URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/addressing-healthcare-equity

Jerrica Kirkley, chief medical officer and co-founder of Plume, and Kiki Freedman, CEO and co-founder of Hey Jane, describe how digital healthcare can help address inequities—especially for marginalized communities—by creating virtual access to expert care, improving financial accessibility, and using feedback and data to make improvements.

Transcript

- I think very deeply about 00:00:03,510 that phrase, health equity, it's funny.. I'm smiling because it's something that I've been hearing for 25, 30 years now.. But I will say people are talking about it and seems to be acting on it in a way that is nuanced and different than the last 25 to 30 years.. We're a company that's entirely dedicated to one of the most marginalized communities in the world, so it's at the very heart of what we do.. When we think about equity, of course access comes to mind.. There is not universal training when it comes to gender-affirming care for health professionals, right? And that's one of the reasons that we did this, because even just finding a provider that can provide that care for you is incredibly hard.. We also know that a third of trans people are actively discriminated against in a healthcare facility in this country.. So having virtual access that's safe, that's comfortable and expert and you have clinical and cultural competence is incredibly important, and a virtual environment allows us to do that.. So access is a big part of that equity piece, but also affordability, and that's something that we've been looking at a lot.. And I think there's, one thing I was thinking about in that last conversation was, yes, there are bounds when it comes to policy..

But there's also a lot of ways we can be creative in the systems that we have.. And what I've noticed is the conversation can look quite different than what you see in the media with all these bills being passed compared to what is actually happening in the healthcare industry, and specifically around the conversation of health equity and specifically around the trans community.. We're talking to a lot of employers, a lot of health insurance companies who really want to find a way to care for their trans universe and employees.. They just don't know how.. And they've tried 10 years ago and they failed, and now they're like, "Hey, how do we do this?" And so that is encouraging to see, and really I think thinking about it in different ways, not only just how can we have a service, what kind of service can provide this, but also again, how can we creatively pay for it? And thinking about alternative payment models and things like that.. So there is a lot of energy around this in a big way, more so than I've seen it in the past, and specifically with the community that we're serving.. Yeah, and so I think that's one of the things that keeps me energized.. 'Cause is hard to go out and see the headlines, but it is nice to know that there are many people on the inside who are really trying to push this forward as well.. - Yeah, absolutely.. 00:02:39,420 Financial accessibility has been huge focus for us..

We've been seeing, as Jerrica mentioned, a lot of appetite from insurance payers to get involved and support this type of work, and I think in ways that hadn't been seen before.. We recently launched our first payer contract with Aetna, which

we're really excited about and are pushing hard for Medicaid as well.. It'll have the highest impact on our patient population about 50% make under $25,000 per year.. We also do a lot of listening to ensure ongoing equity within our communities.. Abortion affects such an incredibly broad swath of people, and so making sure that we have representatives from those communities who can give us real-time feedback on small details to the site all the way up to how we apply much broader justice frameworks I think is really key.. And another thing that I think entrepreneurship and particularly tech entrepreneurship really allows for is that ongoing testing and iteration, these feedback loops that allow you to constantly be learning from your patients.. In general, just reminding ourselves not to reinvent the wheel, to look at the existing literature and all of the amazing partnerships from folks all ready in the space has been really helpful as well as we think expanding equity...