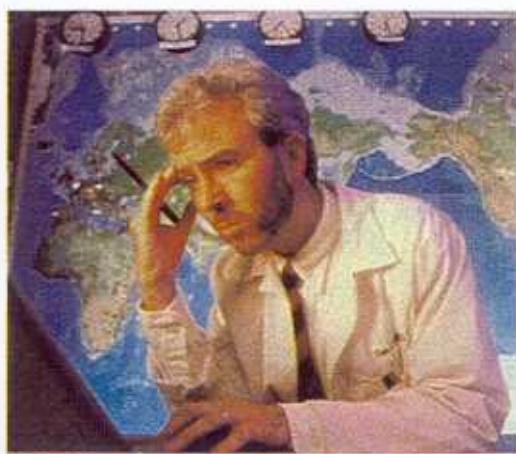


healthcare business

MARKET STRATEGY ■ FINANCE ■ TECHNOLOGY ■ INNOVATION

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Ideas | Distance Medicine Venture Sets Sail



DANIEL CARLIN, M.D.

THREE YEARS AGO, Daniel Carlin, M.D., an emergency medicine specialist, was working in relative obscurity on a business plan for a "distance medicine" venture that would provide healthcare services to those who travel or work overseas. Today, Carlin's company, WorldClinic Inc., has taken flight and is affiliated with the Lahey Clinic, the well-known multispecialty medical center in Burlington, Mass.

Carlin predicts his nine-employee startup, which currently has only 70 patient-members and \$50,000 in annual revenues, will have 1,000 members by next summer as it forges additional partnerships. In May, Lahey gave Carlin office space and access to its 300 physicians in return for 2.5 percent of WorldClinic's stock.

Carlin, a 39-year-old former Navy medical officer, credits a Russian sailor named

Viktor Yazykov for generating interest in the company. While participating last year in a solo yacht race around the world, Yazykov developed a serious abscess on his arm. Carlin, who was providing medical consultation for the race, e-mailed Yazykov instructions on how to perform self-surgery using the tools in his shipboard medical kit.

Publicity from the incident helped Carlin secure investments to expand his business in June. "[Yazykov's] case propelled me from obscurity to someone who was credible," Carlin says. "It was an incredibly powerful demonstration of the value of distance medicine."

WorldClinic members, who pay \$1,500 to \$3,500 annually, can call WorldClinic anytime to speak with an on-call physician about medical concerns. With a proprietary medical records system and a database of thousands of board-certified physicians worldwide, WorldClinic offers a full range of healthcare services, including medical advice by phone or e-mail; interpreting clinical test results; arranging consultations with physicians; and evacuating patients home.

"It's a terrific idea. There are no intermediaries—the patient can just pick up the phone and talk to a doctor," says Karen Moyer, Lahey Clinic's director of network development. The clinic has been expanding its services for corporate clients, Moyer says, and Carlin's concept fit well because so many employers are having difficulty finding people to work overseas, partly due to concerns about inadequate healthcare services.—S.S.