



Industry Briefing Papers 2016

NORTH AMERICA: UNITED STATES

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to spa, wellness, wellness travel or well-being?

Last year, the Global Wellness Summit identified the top shifts in wellness. One of those shifts was a movement towards mandatory wellness, by institutions and governments alike. Mandatory wellness must be affordable and accessible in order to work. The Harvard Business Review (2016) published yet another article about how America can't afford not to keep people well. I've spent the last eight years as an executive with the nation's largest Federally Qualified Health Center. Since 2009, the US health care system has been undergoing massive disruptions. Some would argue that the business community is suffering, others would say that new opportunities for industry have been created. 2016 has been a record-breaking year in mergers and acquisitions in the healthcare industry (Healthcare Finance News) as meaningful use drives the new paradigm of value-based care.

Meaningful use and value-based care are just fancy words for wellness. The rise in mergers and acquisitions has a direct correlation to the US healthcare industry's lack of expertise in 1) how to keep people well and 2) how to prove it using data and analytics. Both of these shortfalls, offer opportunities for wellness experts to fill a growing demand for wellness in America.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think is the most important development in your country for each of the following wellness sectors:

Spas:

Spas are increasingly embracing the intersection of integrative medicine, beauty and wellness.

Beauty:

Beauty can be oppressive and expanding the definition of beauty is imperative in today's world. For example, famed musical artist, Alicia Keys' choice to promote her natural beauty and not to wear make-up, has sparked much needed dialogue around this issue.

Fitness:

The rise of 'life coaching' in this field will help increase sustainable practices, as what has been lacking is more emphasis on behavioral change models.

Nutrition:

There is a rising consciousness about the benefits of a plant-based diet and the inter-connectedness of what we eat to environmental and social injustices globally.

Wellness Tourism:

As wellness tourism has declined in certain parts of the world due to fear, this has created opportunities for US wellness tourism to create new and interesting experiences for people to patronize here at home.

Wellness Communities or Real Estate:

Delos is making real headway through its Well Building Standard, which will take the expectations set by LEED to a whole different level of sustainability and responsibility.

3. Our theme this year is “Back to the Future.” What do you feel is your country’s most significant contribution to what is now a global wellness economy?

Our ability to innovate and find solutions. The American healthcare industry has a huge demand for wellness and a short supply. As this demand increases there are significant opportunities to provide solutions to these institutions, large and small. Whether it's Delos' model of creating well spaces and certifications or the possibility of outsourcing Weight Watchers to supply wrap-around services that help keep patient members well, innovation will pay.

Wellness can no longer be a luxury in the United States. Obamacare has effectively made it a right. America has been on the forefront of workplace wellness for decades and although the progress in that regard has been incremental, the demand for affordable and effective wellness programs continues to grow. Half of Americans earn less than \$50,000 annually and over 14% are still living in poverty, and they all want to be healthier. The US government through Medicaid and Medicare along with private insurers are willing to pay individuals and institutions money to help them figure out how.

4. What do you feel is the biggest challenge in your country when it comes to growing the wellness economy?

As the world population grows and poverty continues, who will equalize this industry and disrupt the notion that wellness isn't affordable or accessible? What will be the Uber or Airbnb of wellness? America is on the right path. Universal healthcare is not new, but universal wellness is, and whoever discovers the algorithm for that quandary, will go down in the annals of history as the person who leveled a very uneven playing field. And, not unlike, Uber or Airbnb, there may be some backlash, but the benefits will far outweigh the costs.

5. While no answers are right or wrong, we would like to know what you feel is the difference - if any - between the terms/concepts of “wellness” and “well-being” in your country.

I believe the terms are clearly inter-changeable. But, as the notion of wellness continues to transform from basic physical activity and nutrition to financial, mental and spiritual well-being, well-being then becomes a natural advancement of the term wellness. Well-being personalizes wellness and brings a wholeness to the idea that wellness is something that a well ‘being’ should embody. In the healthcare industry, there is a movement towards patient-centered care, which puts ‘beings’ at the helm, as opposed to ideologies or institutions.

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