

Healthcare AI, Ambient clinical intelligence

University of Michigan Health-West restores the joy of medicine with ambient clinical intelligence

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February 14, 2022



After battling the COVID pandemic for almost two years and tackling the many challenges that have come along with it, it's no surprise that 98% of clinicians say they've experienced feelings of burnout. Digital capabilities can't take all of those challenges away. But by applying AI and ambient technology in the right ways, the University of Michigan Health-West has taken pressure off clinicians, given them more time to focus on patient care, and ultimately helped bring joy back to practicing medicine.

A recent HIMSS research report revealed that [98% of clinicians say they've experienced feelings of burnout](#), with 88% unsurprisingly agreeing that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated the issue.

It's been an immensely challenging time for professionals across the healthcare sector—especially those on the frontlines. Staff shortages and unprecedented levels of demand have created some of the most overstretched and demanding healthcare environments in recent memory.

Fortunately, as the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention. One silver lining of these highly challenging times has been the accelerated development and adoption of AI-driven solutions designed to reduce burnout and take pressure off frontline care providers.

Reducing burnout by automating clinical documentation

Today, leading organizations are exploring new ways of applying AI-driven ambient clinical intelligence (ACI) to help [alleviate some of the pressures](#) that are contributing to the burnout crisis. While this technology alone can't reduce the overload from patient COVID-19 surges, it can help streamline workflows by automating tasks that consume physicians' time and divert their attention away from patient care, such as documentation.

By securely capturing patient-provider conversations and automatically creating clinical notes from those conversations, ACI is helping providers reduce the time it takes to document care. As a result, providers are freed to focus on delivering better patient experiences. Not only that, with the time savings realized from ACI, providers can see more patients to keep up with the load.

Changing care at the University of Michigan Health-West

At the University of Michigan Health-West (UMHW), Nuance's ACI solution, the Dragon Ambient eXperience (DAX), is playing a major role in the organization's evolution, and supporting the delivery of more intelligent, efficient, life-changing care. Speaking at a [recent webinar](#), UMHW's Chief Information Officer, Josh Wilda, and Chief Medical Information Officer, Lance Owens, showcased how they're using DAX across their operations, and the impact it's having on physician burnout and patient experiences.

The UMHW team initially adopted DAX to help achieve four key goals:

1. **Increase provider satisfaction and reduce burnout:** When physicians have to spend large amounts of time capturing, documenting, and processing health records, not only do they quickly become burned out, they also become your most expensive data processors.
2. **Create more time for providers to focus on patient care:** When providers have to spend a lot of time capturing engagement data, they aren't always incentivized to ask the right questions. It leads to situations where providers simply don't have the time to dive deeper into the issues patients are facing and discover potential underlying issues. So, patients ultimately don't receive the depth of care they need, which keeps them coming back and creates a cycle of symptom treating that keeps providers overstretched.
3. **Enable patient-driven healthcare:** Manual documentation is a barrier to natural, flowing conversations between patients and providers. Often, when patients see their records, they feel that it doesn't reflect what they really said. UMHW wanted to change that, and enable patients to not only be heard accurately, but to drive their own healthcare journeys.
4. **Improve community health:** Above all, UMHW wanted to give providers more time to focus on care delivery, so that they could improve care quality, and focus their efforts on what they do best—delivering strong healthcare outcomes for patients and improving community health.

Josh identified a single overarching issue that prevents care providers from achieving those goals—computers have become a barrier between patients and providers.

Computers have played a central role in the evolution of healthcare over the past three decades—laying the foundation for data-driven care delivery. But now, their use in clinics is impacting the quality of the experience. Providers spend large portions of their time during patient engagements inputting data, rather than listening.

Less time focused on the patient means more errors, fewer opportunities to fully understand the issues patients are facing, and frustrating experiences for patients and providers alike. In short, poor patient-provider experiences and heavy documentation burdens are fueling burnout and dissatisfaction.

Fortunately, as UMHW has discovered, technology is evolving to address its former limitations.

A new, natural approach to care delivery

For UMHW, the decision to adopt DAX and transform clinical documentation was driven by a simple philosophy: that technology should enhance interactions between providers and patients—not hinder them.

Using DAX is incredibly simple. Whether providers are engaging with patients face-to-face or virtually, accurately recording and capturing the information a patient shares with them is as simple as a tap on the DAX mobile app.

Improving patient experiences and bringing back the joy of practicing medicine

DAX is playing an important role in helping UMHW achieve its vision to deliver innovations that improve the patient-provider experience. Since using DAX, the organization has already seen some very encouraging results.

Patient satisfaction rates are up to 98%. But more importantly, most of those patients say that their appointments have felt more personal and that their provider has been more focused on them, compared to previous engagements with the same provider.

Freed from the burden of documentation, UMHW's providers and clinicians are now able to focus on delivering the depth and quality of care they really want to. They're spending less time documenting care, less time working after hours, and less time looking at their computer screens. And they're providing a higher standard of care to more patients faster.

That's why UMHW has been selected to receive Nuance's Joy of Technology in Medicine award. This award is given to organizations that exemplify the spirit of bringing joy back to the practice of medicine by using AI-driven technology to improve provider and patient experiences.

UMHW's use of DAX has helped make care delivery far more patient-centric, and improved satisfaction for patients and providers alike—reducing burnout at a critical time for the healthcare industry.

This is just the first step in UMHW's wider mission to lead innovations that change care, so that its care can change lives. We can't wait to see what the team achieves next.

Tags: [Joy of medicine](#), [Burnout](#), [Dragon Ambient eXperience](#), [Customer success story](#), [Future of healthcare](#)

More Information

Combat burnout with DAX

Discover how you can follow in UMHW's footsteps and use AI-driven ambient clinical intelligence to restore the joy of medicine at your institution.

[Learn more](#)



About Kenneth Harper

Kenneth Harper is the Vice President and General Manager of Nuance's Healthcare Virtual Assistants and Ambient Clinical Intelligence business. Kenn has been working in the conversational AI industry for 15+ years, helping to shape virtual assistant solutions across mobile phones, TV's, cars, wearables, robotics, and most recently healthcare systems. Kenneth leads Nuance's Healthcare Virtual Assistant business, which leverages an advanced suite of technologies combined with purpose-built hardware to streamline interactions with the EHR and creation of clinical documentation, allowing physicians to remain 100% focused on the patient without technology getting in the way. Kenn holds a B.S. in human factors engineering from Cornell University and a M.S. in human factors from Bentley University.



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