ECHO Session Date: 11/19/24

Thank you for presenting your case to the ECHO Idaho – Healthcare Vitality session.

Summary: A 50-year-old family physician with 22 years at a rural clinic, values partnering with patients and the nuanced "Art of Medicine." While intrigued by AI due to discussions with his tech-savvy brother, he has reservations about its integration for note transcription and diagnoses. He acknowledges AI's potential to streamline tasks but fears it may undermine empathy, intuition, and clinical judgment, especially for younger physicians. Concerns about AI inaccuracies and corporate priorities further fuel his skepticism about its impact on care quality and physician well-being.

Questions:
- What are your thoughts about Dr. Amad's concerns?
- What could be lost with AI in healthcare? what could be gained?
- What factors do healthcare systems need to consider when implementing AI programs?
- What do physicians need to consider if they are asked to utilize an AI software program in clinical situations?
- How might AI impact the unique relationship between physicians and patients?
- How might AI positively or negatively impact physician well-being?
- Do you anticipate any legal or ethical considerations?

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

Recommendations and considerations:

- **Potentially misplaced concerns**:
    - Current AI tools primarily assist with transcribing conversations, allowing physicians to remain fully present with patients, preserving the joys of practicing medicine while reducing the time spent on documentation.
    - It could help this physician to remember that he must always review and approve AI-generated notes, ensuring accuracy and alignment with clinical decision-making.

- **Ensure that adoption of AI is voluntary and necessary:**
    - This doctor may not need AI at all. He doesn't sound like somebody who's burnt out by patient interactions or even burnt out by his documentation burden.
    - Physicians should have the option to use AI tools based on their individual needs, ensuring the technology complements their workflows rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all solution.
    - Organizations should prioritize well-being over productivity gains, aiming to rehumanize medicine by giving physicians more time for meaningful patient care.

- **Benefits of AI to share with this physician:**
    - **Reducing administrative burden:** AI tools could allow this physician to focus less on documentation and more on observing and interacting with patients, fostering stronger connections, which aligns with his values.

- **Preserving human empathy:**
  It takes humans real effort and energy to actually be empathic with patients. While AI can mimic empathy, it cannot replace genuine human connection. This physician could benefit from reduced workload, enabling him to invest his energy into empathic patient care.

- **Protecting wellness and work-life balance:**
  Technology implementation must focus on alleviating burnout and improving mental health, rather than increasing productivity demands.

Resource:
- **Dr. Bob Wachter of USCF**
  - [The Digital Doctor](#)
  - He has several interviews and podcasts related to this topic