



SPECIAL REPORT

# THE BUZZ

Takeaways from the 2019 AHA Leadership Summit



Health care's leading thinkers, innovators and doers recently convened at the AHA Leadership Summit in San Diego. They explored innovation processes and transformational strategies to better engage patients. Look inside for what had health care leaders buzzing at the conference.



# 1

## AHA SOLVATHON: Redesigning the health care experience

Nearly 200 emerging leaders from hospitals, health systems and health care companies participated in the AHA Solvathon — an immersive experience designed to uncover solutions to top health care experience challenges. Attendees could select one of four patient personas: those with limited access to care; those who provide care to others; older adults; and those with chronic conditions.

Attendees then formed “startups” of five to six individuals to understand the problem and develop a solution using design-thinking techniques. In the program’s final stage, the startups were broken up and attendees reassembled with new teams that had to determine which new startup ideas were strongest. The effort helped to:

- Generate new ideas.
- Create a networking experience.
- Show attendees how to create an ecosystem of innovation thinkers in their communities.
- Share design-thinking tools to help change attendees’ mindsets on innovation.
- Provide attendees with design-thinking concepts they can implement immediately at their organizations.

“We need to inspire an entire group of next-generation leaders to help the field transform at scale. We hope that people walked away with a sense that there is so much opportunity for us to transform, and we can accelerate that transformation by working in new and different ways,” says Andy Shin, chief operating officer with the AHA Center for Health Innovation.

The startup teams’ solutions focused on using community-building technology to create tighter connections among patients, providers and informal caregivers — extending care far beyond

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hospital walls. Other solution highlights included:

- Creating consolidated navigation resources for the continuum of care.
- A website for caregivers consolidating content and promoting peace of mind by being a trusted source for curated information.
- An artificial intelligence-triggered check-in to assess the status of social connections and provide volunteer virtual visits, community activities and local resources.
- An app connecting older adults to a social network and necessary resources.
- A community platform application that matches peers to help each other manage their chronic conditions and improve health outcomes.

## 2

### **DIGITAL DISRUPTION: Where it is headed**

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Digital disruption is just another name for change, says technology provocateur Linda Bernardi, who gave executives plenty to contemplate as they strive to meet consumer expectations. Keep an eye on these issues:

• **Culture is the new brand.** Don't define your organization in ways consumers don't understand or value. Apple describes itself as a company that revolutionizes personal technology, not as a phone or watchmaker. Describing your organization today as a hospital, health system or integrated delivery network doesn't resonate with consumers. Your culture and how you see your organization should reflect the disruptive and digital strategies being employed today that enable such services as virtual care, remote access to scheduling, health records and more. Focus on the culture you want to build and what's possible.

• **The "know-me" economy in health care is here.** Consumers have grown accustomed to those from whom they buy products and services having deep knowledge about their purchasing habits and personal preferences. Amazon's explosive growth is due in large part to its ability to leverage data about what its customers buy to keep them coming back for the unique shopping and purchasing experience it provides. Health care providers will need to be more like Amazon in using the data they have about patients to customize and personalize their experiences.

This extends to clinical care. For example, as genetic testing becomes more prevalent and starts to be included in personal health records, patients will expect a higher level of personalized clinical care. Bernardi says that winning organizations will know patient preferences and respond with products and services designed specifically for them.

• **Precision medicine is not far off** and will be disruptive in its ability to drive down health care costs without compromising quality or outcomes. The growth of DNA sequencing, electronic health records, personal reported information and digital health technologies are driving precision-driven health care for individuals and for populations. The tailoring of preventive or therapeutic interventions to the patient's individual risk factors based on their susceptibility to a certain disease or their response to a specific treatment will guide health care decisions toward the most effective treatment. This focused approach to patient care will improve quality and reduce the need for unnecessary diagnostic testing and therapies.



Linda Bernardi

## 3

### **RISK-TAKING & CREDIT RATINGS: Why innovation pays**

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Innovation activities can be expensive, often surpassing projected short-term gains and leading to growing debt loads. Still, many organizations make the move, hoping that whatever harm comes to their credit ratings will be outweighed by long-term benefits. Suzie Desai, director and lead analyst,

and Aamna Shah, associate director of S&P Global Ratings, demystified how the agency looks at this issue. They shared these four key points:

- 1 | Most innovation activity today results in a credit-neutral or credit-negative shift.
- 2 | Risk-taking, when viewed as part of overall organizational strategy, can result in a credit-positive situation. Ochsner Health, the speakers noted, received an A rating, in part because of the credit agency's confidence in leadership's structured approach to innovation.
- 3 | S&P considers it a positive if hospitals are getting that experience by taking calculated risks.
- 4 | Provider-backed venture capital investing is worth exploring. This allows providers to partner with startups and help improve and scale the companies. Providers can leverage expertise in selecting the startups they see as most likely to succeed at solving the challenges they face, an additional benefit to the startup.



Suzi Desai



Aamna Shah

# 4

(Left to right) Brian Gragnolati, AHA board chairman and president and CEO of Atlantic Health System; Alisahah J. Cole, M.D., chief community impact officer at Atrium Health; and Neil Gomes, executive vice president and chief digital officer for Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health, served as the expert panel for the AHA Leadership Summit Startup Competition.

## STARTUP COMPETITION: Six entered the shark tank, one survived

At the Leadership Summit's inaugural Startup Competition, attendees met six finalists who were chosen for their practical and tactical solutions from more than 50 organizations that applied. Each finalist team discussed the problem they are trying to solve, how their solution works and results they have seen. After each presentation, they answered questions from an expert panel comprising health care leaders, including AHA Board Chairman Brian Gragnolati.

Summit attendees voted Prescience Health and its predictive nurse-staffing solution for hospitals as the winner. The company leverages data science to help forecast patient demand and nurse staffing to avoid overtime and prevent nurse burnout. [Learn more](#) about the other finalists.



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## **PERSONALIZED PREVENTIVE CARE: It's on its way**

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Raymond McCauley, chair of digital biology at Singularity University and co-founder and chief architect of Bio-Curious — a development space for burgeoning biotech ideas — provided a fascinating look at the future of personalized preventive care. Here are some of his other observations:

- We are getting closer to blood tests that can detect cancer at an earlier stage compared to biopsies, which typically identify cancer at later stages. Once this happens, we could see blood tests that replace the need for colonoscopies and mammograms.
- Polygenic risk scores can drive personalized medicine and personalized preventive care on an individual level, but we have yet to understand fully how it would scale across a population. The next challenge, McCauley says, will be to contextualize what evidence shows across a population and which specific dietary, exercise or other behaviors would yield the most impact for patients. Providers then can focus on prescribing those behaviors — because it's unlikely patients would adopt every possible health change.
- Cryonics for organ replacement may be in health care's future. About 40% of deaths could be prevented if an organ were on hand, McCauley says. The idea is to freeze donated organs that could be kept on hand at hospitals so they are available when needed — just as hospitals maintain blood supplies for emergencies. He adds that scientists are moving closer to success with cryonics.

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## **TRANSFORMATION: Make it a way of life — your future depends on it**

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Carter Dredge, chief transformation officer at SSM Health, urged leaders to develop a compelling vision for their organizations. When there is no vision, challenges can become overwhelming, he said. With increased vision comes increased motivation and strength.

Here are some insights on how to compete effectively not just with other provider organizations, but also leading consumer businesses with laser focus on convenience and simplicity.

- Keep in mind that when the speed of change around an organization is faster than the speed of change within the organization, the organization becomes irrelevant. This is happening in health care today.
- The pace of technologically-enabled change is not linear but exponential.
- Organizations should talk about business lines, not just services provided. This includes revenue, staffing, operations, etc. You need a sustainable business model to enable services. Looking only at services provided may not be sustainable.



(Left to right) Melinda Estes, M.D., president and CEO of Saint Luke's Health System and chair-elect of the AHA's board of trustees; AHA Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Maryjane Wurth; and the first-place winners from NewYork-Presbyterian.

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## AHA INNOVATION CHALLENGE: Winners improve community health

The 2019 AHA Leadership Summit celebrated the AHA Innovation Challenge that asked hospitals and health systems to develop new sustainable and scalable solutions using technology to combat the social determinants of health and improve the health of our communities.

"This was an incredible day for innovation in health care," said Jay Bhatt, D.O., AHA senior vice president and chief medical officer and executive team member for the AHA Center for Health Innovation "We not only celebrated the innovative achievements of our top three winners to improve maternal health, but applauded all hospitals and health systems for doing their part to address the entire spectrum of social factors so that one day all people can reach their highest potential for health."

The top three concepts earned the winners funding, resources and support to help bring their ideas to life. The winners and their concept submissions are:

**First place: NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital.** "Using Digital Tools to Impact Early Childhood Development and Maternal Health" focuses on deploying telehealth technology to link social determinant screening with early childhood development screening. This allows providers to assess social determinant-related vulnerabilities at home and increase patient engagement through virtual check-ins.

**Second place: Henry Ford Health System, Detroit.** "Women-Empowered Community Access for Reproductive Equity (WE CARE)," offers a novel emergency department (ED) intervention using online health technology combined with community health workers. It provides vulnerable, reproductive-aged women with point-of-care planning services during nonemergent ED visits.

**Third place: Children's Hospital Los Angeles.** "Improving Health Equity among At-Risk New Moms" turns a simple app into a virtual transition-to-home solution to help new mothers manage their postnatal care. The app, "Baby Steps LA," provides medical information, task lists, support group and an informational wellness resource for the whole family.

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**FLAGSHIP MOMENTS: Make moments that matter**

Dan Heath, a senior fellow at Duke University's Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship and co-author of *The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact*, provided some valuable insights for organizations looking to create standout moments for patients, including:

- Defining moments shape our lives. When we recall an experience, we tend to remember flagship moments — the peaks, the lows and the transitions. Fixing problems doesn't necessarily raise peaks.
- Moments are created from one or more of the following elements:
  - Elevation:** (1) Boost sensory appeal; (2) Raise the stakes; (3) Break the script.
  - Insight:** (1) Trip over the truth; (2) Stretch for insight.
  - Pride:** (1) Recognize others; (2) Multiply milestones; (3) Practice courage.
  - Connection:** (1) Create shared meaning; (2) Deepen ties; (3) Make moments matter.



(Left to right) John Nance, aviation analyst and medical safety and quality advocate, talks with Apollo 13 astronauts James Lovell Jr. and Fred Haise about the challenges they faced on their trip to the moon.

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**APOLLO 13: Remember, innovation doesn't have to be expensive**

Just ask Apollo 13 astronaut Jim Lovell Jr. He and his fellow astronauts, had little more than two socks and duct tape to help prevent a buildup of CO<sup>2</sup> in their space craft after an explosion ruptured an oxygen tank in the service module. With incredible support from the ground team at NASA, he said, the astronauts were able to make needed repairs. The secret? "We never ran out of ideas," Lovell said.

**Get more coverage of the AHA Leadership Summit**

Read about more news that was made at the [AHAs 2019 Leadership Summit](#) and meet the award-winning health care organizations that are transforming care delivery.