

Healthcare AI

Three trends that will define the future of healthcare

Diana Nole | Executive Vice President & General Manager, Healthcare Division

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There's no doubt that this year will bring numerous challenges for healthcare organisations, but the sector cannot slow down its progress toward achieving the Quintuple Aim. With innovative AI solutions, organisations can make a meaningful impact in three key areas: collaborative care, the tech-enabled workforce, and health equity.

During 2022, we saw health systems make valiant efforts as they strive to achieve the Quintuple Aim against a backdrop of higher patient volumes, severe staff shortages, and shrinking margins.

In 2023, it's likely that we'll see growing pressure to reduce costs as margins stay low and economic uncertainty continues. However, organisations cannot focus on one aim at the expense of the others. Across healthcare, organisations must maintain a steadfast commitment to enhancing patient experiences, managing population health more effectively, improving clinician wellbeing, and advancing health equity.

With [AI-powered healthcare technology](#), organisations can tackle their current challenges, positively impact all five aims, and accelerate healthcare transformation in 2023 and beyond. Here are three trends that we expect to define healthcare over the next 12 months, and the role AI will play in helping organisations withstand increasing pressures and move forward with confidence.

1: Care will become more connected and collaborative

Many organisations are already making significant progress toward breaking down silos within health systems and across the broader healthcare ecosystem. They're seeing the value of having [a single platform to connect people, information, and AI services](#) across a vast and ever-expanding network to accelerate the development and deployment of powerful healthcare AI innovations.

In 2023, we'll see more organisations find new ways to adopt connected and collaborative approaches to care. This will be an important transition as site-of-care shifts gather pace and care moves away from hospitals and physicians' offices—the Advisory Board estimates that [26% of outpatient visits could be performed virtually in the future](#).

AI-driven solutions will enable organisations to connect teams—across specialties, sites, and institutions—and allow them to share insights and coordinate care delivery. Rapid image-sharing, for example, will [give clinicians fast access to actionable diagnostic insights](#) allowing for earlier diagnosis and timely intervention, and reducing operational costs.

So much of a patient's story is tied to an image, and AI is now adept at finding diagnostic clues hidden in the pixels. AI models are continually improving, helping to identify successful treatment pathways and enable precision medicine.

AI will also empower patients to collaborate more closely with their clinicians and take more responsibility for managing their care. For instance, [automated patient engagement solutions](#) will keep patients better informed and more engaged with their care by sending proactive notifications, relevant information, and important reminders throughout their care journeys. By making frequent contact in patients' preferred channels, clinicians can increase care-plan adherence and forge stronger relationships that improve engagement, accountability, and trust.

2: A tech-enabled workforce will transform care delivery

Empowering healthcare professionals with AI-powered tools can have a profound impact on their ability to deliver high-quality care. Health systems already [use AI to streamline radiology reporting](#) workflows to reduce fatigue and improve reporting productivity and quality. Many also [automate the creation of clinical documentation](#), using medical speech recognition solutions to minimise the documentation burden, one of the biggest contributors to burnout.

[Ambient clinical intelligence](#) is an emerging area of medical AI that will continue to grow this year. This technology automatically documents patient encounters accurately and efficiently at the point of care.

Clinicians report that they spend around half their working day on administrative tasks, and of the time they have available to see patients, [nearly 40% is spent on the computer entering or retrieving data](#). With ambient clinical intelligence, the AI automatically creates clinical documentation for clinicians to review and sign off, and clinicians can simply ask the system to find relevant data for them. That means clinicians can focus all their attention on the patient to understand their medical issues and concerns and [build their trust](#). Patients feel heard and understood, and clinicians don't have to spend hours every evening completing documentation.

We expect organisations to ramp up their adoption of AI technologies over the coming year as they look for solutions that can simultaneously impact multiple branches of the Quintuple Aim. However, the solutions organisations deploy must be easy to use and require minimal user training, otherwise adoption will be poor, limiting the ability to achieve a meaningful return on investment.

With budgets tightening this year, and the continuing shift toward risk-based reimbursement models, we'll also see more organisations adopt [computer-assisted physician documentation](#) solutions. These AI-powered tools provide in-workflow guidance to ensure accurate CC and MCC capture in inpatient settings and HCC capture and recapture in outpatient settings, resulting in more complete records and appropriate reimbursement.

3: Big steps will be taken toward advancing health equity

For the advancements we've looked at so far to have a meaningful, long-term impact on population health, we must ensure no patient gets left behind. It's vital that provisions are made for patients who lack internet access or live in remote communities, for example. Achieving health equity is never simple, but initiatives such as installing internet access hotspots to enable under-served communities to benefit from virtual care will help redress the balance.

With so much focus on digital technologies today, it's easy to forget that substantial numbers of patients, particularly in older generations and less affluent communities, are unable or unwilling to use the apps and messaging platforms that many of us take for granted. To advance health equity, patient engagement solutions must take account of this and use tools such as conversational AI to [provide effective self-service in every channel](#). Some patients may not have a smartphone or tablet, but they will almost certainly have a cellphone, so organisations must make it easy for them to access information and manage their care journey through phone and SMS channels.

Earlier, we saw how medical speech recognition and [ambient clinical intelligence](#) solutions are helping to

reduce the documentation burden and improve patient and clinician experiences. These technologies can also contribute to health equity by expanding access to care. AI helps shoulder some of the administrative and data-hunting burdens that cut into the time clinicians have for patients. But with less time spent on documentation and other time-consuming tasks which can be streamlined with AI, organisations can see more patients with fewer clinicians, improving access to care.

Stay tuned during 2023

Each of these trends will have a significant impact in the year ahead. We look forward to continuing to innovate with and for our customers to meet their expanding needs and help them better treat their patients.

With that, it's important to pause and express our gratitude and admiration for all who work in healthcare—thank you for everything you do to help your patients lead longer, healthier, happier lives.

Here's to an exciting year ahead!

Tags: [Predictions](#), [Future of Healthcare](#)

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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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