



American Hospital Association™

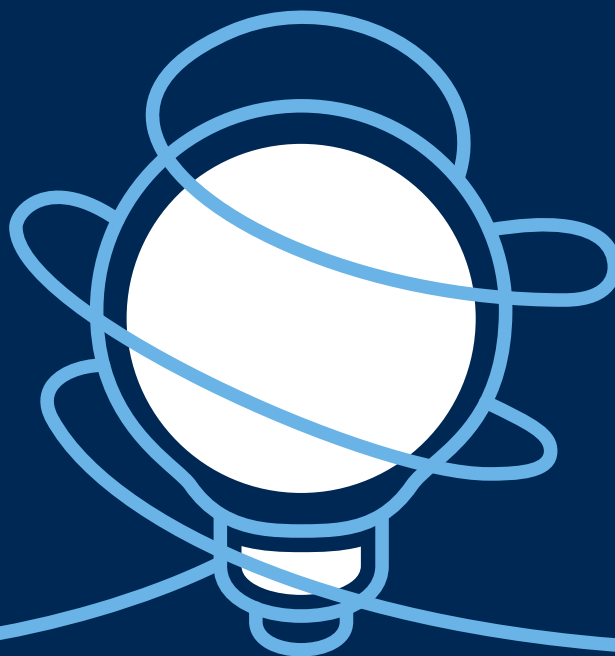
*Advancing Health in America*

2025

AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

# LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

JULY 20-22, 2025 • NASHVILLE, TN



**CONFERENCE  
GUIDE**

[leadershipsummit.aha.org](http://leadershipsummit.aha.org)

LEADING HOSPITALS | LEADING HEALTH CARE



## THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

(AS OF APRIL 17, 2025)



The AHA Leadership Summit provides Continuing Education from various providers.



### **ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (ACCME)**

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of the Academy for Continued Healthcare Learning (ACHL) and the American Hospital Association. ACHL is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

This activity is approved for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*.

Physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and nurses may participate in this educational activity and earn a certificate of completion as AAPA, AANP, and ANCC accept *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* through their reciprocity agreements.

### **HFMA CHFP AND FHFMA MAINTENANCE**

The 2025 AHA Leadership Summit sessions are eligible as continuing education credits toward the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) certification maintenance requirements for active CHFP and Fellows when self-reported. The program or session(s) are approved by HFMA for certification maintenance. For more information about HFMA certification maintenance and to report activities as a CHFP or Fellow of HFMA: [www.hfma.org/maintain](http://www.hfma.org/maintain).

### **AMERICAN COLLEGE OF HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVES (ACHE)**

By attending the 2025 AHA Leadership Summit, participants may earn up to 10 ACHE Qualified Education Hours toward initial certification or recertification of the Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE) designation.

### **AHA CERTIFICATION CENTER**

The 2025 AHA Leadership Summit qualifies for 10 AHA Certification Center continuing education credits (CECs) toward CHC, CHFM, CHESP, CMRP, and CPHRM recertification.

## SOLVE CHALLENGES AND SHARE SOLUTIONS

Keep an eye out for these icons throughout **#AHASummit**. We will use them to highlight educational programming and enhance Sponsor connections.

Our **educational programming** focuses on these critical focus areas:



**Transforming Care Delivery**



**Patient Engagement and Education**



**Workforce**



**Financial Sustainability**



**Strategy and Innovation**



**Behavioral Health**

## SUNDAY, JULY 20

8:00 AM – 6:30 PM **REGISTRATION**

8:30 AM – 12:30 PM **PRE-CONFERENCE LUNCHEON WORKSHOPS**

Workshop Fee: \$400



Workforce

### **The Path to Sustained Excellence in Engagement**

Elisa Arespachoga, *Vice President, Clinical Affairs and Workforce, American Hospital Association*

Nell Buhlman, *Chief Administrative Officer, Head of Strategy, Press Ganey*

Chris DeRienzo, MD, *Senior Vice President, Chief Physician Executive, American Hospital Association*

Marty Wright, *Partner, Press Ganey Experience Consulting, Press Ganey*

Employee engagement is a driver of safety, quality and the patient experience of care, and leveraging the intersectionality among these outcomes drives improvement in both employee and patient experience. The keys to unlocking the evidence-based path are gathering continuous feedback, analyzing integrated data, and investing the time, attention and resources needed to drive action. This highly interactive workshop will explore what top-performing organizations do consistently well to drive sustained improvement, while offering space to talk through successes, roadblocks and innovations in your own organization's journey toward high performance.

CME credit available.

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM **HOSTED BUYER FORUM**

Learn how AHA members can join the **Hosted Buyer Forum**. *Invitation only.*

10:30 AM – 12:45 PM **PRE-CONFERENCE LUNCHEON WORKSHOPS**

Workshop Fee: \$200



Transforming Care Delivery

**Care Delivery Transformation for a Sustainable Future**

Nancy Myers, *Vice President, Leadership and System Innovation, American Hospital Association*  
 Julia Resnick, *Director, Strategic Initiatives, American Hospital Association*

Hospitals and health care systems across the United States are transforming care delivery to better meet the needs of their patients and communities across their lifespans while bolstering long-term financial sustainability. The AHA's new Care Delivery Transformation Framework offers a clear, visual representation of how key components of the health care ecosystem can work together to foster innovative care models. Offering a deep dive into the components of the Care Delivery Transformation Framework, this workshop will review clinical and community-based care delivery settings to set the stage for an engaging discussion of what approaches enable health care organizations to strategically link the two settings. Participants will reflect on their own health care organization's care delivery transformation process and how to apply innovative delivery models in their setting.

CME credit available.



Strategy and Innovation



Workforce

**Human-Centered Leadership for the Next Era of Digital Health Care Systems**

Brian R. Spisak, PhD, *Chief People and Communication Officer and Senior Partner, Csuite Growth Advisors; Program Director, Harvard University*

What it means to be an effective health care leader is rapidly changing in today's fast-paced digital environment. Leadership was typically thought of as a "soft" intuitive skill, while management was thought of as a "hard" science, but those lines are blurring. The days of purely intuitive decisions are over for those who want to remain competitive and sustainable.

This interactive workshop will help you pair cutting-edge technology, such as AI and simulations, with the latest behavioral science to boost your health care leadership skills. Whether you want to increase employee engagement, reduce burnout or improve patient-centered outcomes and long-term sustainability, this seminar will provide you with the tools and knowledge you need to succeed.

CME credit available.

This activity is eligible for up to 2 ACHE In-Person Education credits toward earning or maintaining your **FACHE credential**.

1:00 – 2:15 PM **PLENARY SESSION**

**Leading Through Change**

**Conference Welcome**

Rick Pollack, *President and Chief Executive Officer, American Hospital Association*

**Opening Remarks**

Tina Freese Decker, MHA, MSIE, FACHE, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Corewell Health, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Chair, Board of Trustees, American Hospital Association*

**Leading Through Change: Strategies for Inspired Leadership and Resilient Teams**

Cassandra Worthy, *Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Change Enthusiasm Global*

Change is a constant in the health care field, from organizational restructures to digital transformations. This session equips leaders with actionable strategies to navigate and embrace change with confidence.

Drawing from over 15 years of experience in corporate mergers and acquisitions, the session delves into critical leadership skills required to inspire teams and foster resilience in the face of disruption. Participants will gain insights into cultivating a growth mindset, building workforce engagement and sustaining productivity during times of transformation.

With a focus on real-world applications, this session provides a framework to self-assess leadership strengths, identify areas for growth and develop a practical action plan to lead through change effectively. Attendees will leave with a renewed perspective on managing shifts within their organizations and the tools to become champions of change.

2:15 – 2:30 PM **REFRESHMENT BREAK**

2:30 – 4:15 PM **INTENSIVE SESSION**



Transforming  
Care Delivery

**The Quest for Quality: Achieving Quality Health Care and Advancing Health in Communities**

MODERATOR: Abraham Segres, *Vice President, Quality and Patient Safety, Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association; Chair, AHA Quest for Quality Prize Committee*

The AHA Quest for Quality Prize recognizes hospitals and health systems that lead in quality improvement and advance health in the communities they serve. Hear from the honorees on the strategies and innovations that drive their success. Panelists will share how they engage and support physicians and staff in meeting quality goals, integrate patient and family advisory councils into improvement efforts, and use data and technology to sustain progress. Attendees will gain insights into practical approaches for strengthening safety, enhancing care delivery and improving health outcomes.

*The AHA Quest for Quality Prize is generously sponsored by Laerdal Medical.*

2:30 – 3:30 PM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**



Transforming  
Care Delivery

**Cutting-edge AI Transforming the Patient and Clinician Experience**

MODERATOR: Chris DeRienzo, MD, *Senior Vice President, Chief Physician Executive, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Theo Koury, MD, *President, Vituity*

Dave Newman, MD, *Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for Virtual Care, Sanford Health, Sioux Falls, S.D.*

Richard Riggs, MD, *Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer, Cedars-Sinai, Los Angeles*

Todd Smith, MD, *Chief Physician Executive, Sutter Health, Sacramento, Calif.*

Srinivasan Suresh, MD, FAAP, *Vice President and Chief Medical Information Officer, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh*

Hear how leading hospitals are using AI to reshape clinical workflows, improve decision-making and enhance the patient and clinician experience. Panelists will share real-world applications of AI in diagnostics, risk assessment and workflow optimization. Attendees will gain insights into key considerations for AI adoption, including design, governance and implementation strategies that drive quality outcomes and cost efficiencies.

SPONSORED BY: **Vituity**



Workforce

**7 Minutes to Innovation: Care Model and Workforce Redesign**

MODERATOR: Elisa Arespacochaga, *Vice President, Clinical Affairs and Workforce, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Jason Golbin, DO, *Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Catholic Health, Melville, New York*

Laura Griffin, *Vice President of System Nursing Operations, ECU Health, Greenville, N.C.*

Wendy Horton, *Chief Executive Officer, UVA Health University Medical Center, Charlottesville, Va.*

Mary Beth Lardizabal, DO, *Vice President, Mental Health and Addiction, Allina Health, Minneapolis*

Brenda Nance, DNP, RN, CPHQ, LSSBB, *Vice President, Quality, Saint Francis Health System, Tulsa, Okla.*

Michelle Watson, MSN, RN, CENP, *Chief Nurse Executive and Senior Vice President, Clinical Operations, LifePoint Health, Brentwood, Tenn.*

Join us for a dynamic session featuring hospital leaders sharing innovative solutions to enhance the health care workforce. In 7 minutes or less, each speaker will present bold strategies for transforming care delivery and workforce design. This fast-paced session highlights approaches to rethinking care teams, integrating technology and optimizing workforce structures to improve efficiency and patient outcomes. Explore how new models are reshaping roles, addressing workforce challenges and creating more sustainable solutions for health care organizations. Walk away with fresh ideas and actionable insights to drive meaningful change.

CME credit available.



Patient Engagement  
and Education

**Building Public Trust and Confidence in Health Care**

MODERATOR: Chad Golder, *Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Marc L. Boom, MD, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Houston Methodist, Houston; Chair-Elect, Board of Trustees, American Hospital Association*

Michelle Johnson Tidjani, *Senior Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer, CommonSpirit Health, Chicago*

Erin Weinstein, *Executive Vice President, SKDK*

Public trust and confidence in health care are critical, especially as growing levels of distrust affect all sectors. This session will explore how hospital leaders can assess their current practices, identify strengths

and areas for improvement, and proactively share their hospital's story. Attendees will learn practical strategies to enhance transparency, demonstrate accountability and build lasting trust within their communities.

CME credit available.



Financial Sustainability



Patient Engagement and Education

**How Provider-Led Health Plans Can Benefit Communities: Opportunities for Integrated Strategies**

Brian Fuller, FACHE, *Managing Director, Value Based Care Design and Delivery, ATI Advisory*

Ashley C. Hague, *Senior Vice President, State Programs, Mass General Brigham Health Plan, Mass General Brigham, Boston*

Hospitals and health systems are increasingly evaluating a variety of health plan service lines and products — including Medicare Advantage (MA), Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs) and Value-Based Payment (VBP) arrangements — as critical pathways to strengthen their financial sustainability, enhance patient outcomes and broaden their organizations' strategic positions. Examine how these strategies can help ensure that care and service delivery innovations translate into financial upside, including an example of one health system's success story. Also gain a working knowledge of the health plan business model, common products and key trends, as well as federal- and state-level policies and partnership options among providers and health plans.

CME credit available.

**2:30 – 5:30 PM HOSTED BUYER FORUM**

Learn how AHA members can join the [Hosted Buyer Forum](#). *Invitation only.*

**3:30 – 3:45 PM REFRESHMENT BREAK**

**3:45 – 4:45 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS**



Workforce

**7 Minutes to Innovation: First-mover Strategies for Incorporating Medical and Technological Breakthroughs into Care Delivery**

MODERATOR: Elisa Arespachaga, *Vice President, Clinical Affairs and Workforce, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Stephen O'Mahony, MD, *Senior Vice President, Chief Health Information Officer, RWJBarnabas Health, West Orange, N.J.*

Donna Roach, CHCIO, FCHIME, FHIMSS, *Chief Information Officer, University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics, Salt Lake City*

Roberta Schwartz, PhD, *Executive Vice President and Chief Innovation Officer, Houston Methodist Hospital, Houston*

Join us for a fast-paced session featuring hospital leaders pioneering the integration of medical and technological breakthroughs into care delivery. In 7 minutes or less, each speaker will present bold strategies for rapidly adopting and scaling innovations that enhance patient outcomes, improve efficiency and redefine care models. This session highlights first-mover approaches to implementing cutting-edge treatments, AI-driven solutions and emerging technologies to stay ahead in an evolving health care landscape. Gain actionable insights into overcoming adoption barriers, optimizing clinical workflows and driving transformative change in your organization.

CME credit available.



Workforce

**Empowering Paths: The Transformative Power of Sponsorship**

MODERATOR: Deneen Richmond, *President, Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center; Chief Quality, Equity & Population Health Officer, Luminis Health, Annapolis, Md.*

PANELISTS:

Denise Brooks-Williams, *Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Henry Ford Health, Detroit*

Gina Calder, MPH, FACHE, *Central Region President, Hartford HealthCare, Hartford, Conn.*

Sponsorship is more than mentorship — it's about advocating for someone's growth, championing their strengths and creating meaningful opportunities for advancement. In this panel discussion, accomplished health care leaders will share how sponsorship accelerates careers and strengthens leadership development.

Panelists will discuss how their sponsors helped them secure key opportunities, take on stretch assignments and navigate pivotal career decisions. They'll also reflect on their experiences as sponsors, offering insights into the impact of championing emerging talent and building a culture of support.

Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of sponsorship's role in career success and actionable strategies for cultivating influential relationships that open doors to new opportunities.

CME credit available.



Financial  
Sustainability

### Strengthening the Hospital Supply Chain: Critical Lessons Learned from Disruptions

MODERATOR: Helena Bonfitto, *Senior Program Manager, Funded Partnerships, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Jen Higgins, *Chief Nursing Officer, Lee Health, Fort Myers, Fla.*

Lisa Ishii, MD, *Senior Vice President, Operations, Johns Hopkins University Health System, Baltimore*

Milrose Mercado, *Senior Vice President, Supply Chain and Support, Chief Procurement Officer, Hartford HealthCare, Hartford, Conn.*

Health leaders are navigating ongoing disruptions in the health care supply chain, including product shortages and logistical constraints, while balancing the need for cost-effective operations that support patient care and clinical outcomes. The speakers on this panel will share critical lessons learned about mitigating risks associated with recent disasters and “single points of failure” in the supply chain, and strategies for ensuring continuity in essential supplies. Gain insights into how to design and optimize an agile, reliable and predictable infrastructure to effectively manage supply shortages of all types. Panelists will discuss how centralized supply chain strategies and self-distribution models can drive significant cost savings while improving supply resiliency. Participants will learn how to collaborate with manufacturers and distributors to mitigate risks and strengthen supply chain continuity.



Transforming  
Care Delivery

### Evidence-based Support for Hospital-at-Home Placement and Telehealth

MODERATOR: Suzanna Hoppszallern, *Senior Editor, Data and Research, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Daniel E. Davis, MD, *Senior Medical Director, Continuing Health, Advocate Health, Charlotte, N.C.*

Tom Milam, MD, *Chief Medical Officer, President of Iris Medical Group, Iris Telehealth*

Heather O’Sullivan, MS, RN, A-GNP, *President, Healthcare at Home, Mass General Brigham, Boston*

Rachit Thariani, *Chief Administrative Officer, Post-Acute and Home-Based Care Division, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, Columbus, Ohio*

Patient and community-centered health care in home settings has accelerated rapidly to decrease gaps in access to care and address unmet social needs. Studies comparing hospital-at-home interventions with hospital-based inpatient stays reveal a lower risk for readmission and admission into a long-term care facility among those treated in home settings. Integrating behavioral telehealth into the hospital-at-home patient’s journey lowers rates of depression and anxiety and drives better patient care, helping health systems deliver whole-person, integrated care.

While the home hospital model continues to expand, patients experiencing homelessness are often left out. A novel pathway tackles this critical gap in the first home hospital program to support veterans experiencing homelessness. Panelists will discuss leveraging vetted, published evidence to develop clinical indications for appropriate hospital-at-home placement and behavioral telehealth, and how to implement a culture of safety for home-based care.

SPONSORED BY: **Iris Telehealth**

## 4:45 – 7:00 PM INNOVATION HUB

### Welcome Reception in the Innovation Hub

Join us in the Innovation Hub to connect, collaborate and engage with your peers over refreshments and hors d’oeuvres. The networking reception provides a unique opportunity to forge new connections and strengthen existing ones. Whether you’re looking to share insights, seek advice or explore potential partnerships, the Innovation Hub is the place to be. Connect with colleagues who share your commitment to shaping the future of health care.

### Next Generation Leaders Fellowship Poster Displays

Excellence is in the field! Stop by during the Welcome Reception to speak with leading organizations sharing their expertise and lessons learned.



5:00 – 6:00 PM **INNOVATION HUB MAIN STAGE**



**Advancing Innovation Showcase @ The Innovation Hub**

MODERATOR: Chris DeRienzo, MD, *Senior Vice President, Chief Physician Executive, American Hospital Association*  
 EXPERT PANELISTS

The need for innovation in health care has never been greater. At the same time, businesses are providing fresh takes on collaboration with hospitals and health systems to solve tough problems and capture new opportunities. The AHA Leadership Summit Advancing Innovation Showcase will feature quick-fire presentations from five leading-edge companies to address health care’s most complex and pressing challenges. The companies represented are backed by the AHA as part of its initiative to invest in and support the development of needed innovations for the field. After each solution showcase, a duo of health system innovation leaders will dive deeper into each solution’s promise and potential roadblocks during a Q&A session. Join us to learn more about these companies at the forefront of practical and tactical innovations for health systems and their patients.

**MONDAY, JULY 21**

7:00 AM – 5:30 PM **REGISTRATION**

7:00 – 9:15 AM **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST IN THE INNOVATION HUB**

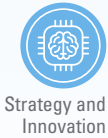
8:00 – 8:45 AM **INNOVATION HUB MAIN STAGE**



**Innovations in Health Care Leadership: Unveiling Success Stories from the Next Generation**

MODERATOR: Jen Braun, *Director, Workforce and Organizational Development, American Hospital Association*

Join us for a dynamic story slam session that spotlights rising stars in health care leadership. In this session, we’ll delve into stories from fellows from the AHA Next Generation Leaders Fellowship program who have spearheaded projects at their hospitals and health systems designed to disrupt health care by addressing critical issues and challenges that impact health care affordability, cost, quality and safety.



AHA Next Generation Leaders will share first-hand experiences in leading innovative initiatives that have impacted their organizations and the populations they serve. This session promises a rich exchange of ideas, lessons learned and actionable insights that attendees can apply in their health care leadership roles. Don’t miss the opportunity to be inspired by the next generation of health care leaders who are driving positive change in the field.

CME credit available.

8:00 – 9:00 AM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**



**AI for Patient Safety: Transforming Care through Implementation and Measurement**

MODERATOR: Kristin Preihs, *Senior Director of Clinical Quality & Funded Partnerships, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Randy Fagin, MD, *Chief Quality Officer, HCA Healthcare, Nashville*

Amy Rockman, *Director, Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence, Rutgers Health & RWJ Barnabas Health, Somerset, N.J.*

Michael Seim, MD, *Senior Vice President and Chief Quality Officer, WellSpan Health, York, Pa.*

Artificial intelligence is transforming patient safety by delivering innovative solutions to improve outcomes, reduce harm and optimize clinical workflows. This discussion will explore practical strategies for integrating AI technologies, including ambient listening tools, while navigating the complexities of safe and ethical implementation. Attendees will gain insights on applying AI to enhance communication, streamline operations and mitigate safety risks. The session will also address key considerations for measuring AI’s impact, fostering collaboration across teams and overcoming challenges such as clinician alert fatigue and ethical concerns.

CME credit available.



Behavioral Health

### Behavioral Health: Scalable Solutions for Access, Integration and Sustainability

MODERATOR: Rebecca B. Chickey, MPH, *Senior Director, Behavioral Health Services, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Seth Brody, MD, MPH, *Executive Vice President, Chief Physician Executive, WakeMed Health and Hospitals, Raleigh, N.C.*

David Lowry, MD, *President and Chief Executive Officer, UNC Health Caldwell, Lenoir, N.C.*

Stephen M. Merz, FACE, *Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Sheppard Pratt Solutions, Baltimore*

Robert Trestman, PhD, MD, *Senior Vice President, Chair of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, Carilion Clinic, Roanoke, Va.*

Hospitals and health systems are navigating complex challenges in behavioral health from workforce shortages to financial constraints and increasing patient demand. This session will explore innovative models that expand access, improve integration across care settings and create sustainable approaches to behavioral health care. Panelists will share strategies for strengthening inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services, embedding behavioral health within emergency and specialty care and leveraging new care delivery models to optimize staffing and reduce costs. Through real-world examples, participants will gain practical insights into designing and implementing solutions that enhance patient outcomes, drive operational efficiency and promote equitable access to behavioral health services.



Transforming Care Delivery

### Innovative Strategies for Population Health and Improving Access to Care

MODERATOR: Nancy Myers, *Vice President, Leadership and System Innovation, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Kurt A. Barwis, FACHE, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Bristol Health, Bristol, Conn.; Member, AHA Board of Trustees*

Kara Curtis, *Senior Director, Sellers Dorsey*

Holly Davis, BSN, *Chief Nursing Officer, Bingham Memorial Hospital, Blackfoot, Idaho*

Dora Anne Mills, *Chief Health Improvement Officer, MaineHealth, Portland, Maine*

This panel discussion will explore how hospitals are integrating public health principles into operations, expanding access to preventive care, strengthening community partnerships and using data-driven approaches to improve outcomes. Panelists will share real-world examples of scalable community-driven solutions that enhance care coordination, reduce disparities and design sustainable care models to meet the evolving needs of diverse populations. Attendees will gain practical insights into strategies that drive long-term improvements in population health.

SPONSORED BY: **Sellers Dorsey**



Financial Sustainability

### Proactive Strategies to Counter Payer Denials and Delays: Driving Financial Stability and Operational Efficiency

Judson Ivy, *Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Ensemble*

Providers spent nearly \$20 billion in 2022 pursuing delayed payments and denials, more than half of which were eventually overturned. Some health systems have seen denials double in the last year alone, with more than half of that activity coming from Medicare Advantage Plans. Receiving accurate, timely reimbursement and reducing unnecessary administrative costs imposed by payers requires a proactive strategy from providers. This session will prepare attendees with actionable strategies to push back against payer tactics hindering cost-effective care delivery by fortifying and enforcing payer contracts with key metrics and analytics, establishing a strong denial prevention program and using technology to challenge delays and denials at scale.

CME credit available.

## 9:15 – 10:45 AM PLENARY SESSION

### Designing the Future of Care Delivery

Introductory comments by Joanne M. Conroy, MD, *Chief Executive Officer and President, Dartmouth Health, Lebanon, N.H.; Immediate Past Chair, Board of Trustees, American Hospital Association*

### Presentation of the AHA Quest for Quality Prize

The AHA Quest for Quality Prize honors hospitals and health systems committed to leadership and innovation in improving quality and advancing health.

### Presentation of the Circle of Life Award

AHA Circle of Life Award honors innovative palliative and end-of-life care programs that exemplify best-in-care models for the field, fostering learning and spreading best practices.

**Designing the Future of Care Delivery**

MODERATOR: Elizabeth Cohen, *Senior Medical Correspondent, CNN*

PANELISTS:

Marty Bonick, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Ardent Health, Brentwood, Tenn.*

Tina Freese Decker, MHA, MSIE, FACHE, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Corewell Health, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Chair, Board of Trustees, American Hospital Association*

Wright Lassiter, III, *Chief Executive Officer, CommonSpirit Health, Chicago*

Eugene A. Woods, FACHE, MHA, *Chief Executive Officer, Advocate Health, Charlotte, N.C.*

Designing the future of care delivery will require both incremental and transformative change. How can we balance both approaches to improve access, affordability and equitable outcomes? Join this panel of forward-thinking leaders as we explore how the field can best support both incremental improvements and radical transformation in care delivery, and what the future means for health care organizations today.

**10:45 – 11:15 AM REFRESHMENT BREAK IN THE INNOVATION HUB**

**11:00 – 11:30 AM INNOVATION HUB MAIN STAGE**



Transforming Care Delivery

**Transforming Geriatric Care: Strategic Solutions for an Aging Population**

Raahat Ansari, MS, *Senior Program Manager, American Hospital Association*

This panel discussion will explore innovative strategies to enhance the quality and safety of care for older adults, drawing on real-world insights from the Superior Treatment of Elders Pathway (STEP) Program, the West Health Accelerator at MGB and the Age-Friendly Health Systems Initiative. Panelists will share how tailored approaches improve patient outcomes, streamline care processes and support workforce development. Attendees will gain practical tools, data-driven protocols, and a replicable framework to transform geriatric care delivery across diverse health care settings. Through a blend of clinical and operational expertise, this session will demonstrate how strategic leadership and actionable solutions can empower health system leaders to implement sustainable, systemwide improvements for a rapidly aging population.

CME credit available.

**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS**



Patient Engagement and Education

**The Capacity Management Playbook: Proven Strategies to Unlock Access, Drive Growth and Achieve Financial Success**

Neel Kapadia, MD, *Medical Director, Patient Flow Clinical Service Unit, Duke University Health System, Durham, N.C.*

Kimberly Krakowski, MSN, RN, CENP, *Assistant Vice President Capacity Command Center, Mobile Medicine, Atrium Health, Charlotte, N.C.*

Nan Nicponski, RN, *Assistant Vice President, Clinical Command Center, Intermountain Health, Salt Lake City*

Vikas Parekh, MD, *Associate Chief Medical Officer, Capacity and Operations, University of Michigan Health, Ann Arbor, Mich.*

Hospital occupancy rates are at critical levels, often exceeding capacity due to rising patient volumes and growing care complexity. With limited beds and increasing demand, hospitals must adopt innovative capacity management strategies to optimize patient flow and access. This session explores proven methods for admitting patients efficiently, reducing length of stay and maximizing resources. Learn how to design governance structures, build operational infrastructure and leverage technology for lasting improvements.

Health system leaders will explore strategies that have increased hospital transfer access, reduced unnecessary moves, shortened length of stay and improved financial resilience. Gain practical insights on optimizing capacity across care settings, including virtual care and using technology to enhance coordination during daily operations and crises.

CME credit available.



Workforce

### Innovative Workforce Strategies: Empowering Teams Through Technology and Engagement

MODERATOR: Claire M. Zangerle, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAONL, FAAN, *Chief Executive Officer, American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL)*; *Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Officer, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Matthew Kurth, *Deputy Chief People Officer, Northwell Health, New Hyde Park, N.Y.*

Meleah Mariani, *Chief Nursing Officer, Corewell Health, Ludington, Mich.*

Hospitals and health systems are adopting innovative approaches to strengthen and support their workforce, recognizing that front-line leaders need both efficiency and meaningful engagement in their work. This panel discussion will explore how hospital leaders are leveraging technology to reduce turnover, slow the pace of work, and bring joy and meaning back into health care careers. Panelists will share insights on treating the workforce as a key consumer in health care strategies and how organizations have seen success when their consumer-focused initiatives begin with their teams. The conversation will highlight real-world examples of workforce transformation, including innovative programs developed in partnership with local communities, and discuss what it takes to build an engaged, resilient and empowered workforce.



Strategy and Innovation

### From Reactive to Proactive: The Future of Clinical Documentation

David Kirk, MD, *Chief Clinical Integration Officer, WakeMed Health & Hospitals, Raleigh, N.C.*

Nate Wilson, *President, Regard*

The future of clinical documentation is moving from reactive, error-prone processes to proactive, data-driven approaches, leveraging AI-powered tools to analyze patient data, identify potential documentation gaps, and offer real-time guidance to clinicians. Innovative documentation strategies ensure a complete picture of patient care leading to better-informed treatment decisions, improved patient outcomes and reduced physician burnout. Examine how automation can streamline documentation workflows, reduce manual effort, identify complications or comorbidities, and extract key insights from patient records that can influence a patient's length of stay and resource utilization. Participants will gain valuable insights from real-world examples and learn best practices for implementing proactive documentation programs.

SPONSORED BY: **Regard**



Behavioral Health

### Improving Care Connections for Patients with Substance Use Disorders

MODERATOR: Elisa Arespacochaga, *Vice President, Clinical Affairs and Workforce, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Carolyn Alessi, *Regional Executive Director, Community Health and Well Being, Trinity Health of New England, Hartford, Conn.*

Richard Bottner, DHA, PA-C, CPHQ, FACHE, *Vice President, Clinical Excellence, Colorado Hospital Association*

Anna Maria South, MD, **UK HealthCare, Lexington, Ky.**

Beth Williams, MSN, APRN, MPH, CARN-NP, *Associate Director, IMPACT, Oregon Health & Science University*

This session will share insights from an AHA initiative that helped hospitals and health systems strengthen care connections for people with opioid and stimulant use disorders. Speakers will discuss effective strategies that improved patient engagement and retention across inpatient, primary care and pharmacy settings. The session will also cover clinical and non-clinical approaches and highlight how hospitals, health systems and community partners are working together to support ongoing treatment. Attendees will learn about new AHA resources to improve outcomes in their own communities.

CME credit available.

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

## INNOVATION HUB MAIN STAGE



Transforming Care Delivery

### The Circle of Life Awards: Transforming Palliative and End-of-Life Care

MODERATOR: David Wu, MD, *Chief of Pain and Palliative Care, NIH Clinical Center, National Institutes of Health*; *Chair, AHA Circle of Life Award Committee*

The Circle of Life Awards honors programs and organizations that excel in delivering safe, patient- and family-centered care, building strong community partnerships and implementing innovative care models. This session features a conversation with the 2025 honorees, who will share insights on advancing palliative and serious illness care. Panelists will discuss strategies for creating a seamless patient-centered care continuum, strengthening community partnerships to enhance long-term sustainability and fostering a supportive culture that promotes resilience among care teams. Attendees will gain practical approaches to improving care delivery and driving meaningful organizational change.

CME credit available.

1:15 – 1:45 PM **INNOVATION HUB MAIN STAGE**



Transforming Care Delivery

**From Stories to Safety: Harnessing Narrative in Patient Safety**

MODERATOR: Ben Wise, *Senior Program Manager, American Hospital Association*

PANELIST:

Caroline Delongchamps, *Program Director, Patient and Family Centered Care, MUSC Health, Charleston, S.C.*

Patient safety is built on more than policies and protocols. A strong safety culture thrives on shared experiences, lessons learned and meaningful engagement. Storytelling humanizes safety efforts, strengthens leadership and fosters lasting change. This session explores how the American Hospital Association’s Living Learning Network and Patient Safety Initiative use storytelling to improve care quality and safety.

A panel of participants from the first year of the Patient Safety Initiative will share insights on integrating storytelling into safety initiatives. Attendees will learn how storytelling serves as a catalyst for cultural transformation in health care organizations, strategies for collecting and sharing impactful stories, and real-world applications of storytelling in the AHA’s patient safety efforts.

CME credit available.

2:00 – 3:30 PM **PLENARY SESSION**

**Navigating Complexity through Leadership & Advocacy**

Introductory comments by Marc L. Boom, MD, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Houston Methodist, Houston; Chair-Elect, Board of Trustees, American Hospital Association*

**Presentation of the Dick Davidson NOVA Award**

The Dick Davidson NOVA Award celebrates the collaborative work of hospitals and community organizations to improve the health status of individuals and communities.

**Presentation of the Foster G. McGaw Prize**

The Foster G. McGaw Prize recognizes hospitals and health systems that have distinguished themselves through efforts to improve the health and well-being of everyone in their communities.

**Fireside Chat**

**Addressing Health Care’s Most Complex Challenges: A New Leadership Role**

MODERATOR: Elizabeth Cohen, *Senior Medical Correspondent, CNN*

PANELIST:

Laura S. Kaiser, FACHE, *President and Chief Executive Officer, SSM Health, St. Louis*

In the complex and evolving health care landscape, health care leaders must navigate deeply complex, interconnected challenges, requiring a nuanced, collaborative and innovative approach. SSM Health President and CEO Laura Kaiser will share how the organization is addressing these pressing issues, focusing on key priorities that drive transformation and sustainable change.

**AHA Town Hall: Navigating the 2025 Political Landscape**

Join the AHA for a discussion on the latest legislative and policy developments impacting hospitals and health systems. This session will provide insights into AHA’s advocacy priorities and the evolving political landscape in Washington, helping health care leaders navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead.

3:30 – 4:00 PM **REFRESHMENT BREAK IN THE INNOVATION HUB**

3:45 – 4:30 PM **INNOVATION HUB MAIN STAGE**



Transforming Care Delivery

**Collaborations for Community Health: NOVA Award Winners Share Their Strategies**

Hospitals can’t go it alone when it comes to improving community health status and addressing the societal factors that influence health. By identifying needs and forming partnerships with local agencies and other groups to address multifaceted challenges like food insecurity, untreated behavioral health conditions and poor birth outcomes, hospitals and health systems can change the future of their communities. Join us for a panel discussion among the 2025 AHA Dick Davidson NOVA Award honorees to learn about building strong partnerships with community stakeholders, identifying where resources will make the biggest impact, setting parameters for success and measuring outcomes.

CME credit available.

**4:00 – 5:00 PM CONCURRENT SESSIONS**



Patient Engagement and Education

**Integrating Community Health Strategy: Insights from the Foster G. McGaw Prize Honorees**

Nancy Myers, *Vice President, Leadership and System Innovation, American Hospital Association*

The Foster G. McGaw Prize recognizes hospitals and health systems that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to community health and development. This session brings together this year's honorees for a discussion on how they are driving sustainable improvement in the health outcomes of their communities. Panelists will share insights on integrating community and population health strategies into organizational priorities, co-designing and investing in initiatives that create lasting impact, and fostering economic mobility to support long-term community health. Attendees will gain practical strategies for building effective partnerships and implementing programs that lead to measurable improvements in health outcomes.

*The Foster G. McGaw Prize is generously sponsored by the Baxter International Foundation.*



Workforce

**The Future is Female: Physician Engagement, Leadership & Dialogue**

Tricia Hern, MD, *Senior Vice President Academic Affairs and Physician Development, Community Health Network, Indianapolis*

John Kunzer, MD, *Executive Vice President and Community Physician Network President, Community Health Network, Indianapolis*

Female physicians often report high levels of job satisfaction yet experience lower engagement and unique challenges in the workplace. Surveys and listening sessions have identified key concerns, including disproportionate home-life responsibilities, differing expectations from staff and patients and the need for more flexible work schedules. National research confirms these trends, showing higher burnout rates, increased EHR time and longer patient interactions for female physicians.

This session will examine these findings and explore strategies to foster a more inclusive workplace. Attendees will learn how leadership styles, communication and cultural expectations impact physician engagement. They will identify tools to assess physician well-being, learn how to collect and act on feedback from groups experiencing lower engagement, and explore strategies to create work environments that value and support female physicians.

CME credit available.



Financial Sustainability

**Building High-Performing Organizations: Strategies for Sustainable Operations**

MODERATOR: Alex Rozenbaum, *Senior Director, Product Development and Account Management, American Hospital Association*

PANELISTS:

Philip Almeter, PharmD, *Chief Pharmacy Officer, University of Kentucky HealthCare, Lexington, Ky.*

Peter D. Banko, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Baystate Health, Springfield, Mass.*

Brady Dubois, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Boone Health, Columbia, Mo.*



Patient Engagement and Education

As hospitals and health systems face mounting financial pressures, medication costs and increasing payer claim denials, leaders must rethink their operating models to ensure long-term viability. This panel discussion will explore innovative strategies for optimizing organizational structures, streamlining care delivery and leveraging data-driven decision-making to improve financial and operational performance. Panelists will share how their organizations have successfully navigated financial challenges, including deploying advanced health care technology and using emerging tools to reduce administrative burden and enhance patient care. Attendees will learn how high-performing systems engage their teams, measure with purpose, and drive cost-effective transformation while maintaining a strong commitment to quality and sustainability.

CME credit available.

**4:30 – 5:00 PM INNOVATION HUB MAIN STAGE**

**6:00 – 8:00 PM SUMMIT CELEBRATION AT THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME**

After a full day of learning and networking, unwind with great food, engaging conversations and Nashville hospitality at the Country Music Hall of Fame, home to one of the world's largest collections of country music history. Connect with peers, explore iconic exhibits and celebrate together in this iconic setting!

8:00 – 10:15 AM **INTENSIVE SESSION**



Strategy and Innovation



Financial Sustainability

**Critical Response: Cybersecurity Tabletop Exercise for Hospital Leaders**

Scott Gee, *Deputy National Advisor for Cybersecurity and Risk, American Hospital Association*  
 John Riggi, *National Advisor for Cybersecurity and Risk, American Hospital Association*

Join the American Hospital Association for an interactive cybersecurity tabletop exercise designed to strengthen decision-making and response for hospital leaders. This session places participants in a real-world scenario to enhance cybersecurity awareness and preparedness.

Designed for technical and non-technical leaders, the exercise will test incident response plans, uncover critical gaps, and guide participants through key decision points. Using lessons from incidents like the Change Healthcare attack, hospital leaders will gain practical strategies to bolster cybersecurity defenses and protect their organizations from future threats.

CME credit available.

8:00 – 9:00 AM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**



Workforce

**Harnessing AI and Virtual Solutions to Address Workforce Challenges**

MODERATOR: Jen Porter, *Senior Vice President, Field Engagement, American Hospital Association*  
 PANELISTS:

Tanya Content, *System Vice President of Talent, UNC Health, Chapel Hill, N.C.*  
 Sunil Dadlani, *Executive Vice President, Chief Information & Digital Officer, Atlantic Health System, Morristown, N.J.*  
 Sondra Davis, *Chief Human Resources Officer, North Mississippi Health Services, Tupelo, Miss.*

Workforce shortages continue to strain hospitals and health systems, making it critical to explore how AI and virtual solutions can alleviate pressure and enhance efficiency. This panel discussion will highlight strategies for identifying the most impactful areas to apply AI and technology, improving workflows and freeing up capacity for clinical teams. Panelists will share best practices for integrating new technologies across large networks, ensuring seamless adoption and maximizing their impact. Attendees will gain insights into how a tech-enabled approach can help organizations navigate workforce shortages, streamline operations and create a more sustainable care delivery model.



Financial Sustainability

**Optimizing Payer Negotiations**

Scott Ellsworth, *President, Ellsworth Consulting*  
 John McLendon, *Vice President, Revenue Analytics & Insights, Bon Secours Mercy Health, Cincinnati*

Effective payer negotiations are essential for hospitals and health systems to secure sustainable reimbursement rates and maintain financial stability. This session will provide key insights into how hospitals can maximize their leverage at the negotiating table, escalate negotiations within payer organizations and strategically time their discussions for the best possible outcomes. Attendees will learn practical strategies to strengthen their position in contract discussions, uncover hidden advantages they may not realize they have and navigate government program negotiations for Medicare Advantage, ACA and Medicaid. The session will equip health care leaders with the tools and approaches needed to drive more favorable agreements and optimize financial performance.

CME credit available.



Workforce

**Building Tomorrow's Leaders: Strategies and Resources for Physician Leadership**

MODERATOR: Chris DeRienzo, MD, *Senior Vice President, Chief Physician Executive, American Hospital Association*  
 PANELISTS:

Melinda Muller, MD, FACP, *Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President, Legacy Health, Portland, Ore.*  
 James Porter, MD, FACHE, FACP, FAAP, *President, Deaconess Health System, Evansville, Ind.*

Explore real-world leadership journeys and gain practical insights from experienced physician leaders. This session will highlight key entry points into medical leadership, essential skills like advocacy and negotiation and resources to support professional growth. Participants will walk away with strategies to lead effective teams, drive innovation and improve patient care outcomes—building a strong foundation for impactful leadership in health care. This session is ideal for those aspiring to build a strong foundation in medical leadership and to make a meaningful impact in health care.

CME credit available.

9:15 – 10:15 AM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**Strategy and  
Innovation**Strategies to Accelerate Innovation**MODERATOR: Lindsey Dunn Burgstahler, *Vice President for Programming and Intelligence*, **American Hospital Association**

PANELISTS:

Chris Frost, MD, *Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Quality Officer*, **LifePoint Health, Brentwood, Tenn.**Fahad Tahir, *President and Chief Executive Officer*, **Ascension Saint Thomas, Nashville**Sara Vaezy, *Chief Transformation Officer*, **Providence, Renton, Wash.**

With ever-increasing uncertainty facing hospitals and the broader health care environment, how can organizations not just continue to innovate but accelerate innovation efforts? Hear how three leading health systems prioritize, structure and sustain innovation efforts and learn about the current initiatives they're advancing. Attendees will gain practical insights on integrating innovation efforts to solve pain points and improve care delivery and outcomes while positioning the organization for long-term success.

CME credit available.



Workforce

**Future-Proofing Health Care: Building Adaptable Organizations and Teams**MODERATOR: Jen Braun, *Director, Workforce and Organizational Development*, **American Hospital Association**

PANELISTS:

Lee Bienstock, *Chief Executive Officer*, **DocGo**Svetlana Lipyanskaya, *Chief Executive Officer*, **NYC Health + Hospitals South Brooklyn Health, New York, N.Y.**J.P. Gallagher, *President and Chief Executive Officer*, **Endeavor Health, Evanston, Ill.**Barbara Joers, *President and Chief Executive Officer*, **Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, Saint Paul, Minn.**

Health care organizations must be able to adapt quickly to an evolving landscape, ensuring they remain resilient and capable of delivering high-value care. This panel discussion will explore how hospital leaders are rethinking operating models, realigning organizational structures and implementing team member success frameworks to foster adaptability. Panelists will discuss strategies for effective change management, including how to accelerate and amplify adaptability in a dynamic and competitive environment. Attendees will gain insights into building adaptable teams, communicating the "why" behind change to strengthen stakeholder alignment and applying a Learning Health Systems approach to continuously evaluate and refine strategies. The session will provide practical takeaways for leaders looking to future-proof their organizations while maintaining a commitment to delivering reliable, high-quality care.

SPONSORED BY: **DocGo**Financial  
Sustainability**Sustainable Operating and Financial Strategies for Hospitals**MODERATOR: Nathan Kaufman, *Managing Director*, **Kaufman Strategic Advisors and Matterhorn Strategic**

PANELISTS:

Gokhan Anil, MD, MBOE, *Chair of Clinical Practice*, **Mayo Clinic Health System, Mankato, Minn.**Donna Lynne, DrPH, *Chief Executive Officer*, **Denver Health, Denver**Chris Newman, MD, *President and Chief Executive Officer*, **Mary Washington Healthcare, Fredericksburg, Va.**Hollie Seeley, *Chief Executive Officer*, **Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento, Calif.**

Hospitals and health systems must rethink their operating and financing models to address growing challenges in capacity, access and financial performance. This panel will explore how leaders have developed and implemented strategies to improve patient throughput, manage capacity more effectively and strengthen financial performance.

Panelists will discuss how they've identified and eliminated inefficiencies, reduced hospital-acquired infections and aligned clinical operations with cost-containment goals. They'll also share approaches to balancing short-term recovery with long-term resilience while maintaining a strong commitment to community needs. Attendees will learn actionable strategies for reducing waste, streamlining operations and driving sustainable improvements across clinical and financial domains.

CME credit available.





### Transforming Next-Generation Workforce Development Programs to Drive Engagement and Retention

Larissa Africa, BSN, RN, CENP, FAONL, FAAN, *Vice President of Clinical Excellence*, **Ascend Learning - Healthcare Workforce Solutions**

As nurse leaders continue to face the challenges of high turnover rates and nursing shortages in this post-COVID era, they are looking for innovative retention strategies. Explore the role of Clinical Ladder Programs (CLPs) in recognizing and rewarding nurses' contributions and how to remedy the inefficiencies of traditional CLPs with digitization. By introducing innovation, digital solutions can streamline processes, increase participation and improve retention rates in health care organizations.

SPONSORED BY: **Ascend Learning - Healthcare Workforce Solutions**

### 10:30 – 11:30 AM **PLENARY SESSION**

Introductory remarks by M. Michelle Hood, FACHE, *Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer*, **American Hospital Association**

#### **The Caring in Health Care: Challenges and Opportunities in a Technological Era**

Abraham Verghese, MD, *New York Times* Bestselling Author; *Practicing Physician*; *Professor*, **Stanford University**

Artificial intelligence (AI) promises to liberate providers from their clerical and documentation burdens; it might also ease the epidemic of provider burnout and allow for more meaningful patient interactions. Historically, technological advances implemented without sufficient forethought, oversight and user input have caused unintended human consequences. A century ago, Peabody famously said, "The secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient." Health care systems need fiscal soundness and inspired leadership; care delivery needs people, presence and empathy. A revolutionary rethinking of humanistic health care must match the upcoming AI revolution.