

# Finding the Best Doctors

**An Interview with John J. Connolly, Ed.D.,  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Castle Connolly Medical Ltd.**

**EDITORS' NOTE** Dr. John Connolly is the President and CEO of Castle Connolly LifeStream MD and Vice Chairman of Castle Connolly Graduate Medical Publishing Ltd., as well as the Co-Publisher of America's Top Doctors® and other consumer guides to help people find the best health care. Connolly served as President of New York Medical College for more than 10 years. He is a fellow of The New York Academy of Medicine and of the New York Academy of Sciences, as well as a director of the Northeast



John J. Connolly

Business Group on Health. Connolly has served as trustee of two hospitals and as Chairman of the Board of one. He has served on a number of voluntary and corporate boards including the board of the American Lyme Disease Foundation, of which he is a founder and past Chairman, and the Culinary Institute of America for over 20 years where he is now Chairman Emeritus. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Worcester State College, a Master's degree from the University of Connecticut, and a Doctor of Education degree in College and University Administration from Teacher's College, Columbia University. He has been awarded honorary doctorates from Mercy College (LHD) and from Worcester State University (LHD). He is the author and/or editor of seven books.

**COMPANY BRIEF** The mission of Castle Connolly Medical Ltd. ([www.castleconnolly.com](http://www.castleconnolly.com)) is to help consumers find the best health care by identifying top doctors. The company publishes a variety of books including the "Top Doctors" series, the most popular of which is America's Top Doctors®. Castle Connolly offers individual and corporate memberships to its Web site along with a number of corporate products and services. The company was founded by two highly respected leaders in health care, John K. Castle, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Castle Harlan Inc., a leading private equity firm, and John J. Connolly, Ed.D.

## **How has your vision for Castle Connolly evolved?**

The inspiration came from John Castle. He suggested we publish books to help people find the best doctors because so many of our friends and colleagues had called us for this advice over the years when he was Chairman and I was CEO of New York Medical College.

Our mission has not changed – to help people find the best health care – even though the delivery mechanisms have evolved in terms of books, partnerships with various magazines, and, of course, our Web site.

The Internet is a major vehicle for distributing health information: visitors to our Web site view 33 million physician profiles a year. We have expanded to 30-plus magazine partnerships and in many markets we publish our own "Top Doctors" magazines.

## **How broad is your global reach?**

Our partner company, Castle Connolly LifeStream MD, is designed for people who travel a great deal and is linked to a number of companies that provide health care services around the globe.

We also have a partnership in Spain with thedoctors.es, a company that is doing "Top Doctors" throughout Europe. We are growing from Spain and Italy into other countries.

We're also getting international calls from people in Europe, Latin America, and Asia seeking advice on the best doctors to see in the U.S. and we very likely will expand that service.

## **What was your vision for LifeStream MD?**

Our partner, Dr. Charles Miner, conceived that vision, and the services are designed for individuals and families, but especially for those who travel in the U.S. or abroad. Every client – family or individual – is assigned a LifeStream MD available with back-up 24/7/365 with the client's electronic medical records available to them. The LifeStream MD provides advice, counsel, and direction for access to the best medical care available anywhere in the world. We have a relationship with International SOS, which provides access to excellent physicians and hospitals in every country, as well as medical evacuation assistance and insurance coverage. Medjet Assist is another relationship with Castle Connolly LifeStream MD that, when necessary, provides transport back to U.S. hospitals. Also, most people don't realize that their insurance won't necessarily cover them in most foreign countries. We handle that issue as well.

## **Does this service make sense for corporate executives who travel often?**

Absolutely. It makes sense whenever corporations are sending their valuable human assets around the U.S. or the world to conduct their business. We also can cover spouses as well as children if they travel separately, including semesters abroad or away from home for college students.

## **Is the doctor/patient relationship being lost in this new health care environment?**

The relationship has weakened over the years because of economic forces. There are more institutional influences on the doctor/patient relationship through insurance companies, hospitals, and others in terms of the changes taking place in health care. This influences what happens between doctors and patients.

Economically, doctors are, either of their own initiative or because of external pressure, required to see more patients and spend less time with each of them. However, this has reached a point with both physicians and patients that there is now a push-back. Doctors would like to spend more time with patients. However, it will be a challenge in the future because we will see an additional 30 million people who will receive health insurance through Medicaid under ObamaCare, and we don't have additional doctors to care for them, so the pressure to provide them with quality care will be severe.

## **Will the Castle Connolly Top Doctors book continue to serve a purpose despite the availability of information online?**

A book separates us from the imitators – it's a symbol of authority and trust. Even though our Web site reaches a broader audience in meeting people's needs to find top doctors, the book is still an important symbol and we continue to publish for that reason. People still buy and keep books, and re-order them every year. Our magazine business is also growing – so print is not dead.

## **Is there still top talent coming into health care?**

Applications to medical schools continue to increase and the applicants are motivated, not by money but by a desire to care for people. Financial reward is not their primary goal. This will continue. It's why top doctors make a difference. Care received from a top doctor is much different, especially in terms of the critical health issues that people face. Being cared for by top doctors may mean, not only better outcomes, but lower costs, because effective and appropriate care is delivered when needed.

## **Is there sufficient focus on the value of preventive medicine?**

Prevention has been growing as a valuable principle for employers. They devote significant time and effort to recruiting top people and rewarding them, and they want to keep those people productive – wellness and prevention assist in that process. The emphasis also is on finding the best health care in the first place; this is why we believe in the mantra, "Top Doctors Make A Difference." ●