



U.S. health care providers have 10 million newly insured patients to serve this year. That's 10 million customers they don't know much about, which makes innovation all the more important. We're already experiencing a first, technology-driven wave of transformation — electronic health records, mobile phones, sensors, and telemedicine robots are making care more effective and efficient. Now it's time for a second wave, one that's propelled by customer needs. Health care organizations must turn to patients, and the people who care for them, for help envisioning the future.

What do grandmothers recovering from breast cancer, busy medical office receptionists, and frontline nurses and doctors know about defining that vision? Quite a bit.

To better understand how health care is experienced by people wherever they are—at home, at work, out and about, or in a facility — we've created a scenario-based tool at Kaiser Permanente. It allows physicians, nurses, employees, and patients to walk in the virtual shoes (through interactive videos) of customers who are new to the health care system or need care in settings other than hospitals or clinics. We're using the tool to gather data on patients' preferences, and to get stakeholders thinking creatively and empathically about how care might be delivered. We're also capturing their thinking online and through surveys, workshops, events, and focus groups.

Insight Center

- **Innovating for Value in Health Care**

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A collaboration of the editors of *Harvard Business Review* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*, exploring best practices for improving patient outcomes while reducing costs.

The avatars in the interactive videos include a young Latino couple going through their first pregnancy and a diabetes diagnosis, and a biracial Medicare couple dealing with early dementia. The first couple needs care at home and at a bus stop; the second needs it while walking home from the hardware store.

The Latina mother answers questions about her diet and activity level. She uses mobile apps to support her customized diet plan and gets support from a breastfeeding-specialist avatar during her first weeks at home after her birth. In the Medicare scenario, the family discusses possibilities of adult care services and remote monitoring to ensure that the father with early dementia can safely stay home alone while his family members are away at work.

Having customers and frontline workers share their ideas about these scenarios sheds light on new problems to solve and new ways of providing personalized care — for instance, teleconsults at the bedside, mobile reminders to take medications, and sensors that track glucose and other real-time data. This exercise has sparked hundreds of ideas like these; more than two dozen have evolved into proof-of-technology projects or initiatives.

While telemedicine, apps, and wearables are the highly touted future of preventive health care, they must be integrated with physical spaces to create a fully consumer-focused health care experience. In order to do that, KP incorporated the input of 150 patients (members and nonmembers), 200 physicians, and 500 frontline staffers and administrators into the design of 12 new facilities that will be built across Southern California over the next few years.

The goal is to weave care more naturally into people's lives by designing buildings that promote both wellness and efficiency. The project team has shadowed providers and met with members in their homes and communities to understand their values and beliefs. As a result of their input, the back office will be largely open and transparent to facilitate casual staff interaction and collaboration, and to allow patients to see workers and feel connected to them.

Even small organizations can benefit from having patients, physicians, and others contribute to their vision of care. At Bellin Health, a 238-bed hospital in Green Bay, Wisconsin, hospital leaders started involving patients, clinicians, and employees in strategy off-sites and sharing their ideas at physician, staff, and board committee meetings. Consumer Reports rated the innovative Bellin the safest U.S. hospital in 2013.

Another organization that's becoming more patient-centered is Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, a nonprofit tertiary 958-bed hospital and multispecialty research center in Los Angeles, California. The hospital is rolling out pilot programs for telemedicine and an initiative called OpenNotes, which allows patients to see the ambulatory progress notes written by their doctors through secure online patient portals. Many of these programs were created in response to patient input. And Cedars-Sinai is launching online focus groups consisting of patients, physicians, and other stakeholders to bring their feedback about the programs into the strategic planning process and to solicit new ideas for making care more convenient, efficient, and effective.

“Whether it's health care or any other business, nothing is more important than understanding what your customer wants. I learned that from being in the medical software industry for 16 years,” says Scott Weingarten, MD, the chief clinical transformation officer at Cedars-Sinai. “It's absolutely critical to have patients and customers shape and strongly influence everything that we do.”

Health care leaders who have successfully enlisted customers and other stakeholders as partners in strategy and innovation say you need three things to get started:

A tangible experience. Engage people physically, emotionally, and verbally, suggests Wendy Lee, who leads KP's consumer digital health strategy. She says interactive video works because “it's not a PowerPoint or a demo; it's a relevant and immersive experience through which consumers can see themselves, their families, and the decisions with which they're faced. We allow them to test drive decisions, situations, and technologies.”

A personal connection. “Our interactions don't need to be high-tech,” says Bellin Health CEO George Kerwin. “The strongest ideas most often result from collaboration and... a multitude of experiences and perspectives.”

A commitment to empathy. “Patient advisory councils are usually just asked to bless something created by someone else,” says M. Bridget Duffy, MD, the chief medical officer at Vocera. Instead of simply seeking approval, engage patients in the design process, map what really matters most to them, and use that insight to inform any technology or process improvements you do. Duffy advises, “You might begin by asking: ‘What one moment most touched your heart?’ or ‘What could we have done differently to ease your burden of illness instead of adding to it?’ Through this approach, we have the opportunity to restore humanity back to health care.”



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