



ceocfointerviews.com

© All rights reserved

Issue: July 18, 2022

How OpenLoop's Full-Stack Clinical Infrastructure is Transforming Virtual Care Delivery



Dr. Jon Lensing, MD
CEO & Co-Founder

OpenLoop Health

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

"I truly believe that OpenLoop will be foundational in powering every single virtual patient visit across the US within the next 10 years." Dr. Jon Lensing, MD

CEOCFO: Dr. Lensing, what is the idea behind OpenLoop Health?

Dr. Lensing: OpenLoop operates as the entire telehealth infrastructure behind-the-scenes for the digital health companies we partner with. We offer full-stack, whitelabeled clinical operations in all 50 states, including the certified clinicians and compliant technology needed to see patients

virtually across the entire US. Essentially, we utilize our years of telehealth expertise to see our clients' patients for them seamlessly, all underneath their brand.

There are four core telehealth support service areas we primarily focus on. The first being provider staffing, where we actually pair up clinicians from our network with clients for patient visits. The second is the technology infrastructure necessary to conduct these virtual visits across state lines with the functionality to issue out different lab orders, like blood work or e-prescriptions. The third component revolves around the regulatory compliance and legal frameworks necessary to operate a telehealth practice legally in all 50 states.

Last, but definitely not least, is the insurance payer coverage our in-network clinicians offer. We are extremely proud to say that our network of clinicians was the first to achieve 90% coverage by the nation's top payers. That equals nearly 300 million patient lives and spans every major telehealth specialty.

CEOCFO: You mentioned twice that you have a full-stack solution. Is that uncommon today? Or is it more piece-meal, in general, across the industry?

Dr. Lensing: It is very piece-meal across the digital health space. Telehealth is still relatively new when you really think about it. Although it's been around much longer than most would know, its mass adoption didn't truly skyrocket until the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. It was a necessity to provide people with safe options to seek medical advice remotely, but the ease of use and expanded access to care quickly became undeniable.

As with any new industry, many of the virtual care companies that are just now coming into play are having to piece all of the critical components together to build a comprehensive solution for their operations. Whereas OpenLoop put a deep focus on positioning ourselves as a one-stop-shop from the beginning to address all of the pain points and requirements that a digital health company would have when launching or scaling telehealth anywhere in the US.

CEOCFO: Do you find that companies getting into telehealth understand what they need or should be looking for? How do you spread the word?

Dr. Lensing: No, more often than not, they have clear goals they're striving to achieve or pain points in need of addressing without a clear picture of the best way to get there. Even more so, many think they must manage all of the many moving pieces in-house or through multiple partners when that's just not the case anywhere.

Getting the word out there that we can support clients wherever they need it the most across a complete stack of telehealth infrastructure is extremely vital for us. The good news is that there is no denying the impact and need for virtual care options across a wide array of specialties to serve largely untapped markets. The critical element is making sure organizations overwhelmed by decisions and duties know that OpenLoop is the right partner to be chatting with to collaborate on the best solutions for their unique patients.



[SafeRX Pharmaceuticals](#)

There are a variety of different approaches to getting our name in front of the right audiences. The overall telehealth industry is very small, interestingly enough, so we tend to attract a large amount of customer referrals from happy clients we work with. I mean, who better to share success stories, right?

CEO CFO: Your website speaks to two different audiences I see, clinicians and companies. Would you explain the different solutions available to each?

Dr. Lensing: Because we do quite a bit of clinician matching for our clients' visits, OpenLoop has two different target audiences we support: digital health companies and telehealth providers.

"We're here to be a proven partner to lean on when it comes to successfully launching and scaling telehealth services for our clients' patients." Dr. Jon Lensing, MD

We are always on the lookout for top tier clinicians across the country to join our provider network. We position it as an "all-access pass" to open shifts, the flexibility to build their own schedules, and the opportunity to generate extra income outside of their normal jobs. In today's highly virtual world, clinicians that have additional availability are signing up to see patients digitally. OpenLoop will pair them with different clients aligned to their same values and passions to deliver meaningful telehealth visits. A win/win!

On the flipside, we also serve digital health companies offering virtual care across the US within nearly all medical specialties. We can provide them with staff augmentation, telehealth-optimized technology, and all the rest of the service lines we touched on earlier. We're here to be a proven partner to lean on when it comes to successfully launching and scaling telehealth services for our clients' patients.

CEO CFO: I also saw mention of diagnostic labs. How do you partner with that vertical?

Dr. Lensing: A diagnostic lab company is really a telehealth company at their core. They typically send out home fulfillment lab kits to patients, which requires physician approval and lab ordering. When the results come back, a physician can also be used to review them and offer consultative next steps to the consumer or patient.

CEOCFO: Do you have any tips on offering user friendly solutions to the different clients you support, whether it be the clinicians or the digital health organizations and their patients? How top-of-mind should it be when rolling out new features?

Dr. Lensing: That is a phenomenal question! For OpenLoop, we have always taken a four-pronged approach.

If you look at the logo on our website, it is four concentric circles all meeting together. It was designed to represent the overlap between being clinician centric, insurance payer centric, patient centric, and client centric. Keeping each of those players front and center is woven throughout all that we do.



[XORTX Therapeutics](https://www.xortx.com)

When we are talking about the technology to actually see the patient, that is very much clinician centric. We consider ways to improve efficiency of visits, options to securely collect information seamlessly, and even ease-of-use for logging in, scheduling, meeting, and note taking.

From the patient perspective, we are always thinking about the easiest way for a patient to get to their primary endpoint, which oftentimes is quality treatment of their medical condition. We built in notifications and reminders, and made payment collection quick and painless.

For our telehealth clients, we evaluate the many different components that they would like to see from a clinician operations perspective. We provide them with monthly dashboards, usage reports, and proven workflows. All clearly map out how many patients we've been able to see, for which conditions, and recommendations to continually optimize processes.

I wholeheartedly believe that ensuring our solutions are user friendly comes down to listening to the voice of each individual stakeholder within the overall industry we serve. We pay very close attention to all four of those different overlapping stakeholders, and then think about how we incorporate that into our product and with our customer service over time. I think we have excelled in this area, to be honest. We have listened. We have iterated based on their feedback. And now many of our clients serve as great testimonials for us.

CEOCFO: What has changed about your approach as more and more people use your services? What have you learned? What have you tweaked? What was unexpected?

Dr. Lensing: When we first launched the company, we had built our product offering to handle telehealth visits that were cash only reimbursed, meaning a patient couldn't utilize their insurance for these virtual visits. The reasons for that were numerous. What it really boils down to is that it's very difficult and time consuming for telehealth companies to get in-network with insurance carriers so that patient insurance is accepted.

It can be a 1- to 2-year process for each different carrier. Then multiply that across 800 different carriers in the US. Based on our clients' feedback, what they were asking for is, "How can we get in-network? How can we accept insurance?"

We actually went through the process recently ourselves when setting OpenLoop clinicians up as in-network providers under all of these different insurance payors. We are now able to help clients who utilize our in-network clinicians for their patient visits.

CEOCFO: What is the state of telehealth these days?

Dr. Lensing: That is another great question! With the pandemic, we obviously saw a dramatic uptick in telehealth utilization in the magnitude of 100-200x growth. Now that the pandemic has relatively subsided, we are starting to see a little bit of pull back since those peaks. Overall the demand has stabilized at 38 times higher usage than pre-Covid times. As we really think about the state of digital health and where it is going, we look at it in 2 different phases.

The first phase was during the pandemic. We call it telehealth 1.0 or version 1. That is where we took doctors appointments that were normally done in-person and started hosting them over video platforms like Facetime, Zoom or Skype.

Today, we are starting to see the introduction of telehealth 2.0. It is aimed at transforming the prior medical experience into a much more efficient experience. Think higher touch visits, without all the human capital behind it. Companies are now trying to implement more technologies for real-time health tracking (like wearables) or for preventative, value-based care.

The industry has reimagined care from the foundational level. In my opinion, this is driving much of the new change that we are starting to see in the digital health space.

CEOCFO: What does being a doctor yourself, and the son of a doctor, bring to the table? Does it give you a more personal understanding?

Dr. Lensing: Foundationally, I went into medicine in order to help patients across all realms of their health, be it anything from primary care to surgical operations that might need to happen. It was during my time in medicine that I noticed patients driving 4- to 5-hours one way to get the care they needed. That accessibility to healthcare really became a foundational origin for the reason OpenLoop was founded. We built the company on trying to increase accessibility to care. We knew that telehealth was going to be one of the key channels to do that.

Being a medical professional myself, it has brought an empathetic side to the business of healthcare. As a practitioner, you understand how care should be delivered, and what patients are looking for within that care delivery itself. I think that has been reflected in all avenues of what we have built here at OpenLoop.

We have a bunch of former clinicians on the team, assisting with our product, how we think about electronic health records, what makes a clinician's life easier, and what gets them the data points they need at their fingertips.

We also have to think of it from a patient's perspective, wanting to be treated from the comfort of their own homes whenever they need care. We try to meet them exactly where they are and take a variety of approaches to do so. It has definitely been very beneficial having many different types of clinicians as part of the OpenLoop team.

CEOCFO: What lies ahead for OpenLoop?

Dr. Lensing: There are so many things that we are tackling.

For the immediate future though, we are looking to expand our service lines and offerings to meet evolving demands. We power many different telehealth companies spanning primary care, mental health care, and specialty care. We are always looking to add new specialty lines to what we offer.

The insurance reimbursement offering is our newest business line within the past 2 or 3 months. Therefore, we are really looking to build operational efficiency within that business line, as well as expanding it across a variety of different specialties.

CEOCFO: Is there anything that people might miss or misunderstand about OpenLoop that they really should recognize?

Dr. Lensing: At our core, when we were first founded, we built ourselves on this mission that we wanted to improve community health outcomes. We were focused on accelerating delivery of medical services with a grandiose vision of delivering healing anywhere.

I believe we are well on track to do just that. When I was practicing full time, I was able to see 20 to 30 patients a day in the clinic. As of today, OpenLoop is seeing tens of thousands of patients a day! I truly believe that OpenLoop will be foundational in powering every single virtual patient visit across the US within the next 10 years.