

# HEALTH CARE

## ROUNDTABLE

The latest expert insights



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**T**HE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY as a whole has faced an incredible array of challenges over the last few years, and has rallied by making improvements, enhancements and adjustments to protocols, all while providing services that are the most essential to those in need.

To explore the future of health-related issues, the Inside The Valley team has discussed insights, suggestions and best practices with five health care experts and thought leaders from the region.

### What is your outlook for the future of the health care system – this year and beyond?

**SPISSO:** The health care industry will continue to see increased patient demand for convenient access to care and personalized medicine that customizes treatment to a patient's individual needs. We will also continue to see a rise in new technologies, including the use of AI, which will bring new efficiencies and improve the quality and safety of care. The rising costs of health care will also continue to be an area of focus. At UCLA Health, we're implementing several strategies to help reduce costs while improving the value of care delivery and leveraging technology to streamline processes.

**MIRZABEGIAN:** As I see the health care system going, my perception is positive. I see more technological and medical advancements impacting the future of health care, which makes it a bright future for

health care and medicine. These advancements will ultimately help improve the way we care for people and change the way we do medicine. AI is already changing the technology we use. We recently upgraded our MRI unit with AI technology, which will produce more precise images and have a faster scan time. Patients are known to be more claustrophobic with MRI scans, so this helps with the patient experience, and the technology allows for quicker diagnosis to support physicians in providing more targeted treatment.

**ISSAI:** Health systems are at an advantage leveraging their systemness in creating more value on many fronts, like creating centers of excellence to reduce duplications and redundancies, which will result in improved quality and better outcomes, reduce cost, create more efficiencies, and develop expertise around streamlined processes. Systemness will create scale for improved contract negotiations, strong buying power and discounts in purchasing. We've made tremendous strides aligning operations and sharing expertise between our hospitals in the Glendale and Simi Valley service area. Additionally, in collaboration with my colleague, White Memorial president John Raffoul, we are working to leverage our strengths as a region with goals to elevate the quality, timeliness, and ease of access to care. This work will not happen without intentional attention to strategies and processes with measurable outcomes.

### What are some evolving best practices in terms of prevention and early diagnosis as ways of stopping serious illness?

**De VITA:** The health care industry is seeing a growing interest in lifestyle medicine, both from our clinicians and our patients. This approach focuses on preventing diseases before they develop and better managing chronic conditions. It's about making small, everyday choices that can have a big impact on our health. For example, how we feed our families and incorporate functional activities and exercises



**THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY IS SEEING A GROWING INTEREST IN LIFESTYLE MEDICINE, BOTH FROM OUR CLINICIANS AND OUR PATIENTS."**

-STEPHEN De VITA

into our daily routines can significantly improve our quality of life and even prevent diseases like diabetes and heart attacks. Kaiser Permanente believes that building strong partnerships and trust within our communities is key. By working closely with our community members, we can encourage more people to participate in medical screenings, leading to earlier detection and more effective treatments. It's about creating a supportive environment where everyone feels empowered to take charge of their health and well-being.

**ZOCH:** Information is powerful. I highly encourage people to "know your health." See your physician, get your labs and testing done, and use it as a powerful tool to measure your health. Food, beverages, exercise, and sleep are four essential components that can drive towards optimal



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-JEREMY ZOCH



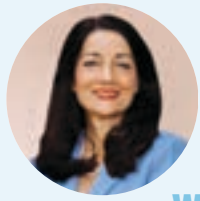
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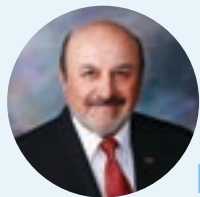


**THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY WILL CONTINUE TO SEE INCREASED PATIENT DEMAND FOR CONVENIENT ACCESS TO CARE AND PERSONALIZED MEDICINE.”**

-JOHNESE SPISSO

health. Wearables, apps, and other techniques have never been more accessible and can help individuals set personal goals. Dr. Peter Attia’s book “Healthspan” is a powerful read on the importance of not only living as long as possible, but doing so with your best health.

**SPISSO:** At UCLA Health and in the health care industry, we will see a continued focus on population health management. This includes analyzing and addressing the factors that influence the health of a whole population, including social, environmental, and behavioral determinants, with the aim of preventing disease and promoting wellness at a community level. Socioeconomic and environmental factors significantly influence up to 80% of health outcomes, highlighting their critical role



**IT’S AN EXCITING TIME FOR THE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY, AS WE’RE STARTING TO SEE MORE AND MORE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BEING INTRODUCED.”**

-EDWARD MIRZABEGIAN

in our patients’ overall well-being. UCLA Health has undertaken several strategies to improve population health, including screening our patients in the domains of food needs, transportation, financial strain, prescription and medical bills, housing, intimate partner violence, and utilities needs and working to connect them with needed resources.

**What should patients take into consideration when selecting their care providers and hospitals?**

**ISSAI:** Patients should be looking for high quality and safety outcomes. They should be looking for excellence and the highest level of competencies with proof points to back it up. They should also be looking for places that offer comprehensive care and advanced well-trained and credible specialists that have great reputations and outcomes. A place that is easy to navigate and where the providers work seamlessly across different disciplines. Adventist Health Glendale has established a true tertiary medical center with several comprehensive centers of excellence. Comprehensive because all parts of a health care journey are available here. And excellence because the superior physicians leading our programs – like interventional radiology, advanced gastroenterology, interventional pulmonology and structural heart. It’s uncommon to see this level of quality in a community hospital.

**MIRZABEGIAN:** Right now, patients don’t really have a choice, it’s dictated by your insurance carrier. Insurance companies are the ones dictating which doctor you see. Patients need to be smart and do their research before they choose an insurance plan. If a patient sees a specific doctor that they like, they should ask what insurance they accept, and go from there. Patients tend to look for physicians that are local to them, specialized for their needs or diagnosis, and have similar cultural preferences such as religious beliefs or language. However, it’s just as important to factor in the out-of-pocket

costs a patient may encounter due to emergencies or an unexpected illness.

**Will outpatient care continue to trend upwards? Why or why not?**

**ISSAI:** We certainly expect to see the upward outpatient care trend to continue. Evolving technology, especially as it relates to specialized and minimally invasive techniques, is opening doors to faster, more efficient, individualized care. We are witnessing this unfold in real-time each day with the advances in structural heart procedures that have drastically reduced the need for open-heart surgeries. Robotics and navigation devices are advancing interventional pulmonology capabilities and reducing occurrences of more-invasive procedures. These innovations are reducing hospitalizations, major surgeries, and lengthy hospital stays. But more importantly, patients experience early diagnosis, improved outcomes and faster recoveries.



**TODAY’S CONSUMERS HAVE CHOICES, AND WILL TRY TO SEEK THE MOST VALUE, EASIER ACCESS, HIGHER QUALITY, MORE PERSONALIZED CARE.”**

-ALICE ISSAI

**MIRZABEGIAN:** Although I see outpatient care trending upwards, I don’t think it’s seen the same, as it did five years ago. There’s a lot of limitations on outpatient care, so I do see it plateauing soon. The reason being that the care received at home is not the same across the board. The level of care differs since there are a lot of variables involved, such as medicine doses, application, etc.; monitoring levels

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**THE LESSONS  
LEARNED  
FROM COVID-19  
HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE  
IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY,  
CONTINUOUS LEARNING, AND  
THE ABILITY TO PIVOT.”**

-STEPHEN De VITA

are too high, are too low, when should I call for medical advice, etc. Although more people want the convenience of being at home, the level of care you receive at home is just not the same.

**ZOCH:** Health care needs to and continues to evolve to the lowest and most accessible place to access care. Surgeries that required two weeks in the hospital are now a same day outpatient procedure with amazing outcomes. My personal philosophy has been the right care at the right time at the right cost. This creates a great experience for patients and also helps us optimize our resources so that hospital-based operating rooms and services are available and used for the most complex care.

**SPISSO:** There will continue to be an increased demand for outpatient care,



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driven by patient preference for convenient, accessible care and technological advancements allowing for more procedures outside of hospitals. At UCLA Health, we are committed to increasing access to high-quality health care. In 2024, we opened eight new clinics in the region, and we acquired West Hills Hospital, now UCLA West Valley Medical, which added 260 beds, seven operating rooms, an ambulatory surgery center and the UCLA Health Regional Burn Center to our network of hospitals and community clinics. We are planning clinical service expansions and new programs to meet the community's needs. The public will continue to see UCLA Health expand throughout the region, bringing our services and care to the community in various ways.

**What can the health care sector do to prepare for a potential future crisis such as another pandemic scenario?**

**De VITA:** At Kaiser Permanente, we believe that preparing for future crises like pandemics requires a proactive and adaptive approach. The lessons learned from COVID-19 have highlighted the importance of flexibility, continuous learning, and the ability to pivot in response to evolving situations. The mindset of “learning over knowing” is crucial for effective crisis management. By fostering a culture of resilience and adaptability, we can better assess, re-assess, and meet the needs of our communities during challenging times.

**How about the insurance landscape? What changes are you seeing there?**

**MIRZABEGIAN:** Insurances are becoming stronger legislatively and it's hurting patient care, and patient outcomes. Providers cannot offer specific care or treatment plans, because insurances place limitations on them. As a hospital, if we introduce a new procedure with advanced technology, we have to go back to insur-

ance plans to ensure these procedures are covered. There's a lot of confinement on the way we can provide care. As we see more insurers lean towards value-based payment models, it also increases constraints placed on providers. There's no cookie cutter approach to health care, and just as providers adapt and manage the uniqueness of each patient, insurances should be just as flexible.



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**How is consumerism impacting the health care industry and how are hospitals and health systems responding?**

**ISSAI:** Today's consumers are very savvy in navigating to find the best care for themselves and their families. Today's consumers have choices, and will try to seek the most value, easier access, higher quality, more personalized care. Easier access means an experience that is consumer-centric and as frictionless as possible. It takes a significant investment of resources for large health systems, like Adventist Health, to deliver on this expectation. But it's an investment that is worthwhile because consumerism in health care is not simply a trend. The “patient as a consumer” mindset should drive future-focused strategy. At Adventist Health, we are creating more seamless record sharing and care coordination, as well as enabling patients to have more access to their journeys.

# In an emergency, time is critical.

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**I SEE MORE  
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**How are organizations successfully implementing value-based delivery to reduce the cost of care while also improving quality?**

**ZOCH:** We are utilizing a patient-centered approach at Northridge Hospital to continually improve our overall services and experience for our patients. We are fortunate to have strong partnerships with our physicians and they are working collaboratively with us to help us optimize the care we are providing. We have been named a Top 50 Hospital by Healthgrades for eight years in a row due to the innovation and focus on quality, compassion, and overall value of our services.

**When you look at all the innovation happening within the health care industry today, what trends are you most optimistic about?**

**SPISSO:** UCLA has always been a leader in innovative health care delivery. Early research at UCLA was integral to the development of new imaging systems such as PET scans. We were one of the first in California to develop a saliva test for COVID-19, SwabSeq, based on the work done in our research labs. These technologies have transformed medical

diagnostics, at UCLA Health and around the world. Today, we're leading innovative research and treatments in many exciting areas that will help transform the health care industry, including the use of artificial intelligence, precision medicine and increasing access to health care.

**MIRZABEGIAN:** It's an exciting time for the health care industry, as we're starting to see more and more AI (Artificial Intelligence) being introduced into technology, medical procedures, and operations. Computerization automates services, which in turn will improve processes and the patient's experience. For example, we just introduced a new bronchoscopy procedure to perform lung biopsies, enabling our physicians to obtain tissue samples from deep within the lung. Using this technology, a scope follows imagery taken before the procedure and uses it like a map to get to the nodule or mass needed to obtain the biopsy. This is incredible technology; it cuts the procedure time, cuts the agonizing wait time for patients, and physicians are able to determine treatment plans faster if needed.

**Are wellness programs worthwhile investments for employers in 2025?**

**De VITA:** Yes, wellness programs can be worthwhile investments for employers in 2025, provided they are committed to fostering a culture of wellness. This involves long-term dedication to initiatives such as wellness committees, department champions, regular wellness events, healthy eating options, and rewards for healthy choices. Wellness cannot be imposed; it requires consistent effort and commitment.

**What should be done today to enhance the patient experience?**

**ZOCH:** It is their care that they are receiving! They should be involved and

informed as their care is happening. All of our leaders round every morning to do our leadership rounds directly with patients. It is a terrific way to hear in real time what is going well and also what we can do to help make sure their care is connected and we are doing our best to create the best care experience possible. There are dozens of departments and people working together with each patient every day and the rounds are a powerful way to make sure they know we are here, available, and ready to help with anything that they need.

**Discuss the importance of sustainability in health care.**

**MIRZABEGIAN:** It's very important. To maintain a financially sustainable health care system is to maintain a sustainable existence for all people. Without it, the future of humanity will hurt. There are three important factors to sustain a health care system. They are: 1) Access, 2) Affordability, and 3) Capacity. Access has been made difficult by insurance providers. People go to the emergency room, when what they really need is a dedicated primary care physician. People need to be able to afford health care services in order to maintain quality of life, and our goal is to expand our capacity to provide that access.



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