

Our future will be determined by how our communities manage chronic medical conditions.

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**Systems** supporting chronic care ideally will work throughout a community.  
This is the scale at which patients experience care through multiple resources, multiple organizations, multiple providers, friends and family.

**Patients** are valuable co-designers of health systems and processes.  
We include patients on all design teams.  
The team knows who to invite, just encourage them.  
Avoid advocates. Include active, experienced patients. They have compassion for us.

**Care managers**, of a special kind, are essential.  
They are the often missing link (continuous relationship for complex patients).

- Lifeguard (immediate action to save life and costs)
- Navigator (negotiate access, remove delays)
- Coach (increase patient activation and self management, support **behavior change**)
- Translator (help physicians, patients, and families understand each other)

There is a large opportunity when we can connect paid care managers with volunteer community resources in support of a much larger group of patients.

**Personal Health Records** are an essential technology, but not as many organizations are thinking of them.  
They support alliances and knowledge sharing for **behavior change**.  
The best one's will be designed by patients and for patients with chronic conditions.  
See [www.sharedcareplan.org](http://www.sharedcareplan.org) and <http://www.wvpp.org/users/0000002/>  
Supports involvement of each person's virtual care team--the patient invites and controls access.  
The PRINTED version, the artifact, stimulates the missing conversations.  
People talk about it. More productive conversations now occur--

- Between providers and patient
- Between patient and family
- Between relatives at risk for similar conditions

They must be patient "owned" and patient controlled if they are to result in behavior change.  
For maximum benefit and adoption it must not be limited or controlled by a part of the fractured health care "system". It must remain functional--

- No matter who your doctors are,
- No matter whether your doctors choose to use it on-line or not.

No matter which hospital you use.

No matter which health plan you use.

In other words it needs to be a "community" supported tool for communication and for the involvement of patients and anyone that helps them with their chronic conditions.