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Healthcare AI

The future of healthcare: 3 trends to watch in 2022

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2021 has been a year of major challenges and significant evolutions across the healthcare landscape. Now, as the pandemic continues to improve, we're set to see even bigger changes and opportunities in 2022. Discover the shifts that will define healthcare over the next 12 months and find out how they'll impact everything from staff retention and engagement to clinical practices and critical patient outcomes.

2021 has been a challenging year for teams across the healthcare industry. The long-tail impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have persisted for millions, leading to significant staff shortages, increasing feelings of burnout, and creating huge shifts in how care is delivered to patients. And with the Omicron variant causing a resurgence in contraction rates and driving infection numbers up around the world, those challenges appear to be far from over.

Amidst these challenges, it's also been a year of powerful, proactive change. Digital transformation has accelerated, driven by increased patient and clinician appetite for telehealth and digital engagements. Long-awaited changes have been implemented to improve patient and clinician experiences, and a strong digital foundation has been laid for the future of healthcare.

Now it's time to look forward. Here are three trends we'll see ramp up and shape the healthcare landscape in 2022.

Trend #1: The burnout crisis will drive significant workflow changes for millions of clinicians

According to a recent report by HIMSS and Nuance, a huge 98% of clinicians say they've experienced feelings of burnout. It's a trend that's persisted since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as time goes on, it's having a major impact on everything from staff turnover rates to critical patient outcomes.

It's a multi-faceted challenge—one that's experienced in different ways by different teams and individuals—which has so far made it challenging to tackle effectively. But as healthcare organizations continue to evolve their digital transformation strategies, we will see more focused efforts on removing friction and unnecessary manual work from clinician's days with the end goal of empowering them to spend their time tackling frontline challenges for patients. As technology continues to advance and workflows evolve accordingly to facilitate that shift, organizations will begin effectively removing a lot of the discrete frustrations that come together to fuel burnout, and we will see a return of job satisfaction, as well as increased patient satisfaction as a result.

In fact, we're already seeing some powerful new technologies help to reduce reports of burnout by transforming tasks like the documentation of care engagements — giving clinicians greater freedom to focus on the patient. Workflow evolutions like these may appear small on the surface, but they can have a huge impact on clinician engagement and patient satisfaction.

Trend #2: Relationships between vendors and hospitals or health systems will become strategic partnerships

In days gone by, hospitals, health systems, and other care providers viewed technology vendors as exactly that—companies that supplied the digital tools they were asked to provide. But with the pandemic accelerating the pace of digital change across the healthcare sector to an almost unmanageable level, many organizations are placing greater trust in vendors to help them evolve quickly and intelligently and navigate the future of healthcare.

Within these strategic partnerships, the role of the vendor changes from IT provider to much more of a trusted advisor and dedicated supporter—providing strategic guidance, white glove service and progress reports against specific shared outcomes, however and whenever they're needed. Instead of waiting to fulfil specific requests, partners work proactively to help guide care providers digital strategies and find creative solutions to emerging challenges like:

- Combating burnout by delivering superior digital working experiences
- Simplifying workflows to help care providers focus on patient outcomes
- Mastering telehealth and developing new best practices for remote care delivery
- Understanding shifting patient preferences and demands, and how technology can help meet them

As partnerships become more important across the healthcare ecosystem, organizations will also look to their partners to help them establish and comply with standards that help them stay flexible and easy to collaborate with, without sacrificing security or privacy.

Trend #3: AI will find more game-changing use cases

AI is already being applied across the healthcare sector, helping teams do everything from accurately capturing and recording data during patient engagements to fully automating non-emergency requests for healthcare information. But we're only just beginning to see its full potential for transforming care delivery experiences and patient outcomes.

As healthcare organizations and researchers establish strong standards for the secure sharing of healthcare data, new collaborative AI projects are set to deliver incredible results that push the boundaries of what's possible and drive more informed care decisions based on the latest research information available.

Stay ahead of the curve throughout 2022

The global healthcare landscape is constantly shifting, with digital change accelerating at an incredible rate. Keep an eye out for our updates throughout the new year to find out how these trends are evolving, and what they mean for patients, clinicians, organizations, and the future of healthcare delivery.

We also want to thank all of those who are in the healthcare sector for all you do to serve your communities, patients, and colleagues.

Tags: Future of healthcare, Future of healthcare, Predictions

More Information

See what's next in healthcare

Keep up with the latest healthcare developments throughout 2022 and track all of these trends and more.

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About Diana Nole

Diana joined Nuance in June 2020 as the executive vice president and general manager of Nuance's Healthcare division, which is focused on improving the overall physician-patient experience through cutting-edge AI technology applications. She is responsible for all business operations, growth and innovation strategy, product development, and partner and customer relationships. Over the course of her career, Diana has held numerous executive and leadership roles, serving as the CEO of Wolter Kluwers' Healthcare division, president of Carestream's Digital Medical Solutions business, and vice president of strategy, product management, and marketing for Eastman Kodak's Healthcare Information Technology Solutions business. Diana has dual degrees in Computer Science and Math from the State University of New York at Potsdam and earned her MBA from the University of Rochester's Simon School.

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