Affordable, Effective, Accessible Online Treatment for Mental Health Problems

TAO Connect (Therapist Assisted Online) is a telemedicine platform that delivers effective mental health therapy via college and university counseling centers, employee assistance programs, outpatient and inpatient medical and mental health centers, and private practitioners. TAO Connect is poised to address the reimbursement requirements for medical care in the Affordable Care Act (namely, evidence of effectiveness, efficiency, cost savings and meeting patient preferences). TAO Connect de-stigmatizes mental health treatment for patients, increases counselor capacity by 66 percent, makes therapy convenient and accessible, and reduces individual patient costs while still maintaining current reimbursement rates for counselors. The company is committed to reducing mental health disparities by bringing affordable, effective, and accessible treatment to people who have had limited access in the past.

Technology

TAO is an effective treatment for anxiety and other mental health problems that allows the patient or client to proactively work on behavioral change and the clinician to monitor progress on treatment tasks and symptom change over time. The result is effective treatment with one-third the counselor time and half the overall cost of traditional face-to-face individual treatment. Counseling centers need an updated model of treatment delivery that increases the capacity to provide treatment without forfeiting budgets or staff size. To address this need, TAO Connect developed a telemedicine platform that provides an on-line treatment program consisting of education, homework, structured feedback and an encrypted video chat with a licensed mental health therapist. Counseling and mental health centers that purchase a license for TAO receive training in providing the treatment and pay a small fee per patient per module. Patients receive daily encouraging text messages and have a videoconference with their counselor each week.

Market Potential

The total addressable market for psychological counseling in the United States is approximately $14 billion, and the estimated annual growth rate is 4.3 percent. In TAO Connect’s initial target market of university and college student counseling centers, more than 5,000 centers were required to provide counseling services to students. In this initial market, the company expects to sell annual licenses of the TAO Connect platform to student counseling centers at an average annual rate of $17,500 each. At 10 percent, the penetration rate results are $8.75 million in revenue in the initial market. Long-term, the company will expand into other psychological counseling markets such as government agencies, public clinics, social services and large employers that have a counseling staff.
Strategy
The company plans to target its initial sales and marketing efforts toward directors and decision-makers in student counseling and health centers at colleges and universities that receive federal funds. TAO Connect will develop a sales team for direct sales to these organizations as well as for VA and other government sales. Tactically, it plans to develop relationships through appropriate conferences and direct marketing to health and wellness centers.

Management Team
Sherry Benton, President and CSO
Dr. Benton is the Founder and Inventor of TAO Connect. Dr. Benton was the Director of the Counseling and Wellness Center at the University of Florida from 2008 to 2014. She is a fellow in the American Psychological Association and President Emeritus of the Academy of Counseling Psychology.

John Donaldson, CTO
Mr. Donaldson is the Chief Technology Officer for TAO Connect. He worked for the past 14 years at the University of Florida’s College of Education, where he managed the operations of projects ranging from application development to self-funded educational and technology ventures. John is a proud United States Marine Corps veteran.

Contact Information
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