Reuters Events
Total Health USA

Post Event Report

Contributors

Based on insights from speakers and delegates at Reuters Events Total Health USA.
With insights from Reuters Events Total Health USA presentations including:

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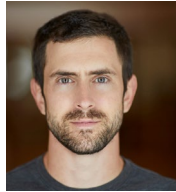Chairman, President and Chief Executive
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Setting the agenda for healthcare transformation

Through partnerships, technology and customized approaches, the healthcare industry is no longer making patients conform to the system but rather adapting the system to the patient.

This is the exciting disruption that's coming to the USA's healthcare system that will deliver more equitable patient experience and better care.

Tackling stress, burnout and staff shortages

Before they can implement such change, however, healthcare systems must contend with the problem of post-pandemic burnout among their people.

Dr. Laura Hamill, Chief Science Officer of Limeade, explains that ensuring employees feel authentically supported and valued by their organization is an important mitigating factor. With staff turnover rates as high as 18%, healthcare leaders need to show that they value their workforce and must significantly change the way they address their employees' needs.

The pressures of the pandemic and impacts of lockdown are not the only problem here. A polarised social and political context in which the role of healthcare systems has become a political football is adding to the problem, says Dr. Anne Klibanski,

President and CEO of Mass General Brigham. "That politicizing of the healthcare system…is adding to a lot of the burnout."

Organizations are getting creative in addressing burnout by developing and implementing a multitude of programs and initiatives designed to support employees and alleviate their stress.

Clay Holderman, President and CEO of UnityPoint Health, describes a virtual mental health program that allows employees to easily access mental health care while eliminating any associated stigma.

Other technological innovations include a digital admissions nurse role that is cutting the workloads of the bedside nursing staff, as well as a nurse turnover prediction tool that allows the organization to reach out

to staff that are on the radar as being at risk for burnout. "Sign-on bonuses and extra pay are not going to solve this crisis," says Holderman.

More meaningful interactions with their patients is key in combating burnout, says Klibanski. "Now more than ever, anything we can do to eliminate administrative burden, whether it's by using bots, whether it's automation, whether it's virtual, all of that will help people feel that whatever work they're doing is much more directly impactful on patients."

Expanding the pipeline of new healthcare workers through flexible training opportunities for current staff and cultivation of new employees through collaboration with local schools and the community, is another effective way to secure staff in the long-term.

Getting to total health means including women's health

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many patients to put the treatment of critical medical issues and preventative care on hold, says Steve MacMillan, Chief Executive Officer of Hologic. "Gaps are emerging, particularly among genders and social groups. Women's health has been left behind."

Hologic's Global Women's Health Index reveals that women's

healthcare needs are nowhere close to being met. In the last year, over a billion women failed to see a healthcare provider or participate in the standard healthcare screenings for several major chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes and hypertension.

This is the optimal time to learn from the pandemic, during which the enormous shift to using data and

tracking to diagnose problems has allowed for innovative solutions.

Applying such tactics to women's health, including aggressive testing and early intervention, will improve long-term outcomes. "If we can harness some of that same kind of data and the focus on it, we know we can make enormous progress on women's health both in the United States and globally," says MacMillan.

Eliminating disparities and advancing health equity

With today's increasing awareness of the social determinants of health, healthcare leaders are striving to implement equitable and inclusive practices to drive better outcomes for their patients.

A key consideration in understanding the patient population and identifying the gaps that exist within their care is ensuring that healthcare leaders, providers and decision makers include representatives of the patient population, says Dr. Gary Kaplan, Chairman and CEO of Virginia Mason. "We need a workforce that looks like our community, that understands the specific needs of our community."

David Holmberg, CEO of Highmark Health, agrees that people with similar backgrounds should represent diverse populations within healthcare. "Whenever you have the opportunity to be treated in healthcare by somebody who looks or has a similar background as you, we think you get better outcomes, and we think it's got to be part of the equation."

Technology is another way to advance health equity, however, it requires a careful balance. The very resources that can increase and improve reach to patients can alienate others who may be at a disadvantage due to their demographic.

Kaplan emphasizes that it is necessary to ensure that underserved populations, such as residents of rural communities and low-income families, not only have broadband and infrastructure, but also the devices to utilize it.

He also states that the regulatory environment needs to be developed so that it does not become too restrictive and therefore a barrier to implementing technology. "The industry, the profession, I think, is on a very steep but very fast moving learning curve. If we can allow the regulatory environment to move along with it, we can potentially avoid disadvantaging people."

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Combine social risk data with clinical insights to drive targeted, tailored intervention

Data-driven population health management uses social determinants of health to pave the way for the delivery of more individualized care to patients.

Gathering and interrogating demographic data in this way allows for the personalization of patient care plans and equitable outreach, which will result in better health outcomes for underserved populations.

The use of data and artificial intelligence allows for the implementation of early interventions, says Michael Neidorff, Chairman, President and CEO of Centene. "We use our data systems to identify high risks and ensure they have the case management they need."

Centene also uses highly accurate, condition-specific predictive modeling to identify members at risk for medical conditions such as diabetes and substance use disorder. "We have to get predictive and get ahead of the curve," says Neidorff. "The secret is let's identify somebody who may have a heart attack before they have it."

Value-based care and the emergence of the 'payvider' model

As payers and providers come together through joint ventures and partnerships, the values, goals and economic incentives of health plans and health systems are aligning. These partnerships are driving innovation and change within healthcare.

"Innovation doesn't always mean fancy gadgets and tech. It means innovating around care delivery models," says Dr. Jaewon Ryu, President and CEO of Geisinger Health. It's about "being able to innovate on models of care that can reduce the total cost of care and look at delivering care in new and different ways and new and different spaces."

In the value-based care model, merging financial and clinical data allows physicians to gauge their performance in achieving outcomes. Meaningful data gathered from members can also be used to improve care delivery methods.

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Dr. Lindsay Jubelt, Chief Population Health Officer of Mass General Brigham, says: "We need to think about the big data. But we also need to think about empowering the folks that are closest to the front lines to be engaged in this and talk to our patients, because that can bring back in a sense of involvement and transformation."

Connecting the payer, the provider and the patient promises groundbreaking advances. Improved outcomes can be achieved by using data to prioritize the patients who are most in need of care and then be able to deliver that care.

"We've seen the power of data really go on steroids when we're actually able to make it usable and actionable, bringing it within the workflow [and] to the actual bedside," says Ryu.

The pandemic has also accelerated efforts to provide care in the home through telehealth. Ryu explains that the ability to provide home care results in a reduction in the rate of ED visits and inpatient admissions. As telehealth evolves, more aspects of care will be provided in patients' homes driving even more affordability.

A silver lining: How Covid-19 vaccines may have changed vaccine and therapeutic development forever

As healthcare exploits the potential of artificial intelligence, virtual engagement and digital literacy, bringing in tech partners, such as Amazon, Apple and Microsoft, will help further the transformation to a better healthcare system.

"We believe that the pandemic may have accelerated digital adoption by as much as five years," says Lidia Fonseca, Chief Digital and Technology Officer at Pfizer. "And it's not that these are new technologies. The difference is that we're applying them at scale."

Pharma is changing its business model. Patients have been the driving factor in changing processes and how business is done. "While we continue to tackle the Covid 19 pandemic, there are also many other critical health needs that demand and deserve our best efforts," says Fonseca. "Beyond the vaccine and new therapies, there is a renewed, intensified, and laser-focused effort to take what we learn and leverage it to deliver more breakthroughs."

The power of partnership

New partnerships can transform healthcare. They can generate incredible benefits that single entities may not be able to achieve on their own.

"One of the lessons that we've learned is that we can't do everything ourselves and that there are organizations and companies out there that are doing things that we, as a healthcare entity, can not only utilize but can benefit by," says Lloyd Dean, CEO of CommonSpirit Health.

One of the projects emerging from the partnership between CommonSpirit Health, and Morehouse School of Medicine is a commitment to add more physicians of color to serve underrepresented communities. This effort was organized after finding that the pandemic was disproportionately affecting people of color.

This is just one way that partnering can tackle and solve issues such as disparities within healthcare.

Dean offers some best practices that are critical to maintaining a successful partnership including establishing goals early on in the process and tracking progress utilizing frequent review checkpoints and open communication. Dean also emphasizes that a cultural alignment must exist between entities in which, not only goals are aligned, but also values.

"History has shown, particularly during this recent pandemic, that we are stronger together in that collaboration around innovation, around technology, around new ways of solving old and challenging problems. We can do better by working together as opposed to competing or working independently."

"We can do better by working together as opposed to competing or working independently."

Lloyd Dean, CEO, CommonSpirit Health

Bringing care into the home: How home delivery can transform access & patient experience

Today's healthcare landscape indicates that it is time to personalize care according to patients' desires and priorities. This includes providing care where the patient wants to receive it, while maintaining quality and affordability.

"We believe strongly that people need to get care where, when and how they want it in a way they can afford it," says Dr. Marc Harrison, President and CEO of Intermountain. "When we talk to people, the last thing they want to do is be in one of our hospital beds unless they really, really need it."

Intermountain has partnered with Zipline to connect patients with providers in the home and provide instant medication delivery using drones. This will have a profound impact on equity since people in rural areas and vulnerable communities, that may otherwise have difficulty accessing care, can be reached.

"We already see technology and instant logistics infusing itself into other parts of our lives, and we think that it's really important that we make health care more convenient and more accessible in the same ways," says Keller Rinaudo, Co-founder and CEO of Zipline.

Zipline's highly innovative system to deliver medication and medical supplies takes delivery logistics to a new level. Rinaudo explains that, when compared to traditional ground transport, drones provide significantly faster delivery, have zero carbon emissions and are more cost effective. Instant delivery is becoming the standard in many industries, and healthcare should be no exception.

Rinaudo adds "it can result in better healthcare outcomes, because if you make care more convenient, you can increase patient adherence, which is super important, particularly for vulnerable populations."

About Reuters Events

The aim of the healthcare division at Reuters Events is to make healthcare more open and valued. More open so that the strongest ideas and insights are brought to the fore in a transparent, trustworthy manner. More valued by having an authentic approach to building products and services that matter to patients. To do this, Reuters Events provides a hub for senior-level healthcare executives, patient groups and other health stakeholders to exchange ideas and observe shifting trends and practices. We actively respond to the aims and interests of our audience, so please get in touch.