

Welcome to another episode of Happy Hour, Happy Patients! In today's episode, We sit down with Ryan Louis, a guest who shares their journey in the healthcare industry. From their days in IT consulting to their current role at ProviderTech, our guest opens up about their experiences and insights. Together, they dive into the importance of people, process, and technology in solving healthcare challenges, highlighting the significance of population health management. Join us as we explore the power of technology, the impact of human intervention, and how a text message may have played a vital role in saving someone's life. Get ready to uncover stories and gain perspectives.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Provider Tech's Early Beginnings
- The Triad of People, Process, and Technology
- Tech and Its Role in Population Health
- Leadership and Feedback Dynamics
- Exploring Generative AI in Healthcare
- Notable Projects and Impactful Stories
- Shifting Toward Entrepreneurship

### **Quotes**

"Our approach goes beyond technology. We first understand our clients' processes, improve them, and then apply technology for project success." - Ryan Louis

"Human intervention will forever remain essential in assisting patients throughout the entire process." - Ryan Louis

### **Featured in the Episode**

#### **Ryan Louis**

Founder, Health Executive - Providertech

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ryan-m-louis/>

#### **Lisa Blue**

Nurse Executive - Providertech

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisa-z-blue/>

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### **Transcript:**

#### **Lisa Blue:**

Hello, everyone. Welcome to our inaugural podcast of Happy Hour, Happy Patients. My name is Lisa Blue and I am your host today. I'm excited to be joined by Ryan Lewis, who is one of the original founders of ProviderTech. I am the Chief Clinical Innovation Officer at ProviderTech and Ryan and I have worked together for many years, so today we're going to talk a little bit about The history of provider tech, Ryan's ideas, to start provider tech, and, a little bit of the journey along the way. So we're so happy that you joined us today. Ryan, thank you for joining us as well. So I'm going to give you a little background into Ryan. Ryan Lewis has worked across the health care technology industry in enterprise sales, digital marketing, Client success and as an operations executive, including over 20 years of technology leadership.

#### **Lisa Blue:**

He has over 10 years working with start ups, Venture Capital and as a founder, Ryan also has consulting experience with Fortune 100 consulting firms, including UnitedHealthcare, Accenture, and Dignity Health. Outside of work, Ryan loves spending time outdoors with his wife and 3 kids, and he's an avid Arizona sports team, avid fan of Arizona sports teams and attending Cardinals and Suns games whenever he can. Welcome,

#### **Ryan Louis:**

Ryan. Thank you. And well well stated. I appreciate the introductions.

#### **Lisa Blue:**

Alright, awesome. So, we're so excited here to talk a little bit about the journey of provider tech. I would love it if you would just kick this off by sharing what was your initial, the initial ideas

around provider tech? What were you doing in your career at the time when this idea was born? If you could just Take us back to those early days.

**Ryan Louis:**

Yeah. And we've gotta back it up, a few years. And, originally there was a group of 3 original cofounders. And, you know, it's a little bit of a funny story because, we We did kind of get in a little bit of trouble back in the day. So we were working for an unnamed large provider group in the industry. And we were, the 3 of us. It was myself, John, and Eric, were the original three Founders, and we added on, one other founder a little bit later to help us build out some of the development. But, the 3 of us were very focused on patient engagement solutions, and, you know, we tended to bend the rules a little bit.

**Ryan Louis:**

So, not that I wasn't entirely a corporate Kool Aid or corporate fit, but, we like to move a little bit at a faster pace, I guess, and so that was, you know, always one of My challenges, I guess, as I did come I started right out of school for Ernst and Young and did some, IT consulting for large, you know, big, big payer and provider groups, and then, did go into industry at this 1 large provider group where The 3 of us mischievous founders got together scheming up up this idea. And so one of the 3 founders was actually part of the ASU Sky Song, Edson program. So he was working, actually, In the same program as you, Lisa, Master of Health Innovation. And so John was, kinda got us access to some neat, like, startup things, where we were able to do, like, a little pitch. And so we built, the concept and the idea around, obviously, some of the, You know, our experience, some of the work that we had been doing in the health care space, but, you know, uniquely different to the things that we are doing and obviously, something that we felt was, whoo, very innovative. Right? And so the very initial idea, and this was kind of around the early times of when Twilio was really just coming out. And so some of these text messaging APIs were fairly new to the industry, and there were a lot of challenges in health care at the time. There was a Regulation called, meaningful use or specifically, it was the meaningful use to regulations that, Pushed the patient engagement strategies, and one in particular that was kind of our initial idea was around getting Discharge instructions to patients quickly so they could meet that Meaningful Use requirement.

**Ryan Louis:**

And so we said, hey, Wouldn't it be cool, like, we know how to integrate with big healthcare systems, and, you know, it'd be so easy if someone just sent a text message. And so That was kind of our initial idea. Now where we kinda got in trouble is, you know, our covert operation to build Provider tech. And at the time, we ended up calling ourselves Parahealth Solutions because we were actually put on suspension when we created the company. So the 3 of us, due to some of the work we were doing on the side, and one of us got excited and made a social media post about a company that we were building, IT solutions and software in the patient engagement space. And so we did get in a little bit of trouble and spent about a week On the

bench, if you wanna call it there. Give us another week to work full time on the project. Silver lining.

**Ryan Louis:**

Right? But the initial that that was kind of the you know, we did get in trouble. We were welcomed back, but, ultimately, we did ultimately win that pitch contest, and became part of the Edson program. So that was one of the initial things, and we did end up pivoting and changing the name to ProviderTech when we officially created the LLC, as a part of that Edson program. So those were the very early days, and those were kinda the initial story on how provider tech came to be. And, you know, I think, most of most founding stories end with Something that's a little bit against the grain. So that was as much trouble as we got in, but, you know, no lawsuits or anything like that, like Facebook, but, at least, Yeah. A little bit of a story behind it.

**Lisa Blue:**

Well, I think that's a really interesting story. And, you know, I like your, Comment about the corporate Kool Aid. Right? Certainly, when, sometimes we're in really large organizations, whatever the industry, things can move a bit slower. So, I'm glad that you guys encountered that. So that encourages you to Look for another path forward. So that's a wonderful story. And I bet I can guess who got excited on social media, but we won't

**Ryan Louis:**

Actually, I don't think it's the person who you thought it might be.

**Lisa Blue:**

Oh, okay. Alright. Very interesting. We'll talk about that offline.

**Ryan Louis:**

I didn't say any last names. So it was John.

**Lisa Blue:**

Oh, okay. Okay. That wasn't

**Ryan Louis:**

gonna be right back. John, you're listening. You'll remember.

**Lisa Blue:**

So you know, knowing your early experience, Obviously it was, you know, deeply founded in the health care IT space, you worked in, you know, obviously project development and implementation at those large systems, how do you think that really prepared you to not, you know, really to take the idea of provider tech and really launch that and get that moving, and really also what were some of the challenges and lessons learned along the way?

**Ryan Louis:**

Yeah. I I mean, and and coming from the the corporate world, you you're kind of, coddled, I don't know is the best word, but, there, you've got access to a lot of resources, attorneys, contract writers, You know, project managers, project coordinators, software developers, just a plethora of resources at your disposal. So I do remember the moment when, you know, ultimately, I wasn't in Kansas anymore. And and and, you know, My path to entrepreneurship was gradual and, you know, a little bit of a risk averse. I did you know, there was some risk as I just you know, we did end up going on the bench and did you know, went against the grain with how we were initially founded, but, for me, I really wanted to learn as much as possible before kinda jumping all in. So, after working at that large provider group, I went to a venture backed start up, a very small company, and I had, as you explained with my background, had spent time With big consulting and a big provider group, so a lot of big corporate background. And so, I remember going over To this venture backed startup called ClearDATA in the healthcare space who are still around today, and have kind of pivoted into a secure platform for health care to help protect your data, when you're moving into the, the, the cloud. So at ClearDATA, that kinda, that moment when I realized that I was not in Kansas anymore, I can recall.

**Ryan Louis:**

I got there and I'm excited. I'm like, here we go. We're a start-up. Venture back. This is great. I'm gonna be a big sponge here. And, I was asked, hey. You know, we've got a big client.

**Ryan Louis:**

I need you to put together, You know, a statement of work. And I was like, oh, okay. Perfect. Like, well, get me in touch with contract management, and let me know who our Attorneys are so that I can help facilitate and make that happen. And then Chris looked at me and he's like, Like, no. No. No. Like, you're gonna write the statement of work.

**Ryan Louis:**

We don't have any attorneys. We don't have any contract management. So I still remember that day where I was like, oh, That's how this works. Like, time to start rolling up your sleeves and figuring things out. Right? The coddling is over. So, I mean, That's just kind of a small example of, like, a lesson learned where, like, you do in a start up and in a start up world and it's an entrepreneur, You kinda have to roll your sleeves up and and just figure it out. And, you know, along the way, I've, we've done different things, and I've always kinda had that passion for

entrepreneurship. Had I done, you know, real estate on the side, and I think it was a little bit of Just wanting to be able to do my own thing and and and, create a solution and and something that's different.

**Ryan Louis:**

And and I think we we did that through there's a number of ways that I had started doing that early on, but it wasn't until I kinda started to learn more about, like, venture capital, Working you know, doing it by working there, not just kinda diving all in and and kind of consuming as much as possible. I actually spent, 5 years, a little over 5 years at ClearDATA in a number of different roles, and and the the company grew from, I think, We might have been, like, under a1000000 in revenue when I started, and and I know that, the hope, ultimately is a \$1,000,000,000 plus IPO. I don't. I don't know where they're probably closer to half, Maybe half of that these days, but a very fast growing venture backed startup in an innovative space. And and, so it was a it was a great, tons of lessons learned throughout, and where, you know, you just ultimately and Lisa, as you know, I'm sure also kind of having that experience going to ProviderTech is a smaller company from larger organizations that it's, you know, you just you figure it out ultimately or it's just not a good fit for you.

**Lisa Blue:**

Yeah, absolutely. So those of you that maybe don't know the story of how Ryan and I came to work together. I actually was a population health director at a large federally called qualified health center here in the the Phoenix area where ProviderTech is based and I was introduced to Ryan and the ProviderTech team, early on, they, were awarded, funding through, and and, Ryan, you can correct me on this, I think it was the, Arizona Department of Health

**Ryan Louis:**

Services. That's right

**Lisa Blue:**

And so we began to work together at that time. My team was doing the work that they were eager to do, as part of that grant award, and so those were really the early days. You know, while Ryan and the the founders were very excited about the, and and had A lot of knowledge about the technology space and the security related to that. I came from the clinical space, and and really helped, You know, influence some of that that beginning development of provider tech and and, you know, what we call our Our population health or care community solution today, and so through that time working together first as a client, and then the last 5 years, I've had, the distinct pleasure of being on the provider tech team and getting to work with our clients In the same way, I worked with Ryan and and his team early on. So, it's been a really fun and exciting journey to, Each year, it's been, you know, a whole new experience year to year as we continue to grow and Expand our team and expand our product and solution itself. So, Ryan,

one of the things that, I've heard, often heard you say, when we're talking with potential clients or even our existing clients is the importance of people, process, and technology, and, you know, I think because provider tech, you know, in and of itself is a technology solution, I'm really interested in and why do you think that that that, that that model and that structure is really important, and really, you know, how how do you think that provider tech, in and of itself supports that model?

**Ryan Louis:**

Yeah. That's a great question, and I think it really applies well, it applies in a lot of different scenarios. So, specifically, there's 2 ways I can think of the application? And when I'm talking to a client, right, I'm typically talking about The implementation or the solution specifically that we're gonna provide to that client. And from that perspective, I think it's very important that when you're trying to solve a problem, you're not putting the cart in front of the horse, right? So, it's very difficult to just take a technology solution and think it's going to solve a problem that you have. Right. It's very important that before you do that, that you have people. Right? So good people Help define a process. Right? So people, it's important that you have people in place and people that you trust, and stakeholders that you trust, because if you're building out an IT project or trying to solve a problem, You need good leadership.

**Ryan Louis:**

So it really starts with the people. Right? And then and and and and with that, You build on it. You say, okay. Well, now what are we trying to do? What are we trying to solve for? Well, let's first do it without any technology. Can we create a and maybe it's like maybe use a pen and paper, but now probably you're gonna at least maybe use a spreadsheet for your row 1. And when we say row 1, that's kind of like the very, that's like our proof of concept. That's the very first thing we want to do. So you need to have good people, the right leadership in place, and then you need to build a process and define what that process is.

**Ryan Louis:**

And then the technology helps enhance the process, right? And population health. We know we can write down here's our gaps in care, and we know that we need To to outreach to these people, right? But we can do that without technology, without text messaging, right? There's a row one to that. I can pick up a phone call, Or I can make a phone call. I can send mailers out, right? I can go knock on someone's door too. Like, I mean, there's a row one for everything. But if you don't understand who that population is or if you're sending you're knocking on the wrong doors, then, right, you're not solving the problem. So really, You need the right people in place, people like Lisa and why we brought Lisa on is not only because she's an awesome person and great to work with, but she Obviously understands population health, so she can help us solve this problem from an expert level perspective. We can put a process in place, and then we can take that technology as the secret sauce that makes us differentiate or do it better than anyone else.

**Ryan Louis:**

So, I mean, that's when we're trying to solve a problem, that's people, process, and technology. And then I think the other perspective is when you're trying Same thing if you're trying to build a company or a culture, right, from a provider tech perspective. Like, we think about great leaders. We're not gonna just say, oh, well, You know, we're gonna drop in Lattice as a culture tool, and we're gonna we're gonna have culture. Right? That's not how it's gonna work. Right? We need to have The right people, the right leaders in place, and then we need to say, hey, we think we need to gain feedback from our staff on how we're doing. First, we can ask them, we can have 1 on ones, we can have great process, and then thirdly, we could say, hey, there's this really neat tool that makes it easier for us and we can be a little bit more So the technology is usually the last thing that you wanna look at. So, that's my advice.

**Ryan Louis:**

And whether you're building a company or whether you're trying to solve A problem within your company that people is where you start process and then technology

**Lisa Blue:**

Yeah. No. I think that It's a really great perspective and, you know, thinking about how we even approach when we're working with clients, that is exactly our approach. Right? We don't, just offer the technology itself. A part of that discovery process and onboarding is really understanding What our clients are doing today and what aspects of that worked and what didn't work and, you know, certainly In health care, there's a lot of processes that can use improvement. Anyone who works in the health care space could certainly attest to that, but really part of our process is to understand, that and and where are there ways That we can enhance that even before we overlay that technology to scale that. So I think that was a really great description of why that is such an important piece to success in any project.

**Lisa Blue:**

So one of the stories that I've heard you tell a number of times is when I, when I was first joining ProviderTech, so, you know, obviously, we already had this history of working together, as a client, and then I was joining the team, even just to help on a couple small projects, and so There was a conference that was upcoming, so Ryan says, well, you know, why don't you come to the conference next week, right, you you understand this and You can work with our clients, and so I, you know, he says, why don't you join us? So Why not? So I jumped on a plane and Ryan and I went to that conference and, you know, it was really our first foray into really working together on the provider tech side. And so I remember a very astute moment, during that conference, you know, we talked about what I do with provider tech. This is actually on our way home. Right? We already had these great conversations with, the the attendees of the conference, and so, you know, we talked about what What it what it was that you needed for



provider tech, right, what functions did you need, what what roles, and, I remember you saying, well, you know, what do you want to do, right, what, you're really understanding that aligning not only what the need of provider tech was, but what I desired as a potential employee, and so, you know, why do you think that, I guess, is that something that you just inherently understand, or or how did you develop that that perspective as a leader?

**Ryan Louis:**

I mean, not to go back to, you know, people, process, and technology, and I like to think that, I can see good things in all people. But, I mean, with, you know, with you, Lisa, in particular, there's just, From day 1, there was just a natural, like, cohesive working. I mean, I and that you probably like that with everyone you work with, Honestly. So but, I mean, I think empathy and I and we talk about that even with our clients. So I think it's not it's It's our people. It's our clients. And and and so, you know, being empathetic to those too and trying to understand their situation is just as important, in leadership and approach to finding good people and to working with good clients. So I think it's, it's part part empathy.

**Ryan Louis:**

And I think at times too, that that may be a vulnerability because if you're, you know, overly empathetic and, You need to be empathetic, but, you know, if you think about it like radical candor, you also need to be very direct in your approach. And sometimes if you're not, then you're actually doing the people that you work with or that work, that you're leading a disservice if you can't Provide them that honest feedback so that they're able to get better. So it's so I think it's really that combination of, you know, being empathetic, and and and and and look, we're not a drill sergeant here. We don't wanna, like, I like being transparent doesn't mean you're giving someone orders. Right? And, I still remember, one of the people who mentored me back in the day, Brian Raboin, who first kinda taught me servant leadership actually when I was at ClearDATA, one of the things I learned there, and I was like, oh, servant leadership, what does that mean? And And in the simplest form, it's like, hey. Like, if I'm gonna lead you, I've gotta I've gotta be able to show you how to do it. Right? I've gotta be your guide.

**Ryan Louis:**

Right. So I gotta be able to understand your situation and take you to the next level. So if I'm gonna, you know, lead you to sweep a room, then I better be the darn best, you know, person sweeping. So here's how we're gonna do it. We're gonna do it together. Right? So I think it's a combination of that, empathy and servant leadership and then being able to kinda go above and beyond and try to, leverage what What you've learned to pass that on, and you've got to do that at times in a direct way, but not in a, like, a drill sergeant way. So I think, for me, that's that's kind of how The secret sauce, if that makes sense, that's kinda how I put it together and how I would, you know, lead teams and and inspire people to be part of the team, would would kind of incorporate those those ideas, right, of empathy, servant leadership, and, Radical Candor being very direct in in your approach to providing feedback

**Lisa Blue:**

Yeah. I agree. I think those are all really important characteristics to, You know, to round out a leadership style, right, they they all have to be present, like you're saying, there could be a vulnerability if you have one more than the other, and so I think that that was a really well said in terms of bringing those pieces together to, really be the type of leader that your your team, you know, is Excited to work with, and and beside, so, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. So Let's just shift a little bit of a broader view for a couple minutes here, so I would like you to share with our listening audience here A little bit about what do you think are one of the most or or some of the most promising things that are up and coming in the health care IT space, that people should have on their radar, right, and some of these things may be things that are happening within provider tech, some might be things that are happening in, in a future state of provider tech on our road map, so we would love to hear what your, what your thoughts are in in terms of Being an expert in the health care IT space, what should people have on their radar?

**Ryan Louis:**

So as I type this question into chat GPT, Yeah. Well, what's up everyone's mind these days, right? Generative AI. Isn't that it? So funny enough, I actually typed this, I typed it into chat GPT just to kinda, You know, a line like what the right answer is over here from what, like, the answer is from everybody else in the chat got world over there. But, You know, it's a little scary, right, generative AI, and I think I was told today that Windows 11 just released the generative AI into Windows operating systems. And so You can go into, like, things like Excel and say, hey, you know, instead of you actually having to think about writing the right equation or or formula for whatever problem you're solving, you can Tell it to write it for you, right? Or you can have it code you a website or write a blog or give a diagnosis. And I think that Some of the diagnosis stuff is coming, is actually, like, pretty promising. It's it's, you know, again, where does that leave The human beings at the end of the day, but, I think that certainly generative AI, with the right guardrails can be extremely promising in the health care space. But, you know, the other thing as I look through the list, that chat GPT suggested.

**Ryan Louis:**

And for me, it's obviously gonna be population health management is most important, but it was on the list here, too. So if we think about it, I mean, it's a problem ultimately that, right, ChatGPT isn't gonna solve. It's not going to, it's not gonna go talk to the patients. It's not going to say, provide empathy, right, to those patients that, That, hey, how do we get them to do something that they're not naturally inclined to do? How do they, how do we sort like, there's It's scary that, you know, diabetes and obesity and some of these things, that's population health management, right? It's like, How do we get people to be healthy? Because at the end of the day, you're not gonna live longer by, you know, like doing less from a chat GPT perspective, right? You need to be healthy. You need to, you know, get to the gym. You need to eat the right things, and those are preventative measures. And And, if so be it you end up with a chronic condition or

something like that, then, you know, you need to stick to your meds, you need to, so all these things are, extremely important, And they require, really some human intervention and the right nudges, and I think that that's, there's huge problems that we're trying to solve, and Chat GPT isn't gonna solve those, and I think it really comes back to the people, people process, and then the technology to help, with those interventions and to better manage the care. So, for me, population health would be number 1, and then Chat gp It would be probably, like, you know, pretty far behind it

**Lisa Blue:**

What are the tools in population health management, You know, problems to solve.

**Ryan Louis:**

Right? Yes. Exactly. Yeah. Technology is 3rd, not first. People process Technology. Absolutely. Especially generative AI.

**Lisa Blue:**

Right. Right. And, you know, there's a lot of things that it can assist with, but, you know, I I think there's still There's a there's a hybrid space there where, you know, we can, you know, create some efficiencies and and scale, You know, some of that information using tools like that, but there's still always going to be the the need for that That human intervention, right, humans, helping, along other humans, patients in this case, along the process, so Absolutely. Alright, so, let's wrap up today with 1 last question. I would love to hear, you know, as we talk about provider tech, how it came about The the journey along the way, I would love to hear, a story from you that makes you really excited about when you, think about the work that that you've done and that ProviderTech has done and is doing with clients. Is there a story that really stands out to you that you can say, yeah, that's why we do what we do.

**Ryan Louis:**

Yeah. I mean and, Lisa, obviously, you'll remember this 1 I think this one really touched all of us at the end of the day. A lot of work went into it, a lot of effort just to, Acquire the client at the time, a large healthcare system. We were working with a great advocate of our Of our work and of our program, Doctor. Sinha, and, we were working on a population health project to identify At risk patients who could potentially be susceptible of lung cancer. So, we developed a cohort based off of, certain, you know, certain criteria, how many pack years, smoking pack year history and Age and other things that said, hey, this is these are the the potential at risk patients who who might might, you know, might have, Potentially, he could have lung cancer based off of, you know, the the problem and the expertise who you know, again, people, the expert doctor Sinha Hope worked very closely in his team to define that population. And so very early on in the program, when we just first started doing outreach to the patients, you know, primarily using

text messaging, we were able to, get, get, get some patients to respond. And we identified 1 patient who, Looked like, you know, she went in, she said, okay, I, you know, sign me up.

**Ryan Louis:**

I wanna do this lung cancer screening. It looks like I might be at risk. And so she went in and got that first scan, and the scan came back positive for potentially lung cancer. So she continued along the course of the treatment, and ultimately it was caught early, right? So it was, when lung cancer's caught early, It's much more treatable, and you can save lives. So, she was caught early, right? It was caught early because we sent that text message, because We played a small part, but it was something that I think touched all of us because ultimately, maybe if we didn't send that text message, she wouldn't have caught that lung cancer early. She doesn't have the treatment and doesn't get it corrected, and there's and there's a terrible outcome. So in a way, like, you think about it like, oh, we put this little part in saving someone's life, and that was like and it was just so much hard work that went into that. It was just like, you know, I think we all shed a few tears at the moment when, like, oh, No way.

**Ryan Louis:**

You know, it's almost like we were taken back. It's like, this is, this is why we're here. This is why we do this. Like, it's not Just for us, right? It's for the people. And that's population health, right? It's caring for the people and doing our part in a better outcome for the greater good. And so that for me, you know, it was pretty easy to do, you know, that I went right to that moment in time. And, it was it was amazing, as you know

**Lisa Blue:**

Yes. Yeah, indeed. I certainly remember that That call, right, and hearing about that story, so, yeah, that was definitely a story that stands out in my mind as well. Thank you for sharing that.

**Ryan Louis:**

Yeah, absolutely.

**Lisa Blue:**

Well, I want to thank you so much for spending some time with me this afternoon and telling Providertech's story and the journey from where it started to where we are today. Very exciting to, I guess, reminisce on this path with you and I'm excited to share this with, with our audience and our clients and, those of you that are interested in learning more about provider tech, and and wondering who we are, that's a good intro to who we are and and why we do what we do. So Ryan, thank you so much for joining us today. We really appreciate your time and your perspective and your idea to launch this Company so many years ago. So thank you so much, and have a great rest of your afternoon.

**Ryan Louis:**

Alright. Thank you. And here's to more of those happy patients.