

ARCH Talking Points--Why it will Work

A.R.C.H. by 4Leaf (automated reduction in the cost of health care) -- J. Morris Hicks, 1-12-17

We have a big problem in the United States with chronic disease and the runaway cost of healthcare it has generated. Topping \$3 trillion in 2014, projected to hit \$4.6 trillion by 2020, it has risen sharply from 5% of the GDP in 1960 to almost 20% that it is approaching today. This deadly trend is unsustainable for a host of reasons but how can it be reversed? First, we must recognize that we don't actually have a "health" care system. Medical journalist Shannon Brownlee got it right:

"We have a disease care system, and we have a very profitable disease care system—it doesn't want you to die and it doesn't want you to get well; it just wants you to keep coming back for the care of your chronic disease."

Where is the incentive to change? There is NONE in the healthcare industry. As stated above, healthcare companies lose a lot of money when people get healthy. But the good news is that there are a great many powerful leaders who DO have a health incentive—the chief executives of thousands of large, self-insured companies. The numbers are staggering when it comes to the dollars at stake—savings in the neighborhood of \$50 million for companies with 10,000 employees. Our ARCH system was created for those kinds of companies. A dozen talking points on why ARCH will work:

1. **Lifestyle Changes.** Many organizations talk about encouraging "lifestyle" changes that include the Super 6: exercise, food, smoking, sleep, stress and love. All of those things are good, but we would argue that the FOOD element trumps all—comprising the basic building block for developing good health. The other five are important, but not nearly as important as the food we put in our bodies. That's why our 4Leaf Survey and ARCH system are based 100% on the food.
2. **Positive — Not Negative.** It is based on the kinds of food we should maximize—whole plants. It is not based on what foods we should avoid.
3. **Not Vegan or Vegetarian.** We know that these terms "turn off" a great majority of the population in the western world where most people eat some combination of meat, dairy, eggs, fish and highly processed carbs three meals a day. Also many *vegan* diets lack enough whole plants to be healthy.
4. **We have a simple survey.** People everywhere can take the survey in two minutes and will get an idea what percent of their weekly calories are from whole plants. They can also see exactly where they lost or gained points and can see exactly how they improve their score and their health
5. **The 4Leaf Survey is a simple, powerful, proven tool.** Now in seven languages, it has been taken over 100,000 times and is now in use by numerous medical doctors around the world who have found that it helps to engage their patient in the process of choosing healthier foods—and they have found that it also saves them a great deal of time.
6. **What about validation?** That will come later, but what we do know now is that our survey does a good job of identifying the 90% of the people who need help, the estimated 7% who are eating "fairly" healthy now, and the tiny 3% who are already eating at the 3Leaf or 4Leaf level. We also know that there are ZERO negative side effects associated with adding more whole plants to one's diet. In other words, ARCH and the 4Leaf Survey can "do no harm" as advised by Hippocrates, and if used properly, can enable the firm to eliminate a large portion of its cost of healthcare.
7. **Easy and Permanent Weight-Loss.** Although we don't call it a weight-loss diet, eating at the 3Leaf or 4Leaf level, with over 60% of calories from whole plants, will make it much easier for everyone to reach and maintain their ideal weight as they effortlessly shed unnecessary body weight if needed. And since we're talking about a permanent lifestyle change, that extra weight stays off.
8. **Everyone sets their own pace.** After taking the 4Leaf Survey one time, the ARCH system will take over from there and will guide each individual, while gently providing them with feedback and helpful tips for improving their score and their health.
9. **Interfacing with ARCH.** As all employees in an organization begin communicating with ARCH (via smartphone, notebook or computer), the system provides an ongoing, automated health coach, helping them choose healthier foods--then maintaining a database that shows the relationship those food choices and the individual's BMI, BP numbers, Cholesterol numbers, etc.

10. **Powerful Management Tool.** With a HIPAA-compliant system, the ARCH database can keep track of many other health-related things—showing the relationship between food choices and many forms of disease, treatments and costs.
11. **Using Company Data to Encourage Participation.** Through the ARCH system, all employees can see the “big picture” regarding the frequency of various diseases within the total number of people who are eating at the six levels of the 4Leaf Scale. For example, imagine the power of knowing that high blood pressure is ten times more likely for those in Level 1 (Unhealthy Diet) than it is for employees scoring in Levels 5 and 6 (the 3Leaf and 4Leaf levels).
12. **Incentives for Healthy Eating.** Beyond the benefit of improved health, management may choose to provide other incentives, like: reduced health-care premium, discounts in the cafeteria, participation in 4Leaf activities on company time, special awards and recognition, etc.

The real beauty of ARCH is its scalability. It can work for a group of 50 employees at a small business or for over 3 million employees at Walmart. So how does the company and the employee save money—compared to what each is now spending for healthcare?

Insurance Groups. One primary incentive could be the opportunity to be part of the healthiest GROUP for computing the annual premium paid by each member in the group. We could envision three groups in an organization that has 100,000 employees:

- **Top Group. Lowest cost to the member.** Comprised of people scoring consistently at the 3Leaf or 4Leaf level. This group might begin with only 3,000 members, but would steadily grow because of many factors.
- **Middle Group. Medium cost to member.** Comprised of people scoring consistently at the 1Leaf or 2Leaf level. Initially, this group might have 7,000 members. It also would grow as people in the lowest group begin to improve their diets and move into this group.
- **Lowest Group. Highest cost to member.** Like most Americans, 90% of the employees and their families are now eating the Standard American Diet (SAD) and will (on a per person basis) account for larger share of the company’s healthcare expenses than do the first two groups.

The huge costs of screening. With the cost per employee (per AON Hewitt) hitting almost \$14,000 in 2016, the cost of healthcare has become a HUGE problem (and OPPORTUNITY) for most large American businesses. How can companies save money on screenings? By lowering the risk of the disease.

While doing research in 2010 for our book, I learned that the risk of dying of colon cancer was 7% in the United States and that the real cost of a single colonoscopy is \$3,000 (Blue Cross data). I also learned that *just the screening* for colorectal cancer in the U.S. alone is a \$50 billion business--six years ago!

If the risk of dying of colon cancer was less than 1% (instead of 7%), would we still have a \$50 billion industry to screen for it? I think not.

Lowering the risk of disease by promoting a diet-style that reverses heart disease and can prevent, slow, stop or reverse many cancers—is the most powerful way to lower the cost of healthcare. And there are no bad side effects. Visionary chief executives of self-insured companies will be able to slash the cost of healthcare as more and more of their employees begin moving in the direction of a whole food, plant-based diet. ARCH can help the management team make that happen.

Within a year, we expect to see savings in prescription drugs as people go off their cholesterol lowering, blood pressure and type 2 diabetes medications. As the risk of cancer drops among the healthiest-eating employees, it will reduce the frequency or eliminate some of the screening costs. Finally, companies will save by eliminating many medical procedures—some of which exceed \$100,000 each.

The Bottom Line. We’re talking about a definite strategic advantage for the pioneering companies. How?

As the first wave of CEOs begins to take advantage of the many benefits that come from a healthier workforce, other companies who don’t undertake similar initiatives will have trouble competing with those who do.