had a banner that you could fly over America with one message for Americans, what would that banner read?

Innocent Clement:

I would say EVOLVD Health, healthcare that cares. So, what I'm in is we truly care about our patient. You come. You're at the right place. A platform where you will be able to... we'll focus on you as a patient. So, healthcare that cares, EVOLVD Health.

Ron Barshop:

[inaudible 00:20:29] cares, but you guys really, really, really, really care. The banner should be a little longer than that because there's a lot of people that pretend to care, but you guys really, truly care.

Innocent Clement:

Absolutely. Right. Yeah. We do really care. So, that's what we call it healthcare that cares.

Ron Barshop:

Yeah. Very nice. All right. Well, thank you again, and we'll be watching your progress, and thank you for joining the show.

Innocent Clement:

Thank you so much for having me.

Ron Barshop:

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