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- Current Issue
- Past issues
- Change of Address
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- Exhibiting & Sponsoring
- Call for Speakers
- E-Weeklies
- Spine Review E-Weekly
- Orthopedic Review E-Weekly
- Webinars
- Upcoming Webinars
- Past Webinars
- Whitepapers
- Spine Lists
- 20 spine imaging systems to know
- 50 spine surgeon predictions for 2018
- 37 Orthopedic and Spine Device Companies to Know
- 20 New MIS Spine Devices in 2016
- 44 MIS devices to know | 2016
- 30 MIS spine products to know | 2017
- Spine Surgeons to Know 2014
- Device Awards
- Resources
- About Us
- Request Media Kit
- Channels
- Spine
- Devices and Implants

# How price transparency in spine and big tech will affect healthcare: 4 Qs with Dr. Isador Lieberman

Written by Laura Dyrda | January 27, 2019 | [Print](#) | [Email](#)



Isador Lieberman, MD, is president of Plano-based [Texas Back Institute](#). He has a special interest in minimally invasive, robotic and endoscopic spine surgery, and has built a career on innovation in patient care.

Dr. Lieberman is also the founder of the Uganda Charitable Spine Surgery Mission. Here, he discusses where he sees the spine field headed and the biggest factors creating change for healthcare providers.

**Question: Do you think the future is bright or dark for spine surgery?**

**Dr. Isador Lieberman:** Very bright for clinical care of the spine patient. We are in a very privileged position at this time. There is so much technology within our reach that can help our patients; we just need to figure out how to make it work best for them.

**Q: What are the biggest factors driving decision-making about your practice?**

**IL:** Cost of care and contracting because more and more the insurers are denying appropriate interventions in an effort to discourage those who try to 'game the system'; this only serves to further escalate the efforts of those who do take advantage, and also denies the care to legitimate patients served by ethical practitioners.

**Q: What do you think about tech companies such as Apple, Microsoft and Amazon moving into the healthcare space? Is this a positive or negative trend for spine and healthcare overall?**

**IL:** I am concerned about the large tech companies moving into healthcare by virtue of their economic prowess and the fact they are not healthcare providers, yet I welcome their involvement as the current system is unsustainable and needs a complete restructuring.

**Q: How do you feel about the move toward increased price transparency? Will this have an impact on spine?**

**IL:** Price transparency is the basis of competition and competition is good. Yes, it will have an impact; my concern is that the least expensive provider may not be the best provider. I recount the famous John Glenn quote: "as I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind — every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder." Price transparency must be accompanied by an assessment of quality and value.

*To participate in future Becker's Q&As, contact Laura Dyrda at [ldyrda@beckershealthcare.com](mailto:ldyrda@beckershealthcare.com).*

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