

Healthcare AI, Ambient clinical intelligence

# Healthcare and the wisdom of people around us

Peter Durlach | Executive Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer

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Successfully improving patient experiences, population health, and healthcare costs requires more than great technology and innovative products – it demands a larger sense of purpose that keeps you focused on what matters most.

Whenever any of us face important personal or professional challenges it's vital to have clear sense of purpose to guide our decisions and actions. One's sense of purpose is informed by our own experiences and by the wisdom of people around us.

Sometimes that wisdom comes from the uncluttered mind of a child.

This crayon drawing was created by a 7-year-old girl following a visit to her pediatrician. It shows her colorful recollections of sitting on the exam table, her older sister, and her mother holding her baby sister seated nearby, and the doctor at the computer with his back to her and everybody else in the room. It was first shared by New Jersey pediatrician Dr. Thomas Murphy in 2011. The drawing resonated with so many physicians that it has since been widely shared on social media and appeared in numerous publications including The Wall Street Journal, the Journal of the American Medical Association, and MIT Technology Review. The picture vividly captures the frustration that many physicians feel about the administrative and reporting burdens imposed to document exams, and to get reimbursed for their services.

Relentless paperwork is not the reason why physicians took out huge education loans and trained for so

many years. They did it because they are passionate about caring for and healing people. Doctors are doing their best with to manage all the required documentation and other administrative requirements. They now spend about twice as much time entering or re-entering data into computers than they do interacting with patients. That's causing what the president of the World Medical Association has called a "pandemic of physician burnout," with 51% of physicians reporting frequent or constant feelings of burnout.

Burnout is a serious barrier to improving the cost and availability of healthcare services. A [study](#) published in the May 2019 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine* reported that physician turnover and reduced clinical hours attributable to burnout costs of \$4.6 billion, or about \$7,600 per physician, in the United States each year. It also stated that burnout can effectively be reduced with moderate levels of investment. In other words, burnout reduction programs that include new AI-powered systems designed to help physicians care for patients instead of clicking and tapping away at computers can pay big dividends in the quality, cost, and availability of healthcare. [AI and speech-driven Ambient Clinical Intelligence \(ACI\) will drive those improvements](#) by automatically documenting medical visits and adding clinical insights in real-time while the doctor stays focused on the patient.

You can use the crayon drawing to illustrate our purpose at Nuance Healthcare as we create AI-powered and speech-driven Ambient Clinical Intelligence solutions to improve healthcare experiences, quality, outcomes, and costs. At Nuance, we're bringing those innovations directly into the healthcare workflow to tackle the "Quadruple Aim" of improving the patient experience, improving population health, reducing costs, and improving the work lives of healthcare providers. The first three goals address a wide range of systemic challenges. Improving provider experiences is the key to making the other three happen. That's why Nuance is focused on delivering solutions that automate time-consuming routine tasks, eliminate inefficiencies, and bring clinical intelligence and decision-support data to clinicians at the point of care.

## Wisdom from my 10-year-old self

I feel fortunate to have been instilled at a young age with a clear sense of purpose in using technology to help others. That began when I was a 10-year-old kid in my dad's lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). My father, Nat Durlach, oversaw the Sensory Communications Group lab, conducting research to help people with vision and hearing impairments. I vividly remember spending a lot of time running around there, sitting in on discussions about topics I didn't understand at all. But the content informed my purpose and work today helping our team create AI and ACI solutions for clinicians.

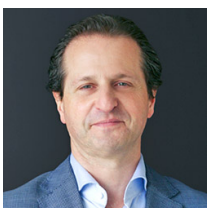
What's more important than ensuring that the people caring for us and our loved ones are cared for by giving them time, energy, and expertise to make a difference in that care? That defines our purpose as we build [AI-powered solutions that help healthcare providers](#) have more satisfying and rewarding work experiences and happier and healthier lives. We strive to focus on what matters.

At Nuance, we believe technology should empower life, not distract from it. That is why we build systems that take obstacles out of the way to help people focus on what matters. To help doctors spend more time with patients and less on paperwork. To help drivers get there safely. And to help every customer service call, comment, and text make life a little easier. We use our talents to enable people to amplify theirs. We give them back their time and voice and empower them to do what they do best, better. Because we don't make technology that stands in the way of what matters; we make technology that puts what matters in focus.

*Focus on What Matters is a blog series by Pete Durlach, Senior Vice President of Healthcare Strategy, and recognized Voice and AI thought leader. In this blog series, Peter boils down the facts and fiction surrounding AI in healthcare into the essence of what technology can and should do.*

*Photo credit: DRAWING BY AG, AGE 7, COPYRIGHT THOMAS G. MURPHY MD 2011*

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### About Peter Durlach

Peter Durlach is Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy officer at Nuance Communications, a Microsoft Company. Peter helped establish Nuance's Healthcare business in 2006, most recently serving as senior vice president of healthcare strategy and new business development, where he drove driving significant growth across the organization, helping to lead the business from \$8m in revenue to approximately \$1b. He is responsible for advancing Nuance's overall strategic direction and the creation and management of new strategic innovations focused on developing disruptive AI powered solutions in areas such as virtual assistants, ambient computing, imaging AI, and patient engagement. Peter also co-leads the overall Microsoft for Healthcare strategy since the Microsoft acquisition in 2022. Prior to Nuance, Peter served as founder and president of Unveil Technologies, Inc., was the vice president of healthcare marketing and business development at Lernout and Hauspie, and was a founder of Articulate Systems. He also served as an entrepreneur in residence at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Peter holds a BS from the University of Vermont in business administration.



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