

# HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE

An Informative Q&A with OC's Top Healthcare Professionals



**Barry Arbuckle, PhD**  
*CEO*  
MemorialCare



**Robert T. Braithwaite**  
*President & CEO*  
Hoag



**Phil Franks**  
*CEO*  
Be Well OC



**Michael Hunn**  
*CEO*  
CalOptima Health



**Chad T. Lafferis**  
*President & CEO*  
UCI Health



**Dawn Maroney**  
*President*  
Alignment Health



**Kim Mikes, MBA, RN**  
*CEO*  
Hoag Orthopedic Institute



**Kim Milstien**  
*President*  
CHOC Region, Rady Children's Health



**Payman Roshan, MBA**  
*Senior Vice President & Area Manager*  
Kaiser Permanente Orange County



**Emmanuelle Schwartzman, PharmD**  
*Professor, School of Pharmacy*  
Chapman University



**Stephen E. Thorne IV**  
*Founder & CEO*  
PDS Health



**Annette M. Walker**  
*President*  
City of Hope Orange County



# HEALTHCARE

## ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

### Alignment Health

Alignment Health is championing a new path in senior care that empowers members to age well and live their most vibrant lives. A consumer brand name of Alignment Healthcare (NASDAQ: ALHC), Alignment Health's mission-focused team makes high-quality, low-cost care a reality for its Medicare Advantage members every day. Based in California, the company partners with nationally recognized and trusted local providers to deliver coordinated care, powered by its customized care model, 24/7 concierge care team and purpose-built technology, AVA®. As it expands its offerings and grows its national footprint, Alignment upholds its core values of leading with a serving heart and putting the senior first. For more information, visit [www.alignmenthealth.com](http://www.alignmenthealth.com).



### Be Well OC

Be Well OC is a transformative initiative bringing together public, private, academic and faith-based organizations, as well as others, to create a coordinated system of mental health care and support for all Orange County residents. The Be Well OC mental health system, which also includes substance use services, features a first-of-its-kind mental health and wellness facility in Orange, a second campus opening this year in Irvine, and a robust Mobile Response Program currently serving four cities and UCI. Be Well OC's movement spans across all cities of Orange County and a range of needs, from prevention and early intervention to crisis aversion, crisis management, treatment and recovery. For more information visit [bewelloc.org](http://bewelloc.org).



### CalOptima Health

CalOptima Health provides quality health care coverage for nearly 1 in 3 Orange County residents through three programs: Medi-Cal, a publicly funded insurance plan for low-income children, adults, seniors and people with disabilities; OneCare, a Medicare Advantage plan to coordinate care for people who have both Medicare and Medi-Cal; and the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), a comprehensive plan for seniors with chronic conditions to keep them active and living at home. CalOptima Health's mission is to serve member health with excellence and dignity, respecting the value and needs of each person. CalOptima Health serves more than 915,000 members with a network of nearly 8,400 primary care doctors and specialists and 43 acute and rehab hospitals.



### Chapman University

Founded in 1861, Chapman University is a nationally ranked private university in Orange, California, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles. Chapman serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, with a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Students can choose from over 100 areas of study within 11 colleges for a personalized education. Chapman is categorized by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 "high research activity" institution. Students at Chapman learn directly from distinguished world-class faculty including Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur fellows, published authors and Academy Award winners. The campus has produced a Rhodes Scholar, been named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars and hosts a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society. Chapman also includes the Harry and Diane Rinker Health Science Campus in Irvine. Learn more about Chapman University: [www.chapman.edu](http://www.chapman.edu).



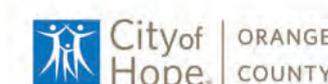
### CHOC, now part of Rady Children's Health

Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) is committed to being a leading destination for children's health by providing exceptional and innovative care. The nationally recognized pediatric healthcare system includes two hospitals and a regional network of primary and specialty care clinics. CHOC offers several programs of excellence providing the highest levels of care for the most serious pediatric illnesses and injuries. CHOC's research and innovation institutes are focused on translating real patient needs into real-world treatments so every child can live the healthiest and happiest life possible. In January 2025, CHOC and Rady Children's Hospital San Diego united to form Rady Children's Health to transform pediatric care, research and innovation. Each organization will maintain separate medical staff, local governing boards and onsite leadership to ensure they continue to meet the unique needs of their respective communities, while providing the new benefits of an integrated healthcare system. Learn more at [radychildrens.org](http://radychildrens.org).



### City of Hope Orange County

City of Hope Orange County is part of one of the largest and most advanced cancer research and treatment organizations in the United States and ranked among the top five for cancer care in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. City of Hope Orange County includes an academic cancer campus in Irvine and a network of clinical locations. This year, City of Hope will open Orange County's only cancer specialty hospital, completing the continuum of care and fulfilling its promise to bring more lifesaving cancer care closer to home. Patients at City of Hope Orange County benefit from the expertise of world-renowned physicians who solely focus on preventing, treating and curing cancer and more than 700 cancer-focused clinical trials each year.





# “Dr. Chang extended my life.”



Rick's esophageal cancer required a groundbreaking procedure that few doctors in the world could attempt. With no room for error, Dr. Kenneth Chang achieved the impossible in just 14 days.

Rick's experience is unique and may not be representative of all patients. The type, stage, and treatment of cancer can significantly impact outcomes. Always consult with a healthcare professional for medical advice tailored to your individual circumstances. Results may vary.

Watch Rick's story at  
[hoag.org/excellence](https://www.hoag.org/excellence)

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WORLD *of* EXCELLENCE

# HEALTHCARE

## ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

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### Hoag

Hoag is a nonprofit, regional health care delivery system in Orange County, California. Delivering world-class, comprehensive, personalized care, Hoag consists of 1,800 top physicians, 17 urgent care facilities, 11 health & wellness centers, and two award-winning hospitals. Hoag offers a comprehensive blend of health care services that includes seven institutes providing specialized services in the following areas: cancer, digestive health, heart and vascular, neurosciences, spine, women's health, and orthopedics through Hoag's affiliate, Hoag Orthopedic Institute, which consists of an orthopedic hospital and four ambulatory surgical centers. Hoag is the highest ranked hospital in Orange County by U.S. News & World Report and the only OC hospital ranked in the Top 10 in California, as well as a designated Magnet® with Distinction hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). For more information, visit [hoag.org](http://hoag.org).



### Hoag Orthopedic Institute

Hoag Orthopedic Institute (HOI)'s mission is to optimize the musculoskeletal health of individuals and their communities. Since 2010, HOI has provided highly specialized and experienced orthopedic and spine care, focusing on patient-centered, value-based outcomes for knee, hip and spine disorders and specialty care related to sports medicine, orthopedic trauma and extremities care. HOI is ranked #1 in volume for hip, knee and shoulder replacement in the Western United States and #1 for spine surgery in Orange County. HOI has one specialty hospital located in Irvine and five ambulatory surgery centers in Newport Beach, Mission Viejo, Orange, Beverly Hills and Aliso Viejo. There are more than 300 physicians on staff, including more than 80 orthopedic and spine specialists. HOI has been named in the top orthopedic hospitals by U.S. News & World Report since 2010 and is proudly founded by premier physicians in partnership with Hoag. Visit [hoagorthopedicinstitute.com](http://hoagorthopedicinstitute.com).



### Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and nonprofit health plans. Founded in 1945, Kaiser Permanente has a mission to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve 12.4 million members in 8 states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal Permanente Medical Group physicians, specialists, and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery, and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education, and the support of community health. For more information, go to [about.kp.org](http://about.kp.org).



### MemorialCare

MemorialCare is a not-for-profit, integrated healthcare delivery system with 225 care locations, including leading hospitals—Saddleback Medical Center in Laguna Hills, Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, Long Beach Medical Center, and Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach; MemorialCare Medical Group and Greater Newport Physicians; MemorialCare Research Program; MemorialCare Select Health Plan; and numerous outpatient health, imaging, surgery, urgent care, physical therapy, breast health and dialysis centers throughout Orange and Los Angeles counties. Accolades include Nation's Best Health Systems and Workplaces, Top 50 U.S. Hospitals and Cardiovascular Hospitals, 10 Largest Children's Hospitals, 100 Best Hospitals - Spine and Prostate Surgeries, Best of Orange County and Long Beach Hospitals and Medical Groups, U.S. News & World Report Best Hospitals and "high performing" in 31 clinical categories, and Newsweek World's Best Hospitals, Top 100 Hospitals, Best Maternity Hospitals – and more. Visit [memorialcare.org](http://memorialcare.org).



### PDS Health™

PDS Health™ continues the journey started by Pacific Dental Services® in 1994, with a vision to redefine health care through the integration of dental and medical services. Its approach, centered on the connection between oral health and overall health, aims to create healthier, happier patients and set new benchmarks in the healthcare industry. As a leading provider of integrated healthcare support, the company delivers a broad spectrum of services to dental, dental specialties, and medical providers, enhancing operations and care delivery for clinicians across the U.S. For more information about PDS Health, visit [pdshealth.com](http://pdshealth.com).



### UCI Health

UCI Health, one of California's largest academic health systems, is the clinical enterprise of the University of California, Irvine. The 1,317-bed system comprises its flagship hospital UCI Medical Center in Orange, four inpatient locations and affiliated physicians of the UCI Health Community Network in Orange and Los Angeles counties and a network of ambulatory care centers across the region. The final phase of the UCI Health — Irvine medical campus, a 144-bed acute care hospital, will open in late 2025. UCI Medical Center provides tertiary and quaternary care and is home to the only Orange County-based National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center, high-risk perinatal/neonatal program and American College of Surgeons-verified Level I adult and Level II pediatric trauma center, gold level 1 geriatric emergency department and regional burn center. Powered by UC Irvine, UCI Health serves residents across Southern California.



# Coming soon: Acute care hospital

At UCI Health, we share a single calling: to improve the lives of people in our community and beyond. Now, we're bringing leading-edge clinical care — and our devoted team of nationally recognized physicians, nurses and researchers — closer to you and your family.

With the opening of our newest seven-story, 350,000-square-foot, 144-bed hospital, we will welcome you to experience a new era of innovation and compassionate care.

Learn more at [ucihealth.org/irvinehospital](https://ucihealth.org/irvinehospital)

Powered by UC Irvine.

**UCI Health**



# Here for you when you need us most.

We deliver proactive preventive care that's proven to keep you healthy, and world-class treatment if you do get sick. Choose Kaiser Permanente, and get high-quality, personalized care, designed to help you spend more healthy years doing more of what you love.

Learn more at  
[business.kp.org](https://business.kp.org)



Kaiser Permanente has  
**2 of Orange County's  
best hospitals**

- Anaheim Medical Center
- Irvine Medical Center



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## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



There's no question that Orange County is on its way to becoming a health care destination. The robust capabilities in our community will further drive access to highly specialized care teams and physicians.

**Annette M. Walker**  
President  
City of Hope Orange County



The integration of AI, virtual reality and robotics in medical diagnostics and treatment is paving the way for more accurate and efficient health care delivery.

**Robert T. Braithwaite**  
President & CEO  
Hoag

**Orange County is fortunate to offer access to numerous outstanding medical care facilities. What should patients take into consideration when selecting their care providers?**

**Kim Mikes, Hoag Orthopedic Institute:** When choosing orthopedic care, patient experience, quality outcomes and choosing a hospital or surgery center that conducts research are all important aspects to evaluate. At HOI our excellence in musculoskeletal patient care and high patient ratings are augmented by a robust academic research and education program. Our physicians published 20 peer-reviewed manuscripts last year and are involved in clinical trials and research improving the future of orthopedics. As a physician-led organization and the only orthopedic specialty hospital in Orange County, we pride ourselves in a premier patient experience, evidenced by our recent 5-star Patient Survey Rating by CMS. As a leader in orthopedic and spine care, HOI has earned its elite reputation through a patient experience unmatched by others.

**Robert T. Braithwaite, Hoag:** We want patients to feel confident and empowered that they have access to complete care for themselves and their families. With Hoag, you don't have to leave Orange County to receive world-class, comprehensive, compassionate care. Only a handful of hospitals like Hoag combine a personalized, community-based approach with cutting-edge medicine, renowned specialists and access to clinical trials. This "privademic" approach gives us the agility and personalized approach of a private, not-for-profit hospital paired with the world-class innovations of an academic institution. What that means is peace of mind that quality care is right here in your community. Access to innovative treatments by nationally recognized primary and specialty care physicians, state-of-the-art facilities and world-class services are here when and where you need it.

**Annette M. Walker, City of Hope Orange County:** There's no question that Orange County is on its way to becoming a health care destination. The robust capabilities in our community will further drive access to highly specialized care teams and physicians. Providers are tasked with keeping up with medical knowledge that expands at an unprecedented rate. It's estimated that in 1950, it took about 50 years for medical knowledge to double. Now, it's closer to every 73 days. At City of Hope, we solely focus on cancer. Cancer isn't one disease. It's hundreds. For their best chance at a cure, patients should look for a provider who is an expert in their kind of cancer and who leads academic research, including clinical trials. This is a patient's best hope for a cancer-free future.

**Emmanuelle Schwartzman, Chapman University:** Patients in Orange County have access to a wide range of primary, specialized, urgent, and emergency care options. When choosing a provider, patients should consider factors like proximity and ease of access, particularly for ongoing or chronic conditions. It's

important to select providers with expertise in the specific area of care needed. Additional factors include the availability of translation services, insurance plan acceptance, cost of care, and support services like transportation and social workers. Most importantly, patients should seek facilities that prioritize a patient-centered approach, where they feel empowered and supported by their healthcare team in making decisions about their care.

**Kim Milstien, CHOC Region, Rady Children's Health:** When selecting a care provider, patients should consider more than just convenience—they should look for specialized expertise tailored to their needs. For children, that means turning to providers with dedicated pediatric training and resources. At CHOC, we offer families access to board-certified pediatric specialists, child-specific technology, and a healing environment designed just for kids. Children are not small adults; their developing bodies and unique emotional needs require expert, compassionate care. Families should also consider a provider's reputation for safety, innovation, and family-centered support to help ensure the best possible outcomes.

**AI, virtual reality, and robotics have become the leading technology platforms for many hospitals today. How have you harnessed the power of this proliferating technology to improve patient care, outcomes, and the patient experience?**

**Kim Mikes, Hoag Orthopedic Institute:** HOI has leaned into the power of robotics and other forms of advanced technology quite heavily. We currently employ several different robotic systems for joint replacements and spine surgery and were the fifth hospital in the world to use robotics for a reverse total shoulder replacement. In the hands of well-trained orthopedic surgeons, robotic technology can deliver superior outcomes for our patients including additional precision, alignment and reproducibility. HOI employs 10 robots throughout its hospital and surgery center network, with plans to add more this coming year, ensuring all patients have access to the most advanced technology.

**Robert T. Braithwaite, Hoag:** The integration of AI, virtual reality and robotics in medical diagnostics and treatment is paving the way for more accurate and efficient health care delivery. From the operating room to hospital operations, this is integral to Hoag's culture of innovation. Dr. Robert Louis, who spearheads the Center for Advanced Visualization and Immersive Therapeutics, helped develop VR technology that allows surgeons to "rehearse" complex procedures, which reduces the time and risk associated with surgery. Hoag has been a leader in AI technology bringing some first-to-California offerings for colonoscopy, melanoma screening, mammograms, and more. After recently completing our 30,000th robotic-assisted surgery, Hoag continues to be a destination for patients seeking robotic surgical care given our expertise and experience in the field, and superior outcomes for patients.

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Your  
Health Is  
Everything  
to Us

## Focused on giving health a lift

◆ Access to Care ◆ Mental Health Services ◆ Complex Care Coordination

As the largest health plan in Orange County, we know that access to care is essential. Yet health depends on more than medical care alone. Our team also coordinates care for complex health needs, mental health services and nutrition programs. We even connect members to housing and support services — all to lift everyone's whole health.

**caloptima.org**  
CalOptima Health, A Public Agency



## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



Value-based health plans emphasize whole-body health and can offer more affordable options while encouraging preventive care and delivering lower costs.

**Barry Arbuckle**  
CEO  
MemorialCare

**Payman Roshan, Kaiser Permanente Orange County:** Like many organizations, Artificial Intelligence is an emerging technology for us. However, one of the most exciting areas for AI and technology is in supporting our clinicians to manage some of the administrative burden that they face on a day-to-day basis. Kaiser Permanente, to the best of my knowledge, is deploying the largest implementation of the clinical AI scribe technology in the country. The purpose is to generate a first draft of the clinical note from a recording of the patient's encounter. We know that we learn more as technology advances, and it is assessed properly.

**Annette M. Walker, City of Hope Orange County:** AI holds transformative potential across oncology care, operational excellence, and research acceleration; City of Hope is uniquely positioned to lead in this space. With our extensive oncology data, deep clinical and technical expertise, and firsthand knowledge of healthcare's biggest pain points, we have the opportunity to create novel AI-driven solutions and intellectual property that do not currently exist. Through AI-powered early detection, precision diagnostics, personalized treatment optimization, administrative automation, and accelerated research, we can profoundly improve patient outcomes, streamline clinician workflows, and catalyze breakthroughs in cancer research and care. Examples of how we are harnessing AI include development of AI-assisted apps that can provide practical resources from diagnosis to survivorship, predicting genetic mutations, and examining what happens in gene expression when a cell becomes cancerous.

**Barry Arbuckle, MemorialCare:** MemorialCare has made early investments in AI and robotics surgical equipment. For example, our pilot program with Abridge, an ambient listening tool, allows physicians to be more present with patients while the AI software captures the details of a visit. This reduces daily note-taking time by 29% so doctors can spend more time with patients discussing care options.

Additionally, MemorialCare adopted state-of-the-art robotics technology resulting in more precise, less invasive surgeries that reduce recovery time and provide patients faster, improved outcomes. MemorialCare's Long Beach Medical Center was the first hospital in California to use Stryker Q Guidance System, which offers an unprecedented level of precision for spinal surgery patients. Our Galaxy System provides robotic-assisted bronchoscopy delivering earlier, more accurate diagnosis of lung cancer.

#### **How are hospitals in the region evolving maternity services to improve patient outcomes and experiences?**

**Robert T. Braithwaite, Hoag:** In 2024, Hoag was privileged to be part of 8,387 births, more than any other hospital in Orange County and the second-most in California. From our dedicated Obstetrics Emergency Department to our nationally recognized maternal-fetal medicine specialists,

Hoag provides the highest-quality, family-centered care to the women of Orange County. One of the newest technologies we've implemented is PeriGen Vigilance, funded by Hoag Innovators, which uses AI to continuously monitor maternal and fetal conditions. This technology provides an automated early warning system for clinicians to be able to intervene quickly and ensure the best outcomes for moms and their new babies. Hoag has also been recognized as a Center of Excellence by the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology, reinforcing our leadership in obstetric care.

#### **Despite the proven benefits of preventive screenings, a significant portion of the population fails to undergo routine screenings, leading to missed prevention opportunities. How can we get more people screened, particularly for critical illnesses like cancer?**

**Barry Arbuckle, MemorialCare:** Employers play an especially influential role by encouraging employees (and their families) to be more proactive by offering wellness incentives or rebates for completing annual exams, preventive screenings, and seasonal vaccinations. Value-based health plans emphasize whole-body health and can offer more affordable options while encouraging preventive care and delivering lower costs.

MemorialCare offers direct-to-employer health care plans including tools and incentives that encourage preventive care. Incentives paired with care that is easier to access, such as virtual visits, increases usage, which is why we prioritize alternative options and have opened more clinics in the community for more convenient care.

**Payman Roshan, Kaiser Permanente Orange County:** It comes down to having systems and processes where screening is offered at each touchpoint. Irrespective of the reason for a patient visit within our system, screenings are offered. If a family physician sees a diabetic patient for lower back pain and they need a diabetic foot exam, the nursing staff flags the chart, and the clinician performs the service. If a patient in our system is seen in endocrinology and needs a mammogram, that test is flagged and ordered by our specialist team and the result forwarded to the primary care physician. In addition, we measure our preventative service performance by clinicians and are incentivized to ensure our patients are getting the preventative services they need.

**Michael Hunn, CalOptima Health:** To boost participation in preventive screenings for breast, cervical, colon and certain lung cancers—diseases that are highly treatable when detected early—CalOptima Health launched a \$50.1 million Cancer Screening and Support Program. The program includes awarding grants aimed at raising awareness, improving access to screenings, enhancing facilities and strengthening care coordination. A core component is our "Screening Is About Life, Not Cancer" ad campaign, created to counter the fear and stigma

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# What if You Could Offer Better Care for Less?

MemorialCare is the region's leader in value-based health care, with products that hold us accountable for delivering exceptional care and service at a reduced cost. Our track record demonstrates significant savings for employers who choose an HMO, PPO or EPO value-based plan that we participate in – either through traditional health plan carriers, such as Blue Shield, or our direct-to-employer model with Centivo.

## Put Your Employees' Health in Caring Hands

**Caring is Our Calling.** Keeping your employees healthy is our top priority. Our plans include access to hundreds of award-winning primary care physicians and thousands of specialists; convenient centers for urgent care (both in-person and virtual), imaging and surgery; and health and wellness programs that focus on preventative care. Our 24/7 navigation center and nurse hotline mean help is only a phone call away.

Contact us today. Let us help you find the right solution for your business and employees.



Learn more about our employer health plans.  
[memorialcare.org/b2b](https://www.memorialcare.org/b2b)

## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



Most importantly, leaders must be willing to challenge the status quo while demonstrating empathy and integrity. It is crucial that they genuinely care.

**Dawn Maroney**  
President  
Alignment Health

often associated with cancer screenings. Recognizing that screenings are often avoided due to lack of awareness, cultural beliefs or fear, the campaign emphasizes the life-saving potential of early detection. It features culturally tailored messages and visuals that resonate with diverse communities, reframing screenings as a proactive step toward a long, healthy life.

**Annette M. Walker, City of Hope Orange**

**County:** The best way to treat cancer is to prevent it in the first place. Yet, despite knowledge about the importance of screenings, some studies suggest that nearly seven in 10 U.S. adults are behind on at least one cancer screening. The reasons for this include a lack of knowledge about when to be screened, access, and eligibility. At City of Hope, we offer breast and colon cancer screenings and early detection clinical trials at City of Hope Orange County Lennar Foundation Cancer Center in Irvine. We also offer screenings for other cancers, including pancreatic, thyroid and stomach cancers. Finding effective ways to screen a larger population and screen them more frequently remains a priority. Catching cancers earlier offers patients the best opportunity to beat cancer.

**What are the leadership qualities that we should prioritize to effectively address health care challenges on the horizon?**

**Kim Mikes, Hoag Orthopedic Institute:** As a physician-led and owned specialty hospital, HOI's leadership team is comprised of decision makers who view hospital operations through a clinical lens and through the eyes of our patients and their care experience. Our division chiefs in spine, joint replacement, sports medicine and shoulder ensure the care provided, staff training and the overall flow of clinical operations combine to provide superior patient outcomes. HOI was again selected as the highest rated hospital for patient experience by Press Ganey and received a 5-star Hospital Patient Survey Rating by CMS. These achievements stem from an unwavering commitment from our physician leaders and clinical leadership, who created a care model around patient experience.

**Dawn Maroney, Alignment Health:** We need leaders who are both visionary and practical, capable of balancing financial stewardship with a focus on patient-centered care. Essential qualities include resilience, adaptability, data-driven decision-making, and the ability to inspire collaborative innovation among clinical, operational, and policy teams. Most importantly, leaders must be willing to challenge the status quo while demonstrating empathy and integrity. It is crucial that they genuinely care.

**Phil Franks, Be Well OC:** To effectively navigate the complex health care environment, leaders must demonstrate collaboration, adaptability and innovation. The challenges we face are not easily solved, and uncovering solutions requires

strategic thinking, persistence and a willingness to take calculated risks. Be Well OC leadership has been working alongside OCHCA, CalOptima, the Board of Supervisors, and many others in the public and private sectors to serve the Orange County community and enhance the coordination of behavioral health care available to its residents. The work is equally challenging and rewarding. Each life impacted through our work and every family supported during difficult times reaffirms the purpose behind our mission. I encourage those who are stimulated by problem-solving and overcoming obstacles to pursue a career in the mental health care field.

**Annette M. Walker, City of Hope Orange**

**County:** Good leadership is fundamental to a health care organization's ability to deliver on its most important goal: serving patients. The best leaders are visionaries who have the ability to look ahead and prepare an organization for new conditions in the market and in the industry. To effectively address health care challenges, a leader must inspire his or her people to solve challenges with innovative thinking and make them want to be the best versions of themselves. Knowing how to appropriately deploy and conserve an organization's resources is vital. Finally, it's important for a leader to love their people. The average person spends more than one-third of their lifetime at work. As leaders, we have an obligation to take care of the people in our charge.

**Emmanuelle Schwartzman, Chapman**

**University:** Healthcare leaders must be adaptable, empathetic, and effective communicators, staying informed about the latest technology and treatment advancements. They should foster an environment that encourages new ideas while ensuring decisions are driven by their impact on patient care. Empathy is key in understanding patient needs and concerns, which guide better decision-making. Collaboration is essential, as leaders must promote teamwork among professionals to provide coordinated, holistic care and address complex healthcare challenges. Additionally, building partnerships outside traditional healthcare sectors can bring innovative solutions and support systems that improve patient outcomes. Leaders should maintain clear, transparent communication with all stakeholders. Ultimately, they must ask, "Will this benefit the patient?" to ensure every decision prioritizes patient health and well-being.

**Is truly personalized health care possible? If so, how do you make it a reality?**

**Stephen E. Thorne IV, PDS Health:** Personalized healthcare is achievable through advanced diagnostics that identify early disease indicators. Saliva diagnostics is highly effective due to its non-invasive nature and ability to detect specific biomarkers that identify risk for systemic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's, and potential pregnancy

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# DRIVEN BY **COMMUNITY**



At Chapman University, we're training the next generation of healthcare professionals to serve Orange County. From hands-on experience with local patients to groundbreaking research that addresses regional health challenges, our students are making a difference from day one.

# INSPIRED BY **CHAPMAN**



CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

[Chapman.edu](http://Chapman.edu)

## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



By meeting patients where they are, both physically and temporally, virtual healthcare improves overall access and promotes better continuity of care.

**Emmanuelle Schwartzman, PharmD, APh, CDCES, BCACP, FASHP**  
Professor & Chair,  
Department of Pharmacy  
Practice, School of Pharmacy  
Chapman University

complications. At PDS Health, these diagnostics are integrated into routine dental visits, allowing clinicians to detect potential health risks well before symptoms appear. Combined with digital health records that track key dental and medical information over time, clinicians can better understand each patient's health journey. It enables them to identify patterns, catch risks early and deliver more precise, personalized care. Patients benefit from improved overall health, fewer costly treatments and earlier intervention, ultimately leading to healthier, happier and longer lives.

**Dawn Maroney, Alignment Health:** Yes, personalized health care is achievable through the integration of data, technology, and clinical and social care delivery. It begins with investing in predictive analytics, incorporating social determinants of health, and creating care models that adjust to individual patient needs. Success requires proactive engagement, culturally competent care teams, and technology-enabled tools that help clinicians and patients make informed, individualized decisions.

A powerful example of bringing personalized health care to life can be found at Alignment Health. Our members benefit from Alignment's customized care model, which is powered by our Care Anywhere program and the purpose-built AVA™ technology. AVA® enhances clinical outcomes and empowers our care specialists to anticipate members' complex care needs, often before the need arises.

**Robert T. Braithwaite, Hoag:** Personalizing health care is not only possible, but essential. Through offerings like Hoag Compass, we help patients take a proactive approach to health care that goes beyond traditional primary care. The lifestyle wellness program offers expanded lab testing, nutrigenomic DNA testing, health coaching, mental health support and coordinated referrals to Hoag's renowned specialists. Patients get a data-driven, individualized care plan with actionable interventions. At Hoag Family Cancer Institute, our Precision Medicine Program utilizes genomics and genetics to create a personalized, more targeted treatment option for our patients. The goal is to tailor medication and dosage to minimize the risk of adverse reactions and improve the patient's quality of life.

**Annette M. Walker, City of Hope Orange County:** Personalized health care is not only possible, it's already a reality at City of Hope. We know cancer cannot be effectively treated with a one size fits all approach or the current standard of care. Accurate genomic testing and tailored treatment plans for each patient have revolutionized the approach to beating cancer. Targeted therapies, including immunotherapy and CAR T-cell therapy, have transformed our approach to care. These breakthroughs are saving lives, improving outcomes, and enhancing the patient experience. They are helping people get back to their lives before cancer faster. AI is also key to transforming the future of personalized health care.

### How can we address the rising utilization and medical expenses of Medicare Advantage?

**Dawn Maroney, Alignment Health:** To tackle the increasing utilization and medical expenses associated with Medicare Advantage, we should concentrate on three key areas: prevention, care coordination, and collaboration with provider partners who prioritize patient care over simply billing for services.

1. Prevention: Emphasizing preventive care and early intervention can significantly lower downstream costs. 2. Care Coordination: Implementing robust care management programs and utilizing technology-driven solutions can help minimize unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital admissions. 3. Value-Based Contracts: Establishing value-based contracts with aligned physician groups ensures that we compensate providers based on patient outcomes rather than the volume of services provided.

By focusing on these strategies, we can effectively address the challenges facing Medicare Advantage.

### Mobile/virtual health care offerings are growing in the community. Why is it important to have providers and services "on-the-go"?

**Emmanuelle Schwartzman, Chapman University:** Virtual and mobile healthcare services are vital for increasing accessibility and convenience, especially for preventative care and managing chronic conditions. Offering healthcare "on-the-go" allows patients to seek care without the barriers of transportation or long waits in crowded offices. Additionally, these services enable flexible scheduling, accommodating patients' busy work hours or personal commitments. By meeting patients where they are, both physically and temporally, virtual healthcare improves overall access and promotes better continuity of care. This approach is particularly beneficial for underserved communities or those with mobility challenges, ensuring that all patients receive the care they need, when and where they need it.

**Robert T. Braithwaite, Hoag:** Hoag is making it easier than ever for Orange County residents to access high-quality health care, on demand. Set to launch this summer, a new virtual care service will provide quick and convenient access to Hoag's trusted providers through an easy-to-use digital platform. With this virtual offering, patients will have direct access to on-demand care for urgent and acute care needs. Hoag is also leading the charge to bring health care directly into people's homes. Studies have shown that patients often recover faster from injury or surgery in their home, surrounded by family. Through Hoag at Home, we can provide the quality, compassionate care you expect from Hoag seamlessly and in the comfort of your home.

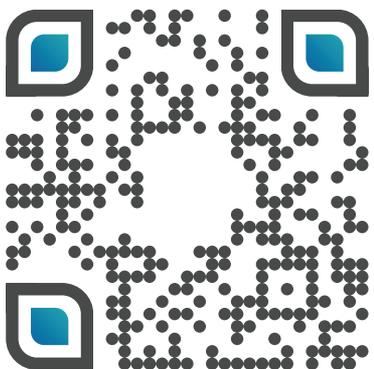
**Phil Franks, Be Well OC:** When someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, time is of the

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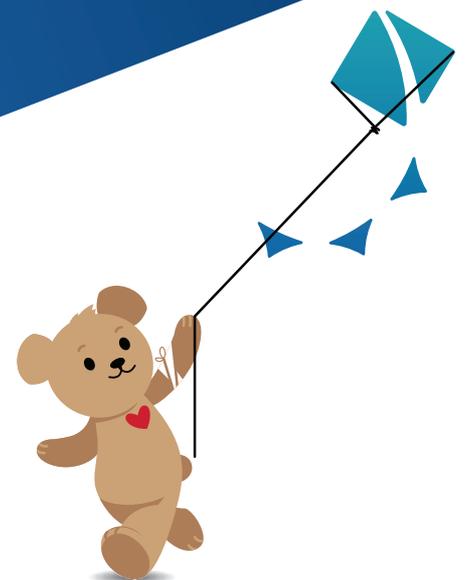


# Together, building healthier futures for children

Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) and Rady Children's Hospital San Diego have united under a combined nonprofit parent organization called Rady Children's Health to transform pediatric care, research and innovation.



Learn more at [radychildrens.org](https://radychildrens.org)



## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



The mental health care system is facing a perfect storm—demand has surged since the pandemic, but access remains limited due to workforce shortages and low reimbursement rates, often over 50% less than for physical health care.

**Kim Milstien**  
President  
CHOC Region, Rady  
Children's Health



Academic medicine is where innovation, research and clinical care converge.

**Chad T. Lefteris**  
President & CEO  
UCI Health

essence to ensure immediate support. It is transformative to deliver acute mental health care directly via a mobile program, meeting individuals where they are and when they need help most. Be Well's Mobile Response Program, with 16,755 client encounters in 2024 alone, continues to adapt and expand alongside the evolving needs of the community. Partnerships with cities offering dedicated mobile programs include Huntington Beach, Westminster, Garden Grove and Laguna Beach. UCI also has a mobile response team to serve its student and faculty populations. We are in discussions with other potential partners looking to leverage Be Well's expertise in crisis response to support individuals across sectors including hospitals, health care, and education.

**Barry Arbuckle, MemorialCare:** The convenience and effectiveness of virtual care helps remove financial or physical barriers to bring quality care to everyone in the communities we serve.

MemorialCare offers several virtual options including eConsults and at-home exam kits. eConsults allow primary care providers to request a specialist's expert opinion within 24 hours and we have found that more than 70% of the time, those eConsults replace the need for an in-person visit.

TytoCare virtual exam kits include adaptors to capture heart and lung sounds, body temperature, and images of the throat, ears, and skin. Patients perform a medical exam, and the results are sent directly to their doctor. This access can make a major difference for middle-of-the-night illnesses or for patients who can't afford to take time-off work.

#### What are the challenges in accessing quality mental health care?

**Dawn Maroney, Alignment Health:** Accessing quality mental health care is hindered by several challenges, including a shortage of qualified mental health professionals, reimbursement models that discourage integrated care, and the ongoing stigma surrounding mental health issues. These factors limit patients' access to necessary services.

Additionally, understanding mental health benefits can often be confusing for patients. To address these challenges, solutions should include expanding telehealth services, integrating behavioral health into primary care settings, improving reimbursement structures, and reducing cultural barriers through community partnerships.

**Phil Franks, Be Well OC:** Traditionally, individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis would go to an emergency room or find themselves engaged with law enforcement. However, emergency rooms aren't equipped to effectively address mental health crises. At Be Well OC, individuals can receive targeted

behavioral health or substance use urgent care and/or residential treatment on campus in Orange or through the Mobile Response Program in partner cities. To address community needs and improve access, we have been intentional in developing our new Irvine campus, which reflects our commitment to providing a full continuum of mental health and wellness services, from urgent care to residential treatment to community wellness support. The need is great, and we aim to serve all residents in need through our programs and services.

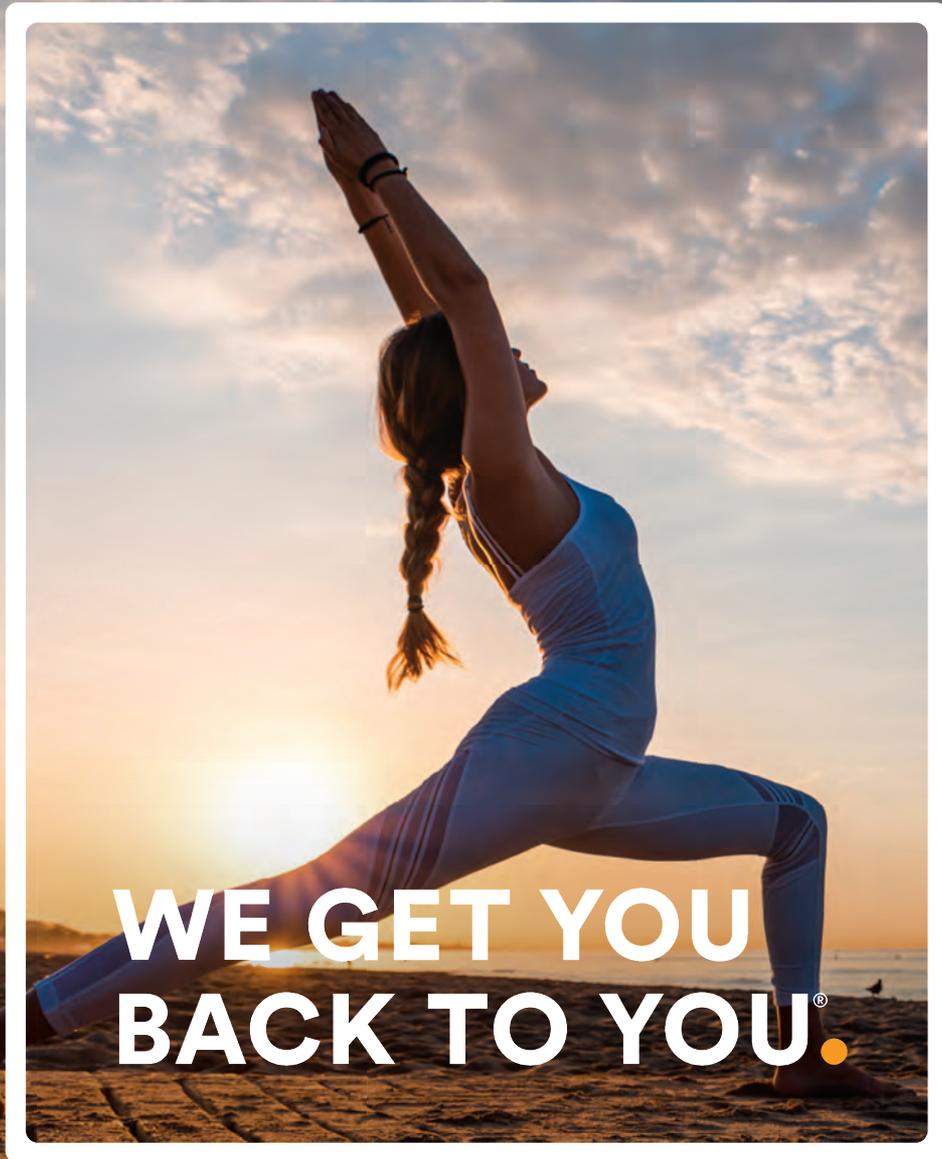
**Michael Hunn, CalOptima Health:** One of the major challenges in accessing quality mental health care is flexible access to care. Many individuals face barriers—such as long wait times, limited provider availability, transportation issues or scheduling conflicts—that make it difficult to get help when they need it most. To help address this, CalOptima Health offers our members access to TeleMed2U, a telehealth platform that delivers convenient, timely mental health care from the comfort of home. Additionally, we recently funded a free mental health telehealth platform through Hazel Health for all public school students in Orange County. By providing care available either in school or at home, this service ensures students can access the support they need—helping to reduce stigma, remove barriers and improve outcomes.

**Kim Milstien, CHOC Region, Rady Children's Health:** The mental health care system is facing a perfect storm—demand has surged since the pandemic, but access remains limited due to workforce shortages and low reimbursement rates, often over 50% less than for physical health care. At CHOC, we're meeting this challenge head-on. We've expanded training programs to grow the pediatric mental health workforce and focus on evidence-based, child-specific care. To improve access, we've developed shorter-term, targeted treatments and launched an outpatient stabilization clinic for children experiencing suicidal ideation. We've also embedded mental health clinicians in primary care offices and implemented broad screening to catch concerns early—when interventions are most effective. These efforts allow us to intervene sooner, provide timely care, and reduce the long-term impact of mental health conditions.

#### How does academic medicine drive advancements in healthcare, and what unique benefits does it offer patients compared to non-academic health systems?

**Chad T. Lefteris, UCI Health:** Academic medicine is where innovation, research and clinical care converge. At UCI Health, patients benefit from early access to breakthrough treatments, including clinical trials in cancer, neuroscience and cardiology. Our physicians are also researchers and educators, ensuring care is evidence-based and forward-looking. As the only academic health system based in Orange County

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**WE GET YOU  
BACK TO YOU.®**

HOAG ORTHOPEDIC INSTITUTE

# Orthopedics & Spine – It's All We Do

Of the 27 hospitals in Orange County, **only one** specializes exclusively in orthopedics and spine: **Hoag Orthopedic Institute.**

**#1 in the Western United States for Total Joint Replacements**

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**Hoag  
Orthopedic  
Institute.**



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## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



Our model connects dental and primary health care, enabling clinicians to identify health risks earlier and address oral health disparities that impact overall health outcomes.

**Stephen E. Thorne IV**  
**Founder & CEO**  
**PDS Health**

and powered by UC Irvine, we bring discoveries from the lab to the bedside, delivering care that's not only leading-edge, but also shaping the future of medicine.

**The healthcare workforce is facing challenges around burnout and turnover. How is your organization supporting its staff, and what strategies are in place to retain talent in an increasingly competitive job market?**

**Stephen E. Thorne IV, PDS Health:** PDS Health addresses burnout and turnover by prioritizing professional growth, team member well-being and purposeful engagement. Our education programs include tuition reimbursement, professional certifications, and, for eligible team members, our College Advancement Program, offering 100% tuition coverage for an undergraduate degree of their choice. PDS Health University provides specialized training in leadership, clinical excellence, business acumen, and personal development, along with complimentary continuing education to maintain clinical proficiency. Annual events like Smile Generation Serve Day create meaningful community outreach and volunteerism opportunities, building camaraderie and a sense of purpose. Together, these initiatives create a supportive workplace culture that enhances job satisfaction, encourages personal and professional growth, and helps retain talent in today's highly competitive healthcare job market.

**Barry Arbuckle, MemorialCare:** MemorialCare successfully improved our recruitment and retention practices over the last few years, focusing on creating an environment where employees feel they can build a future. We reinforce that through opportunities to expand skills, plot career trajectories, and access professional coaching. We also streamlined our recruitment process to provide a more efficient experience for applicants, hiring managers, and recruiters.

Each of our four hospitals customized programs based on specific employee needs. Some created shared governance councils to give nightshift caregivers a larger role in decision-making, while others implemented wellness and mentoring programs to retain and invest in valuable talent. We see this as a continual effort, but one that is rooted in creating a culture where our employees feel valued and that their voices matter.

**Kim Milstien, CHOC Region, Rady Children's Health:** At CHOC, we have concentrated our efforts on reducing stress and burnout, resulting in increased staff retention. We know that perceptions form quickly, so we've focused energy on improving the candidate experience to make new "Defenders of Childhood" feel welcomed, energized, supported and valued from the very start. Beyond ongoing investments in our people — such as annual merit increases and salary reviews ensuring competitive pay, new flexible work options, and enhancements to growth, development and mentorship programs — we

listen to our employees to learn how we can improve. Their feedback has informed numerous enhancements, including the establishment of respite rooms that provide calming rejuvenation spaces, and the recruitment of a full-time, onsite therapist to provide no-cost counseling for employees and physicians.

**What steps is your organization taking to address health disparities and improve access to healthcare for underserved populations in Southern California? What initiatives have been the most successful in improving health equity?**

**Stephen E. Thorne IV, PDS Health:** PDS Health is committed to closing gaps in care by addressing health disparities through an integrated, patient-centered approach. Our model connects dental and primary health care, enabling clinicians to identify health risks earlier and address oral health disparities that impact overall health outcomes. We actively advocate for expanding access to preventive and diagnostic dental services, including efforts to secure Medicare dental coverage for seniors, reducing financial barriers to care and supporting earlier, more affordable treatment. Additionally, we collaborate with nonprofit organizations to address broader social determinants of health by providing millions of dollars annually in donated dental services and patient education. These efforts ensure that underserved populations receive timely, comprehensive care that leads to better long-term outcomes and advances health equity for vulnerable communities.

**Dawn Maroney, Alignment Health:** At Alignment, we focus on investing in community partnerships, culturally tailored outreach efforts, and bilingual care navigation services. We have developed benefits that address key issues, including food insecurity, transportation, and social isolation. Some of our most successful initiatives include community health worker programs, targeted outreach in high-risk ZIP codes, and increasing provider diversity to better reflect the populations we serve.

**Payman Roshan, Kaiser Permanente Orange County:** Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to enhancing health conditions and promoting equity within communities by addressing social determinants of health and offering care and services tailored to individual needs. In Orange County, we support equity-focused initiatives like the Black Infant Health Program to address health disparities affecting Black families, aiming to reduce high rates of pre-term births, low birth weights, and infant mortality. Additionally, we support the Street Care Initiative, a project by Lestonnac Free Clinic that offers medical services to unhoused populations, providing free primary care, health screenings, and support for substance use disorders to vulnerable individuals. Our community health partnerships address factors affecting health, including access to healthcare, food and nutrition security, housing needs, mental health, and economic

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# A NEW ERA OF AGING.

**DAWN MARONEY**

President, Alignment Health

We're Alignment Health, and senior health care is all we do. We believe seniors deserve better health care, and we empower seniors to take control of their health so they can spend time doing what they love.

Alignment Health is dedicated to inspiring and serving seniors, fueled by technology and empathy. We strive every day to change Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans for the better.

**At Alignment Health, we are champions of aging well.**

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## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



Surgical intervention is not always the answer to orthopedic pain and limited mobility. Getting patients back to doing the things they love is the ultimate goal.

**Kim Mikes**  
CEO

**Hoag Orthopedic Institute**

opportunities, with the goal of expanding healthcare access and improving health equity across various Orange County communities.

**Michael Hunn, CalOptima Health:** CalOptima Health is proud to release our inaugural Health Equity Report, showcasing meaningful progress in addressing health disparities across Orange County. Over the past year, we developed a Social Determinants of Health Assessment tool to better understand and address the non-medical factors influencing our members' well-being. We also launched a targeted call campaign to help close gaps in well-care visits and allocated \$50 million to a Provider Workforce Development Initiative aimed at strengthening our county's health care workforce and improving access to care. Our commitment to health equity is the foundation of our work. We are focused on reducing health disparities, advancing initiatives through advocacy, partnerships, and continuous quality improvement, delivering equitable, culturally responsive, and linguistically accessible care, and driving change through data-informed strategies.

**Chad T. Lefteris, UCI Health:** UCI Health addresses health disparities through targeted outreach, research and partnerships. Our Latinx Diabetes Initiative supports a community disproportionately impacted by chronic disease. We've expanded partnerships with Federally Qualified Health Centers to extend access to primary and specialty care. We also operate Orange County's only Level 1 geriatric emergency department, improving outcomes for older adults. Through direct investments, grant-supported outreach, and philanthropic support, we're increasing diversity in clinical trials to ensure equitable access to leading-edge care.

**Kim Milstien, CHOC Region, Rady Children's Health:** Our organization addresses health disparities through a three-part approach: identification, intervention, and collaboration. We developed a pediatric-specific Social Needs Assessment Tool—a brief digital questionnaire used across primary care, specialty clinics, the hospital, and emergency department—to identify families at risk due to food insecurity, housing instability, transportation barriers, and more. When needs are identified, our social services team responds within 24 hours to connect families with resources. We partner with community-based organizations to ensure a closed-loop referral system, providing comprehensive support. This model has proven highly effective in improving health equity and access for underserved populations across Southern California.

**What role does preventive care play in your organization's approach to improving long-term patient health and reducing costs?**

**Kim Mikes, Hoag Orthopedic Institute:** HOI has embraced preventive care in all parts of our operation. Most back or spine pain, for example, goes away on its own in a few weeks; not all back or spine pain needs surgery. Our surgeons established HOI's 'Back to You' nonoperative spine

and back program to incorporate exercise, yoga, diet, pain management, acupuncture and cognitive therapy to help patients recover from acute and chronic back pain. At HOI, our physicians embrace the fact that many patients will benefit from non-surgical treatments. Surgical intervention is not always the answer to orthopedic pain and limited mobility. Getting patients back to doing the things they love is the ultimate goal.

**Stephen E. Thorne IV, PDS Health:** Preventive care is central to PDS Health's approach, focusing on educating patients about the connection between oral and overall health, known as the Mouth-Body Connection®. Regular dental visits include screenings that identify early warning signs of systemic conditions, such as inflammation and collagen breakdown in the mouth. These screenings serve as indicators of potential health issues like heart disease, diabetes and other chronic conditions. In addition, through integrated dental and medical records, clinicians can intervene early to prevent disease progression, ultimately reducing long-term healthcare costs. By addressing both oral and systemic health together, we improve outcomes, empower patients to take charge of their health, and reduce the burden of preventable diseases.

**Kim Milstien, CHOC Region, Rady Children's Health:** Preventive care is central to our approach for improving long-term health and reducing costs. We proactively reach out to at-risk children who are overdue for vaccines or well visits, and we screen early for developmental delays, adverse childhood experiences, depression, and autism—intervening when outcomes can be most effective. Our team also brings services directly into the community, offering injury prevention education and supporting school WellSpaces that promote mental health and connect students to care. With many Orange County children in managed care, coordinated prevention is essential to both their well-being and the sustainability of our model. This comprehensive approach strengthens health outcomes across physical, emotional, social, and academic domains.

**How is your organization using patient data and insights to drive more proactive, personalized, and effective care?**

**Kim Mikes, Hoag Orthopedic Institute:** At Hoag Orthopedic Institute, data drives our world. Innovations in patient care, surgery, research and training all stem from our rigorous collection, management and collective decision-making using data. HOI's superior clinical outcomes in surgical care are rooted in our commitment to studying and analyzing data; that data, reviewed by our performance improvement team regularly, results in delivering more effective care for every patient. We take pride in sharing our data, insights and measurements with our patients, physicians and stakeholders through our annually published Outcomes Report. We believe data transparency related to our performance allows patients to be better informed, educated and armed with questions when making decisions about their care.

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# HOPE HAPPENS HERE.



## Be Well OC New Irvine Campus to Expand Care in 2025

The mission of Be Well OC is to enhance the behavioral health care system for all Orange County residents through transformational public and private partnerships.

With the opening of our second campus in Irvine, we are thoughtfully increasing access to a full continuum of mental health, substance use disorder, and wellness services for children, adolescents, adults, and pregnant women and their children in Orange County.

Learn more at  
[BeWellOC.org](https://BeWellOC.org)

Thank you to our public and private partners.

Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris

CalOptima Health

Congressman Lou Correa

Hoag

Kaiser Permanente

MemorialCare

Providence Health

The Cities of Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, Laguna Beach, and Westminster

The County of Orange

University of California at Irvine

Over 100 individual, family, foundation, corporate and community donors

## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



Patient data and updated science helps us develop our strategic approach to patient care, both upstream and downstream.

**Payman Roshan**  
Senior Vice President &  
Area Manager  
Kaiser Permanente  
Orange County



Orange County has the potential to serve as a model for how communities can unite to ensure optimal mental health and wellness for all.

**Phil Franks**  
CEO  
Be Well OC

**Stephen E. Thorne IV, PDS Health:** PDS Health practices use integrated health records that combine medical and dental histories to give clinicians a complete view of each patient's long-term health patterns. This comprehensive data allows for more precise, personalized care by identifying potential health risks early and tailoring interventions accordingly. Saliva screenings and diagnostics to go a step further by detecting inflammatory markers and analyzing genetic risk factors that influence an individual's susceptibility to systemic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. This genotype information provides a deeper understanding of a patient's unique health profile, enabling clinicians to predict, prevent and manage disease progression effectively. Leveraging these insights leads to earlier interventions, fewer costly treatments and better long-term outcomes — resulting in more effective, personalized care that improves overall patient health.

**Payman Roshan, Kaiser Permanente Orange County:** Patient data and updated science helps us develop our strategic approach to patient care, both upstream and downstream. Performance metrics from both a nursing and provider standpoint drive improved performance and therefore lives saved. For instance, we celebrate great catches — such as when a service representative convinces a patient to schedule a mammogram, and a cancer is found in a less aggressive stage. Furthermore, we have a patient advisory council that provides us feedback on what is working well and what needs improvement from a care delivery standpoint. In many instances, we bring these advisors in during the developmental stage of workflow.

**Barry Arbuckle, MemorialCare:** Data allows us to provide more personalized care that meets the specific needs of the communities we serve. Our care management team can identify high-risk or rising-risk patients to provide more proactive treatment across the care continuum.

For example, our data showed a specific population struggling with blood pressure control due to limitations in monitoring. We delivered blood pressure monitors to patients with uncontrolled hypertension at home so that they could better track and intervene, which led to improved outcomes. Similarly, MemorialCare pioneered an initiative for patients with complex diabetes. Our multidisciplinary team of pharmacists, dietitians and case managers partnered with primary care providers to develop lifestyle changes, medication management and advanced education that improved patients' A1C levels and helped them manage related conditions.

**Orange County continues to grapple with health care and social services for people experiencing homelessness. What resources and programs will your organization contribute to address health care for the homeless?**

**Michael Hunn, CalOptima Health:** CalOptima Health's Street Medicine Program brings primary care and social services directly to individuals experiencing homelessness in four cities: Garden Grove, Costa Mesa, Anaheim, and Santa Ana. This effort reflects our continued commitment to meeting people where they are—delivering compassionate, accessible care on the streets of our communities. By leveraging funds from the state's Housing and Homelessness Incentive Program, we have been able to launch these vital services with a focus on long-term sustainability. This initiative not only addresses immediate health needs but also connects individuals to the broader support systems that can help them transition to stable housing and improved well-being. Since the program's launch in 2023, more than 500 members have received coordinated health care, behavioral health and social services.

**Orange County is experiencing an increased incidence of cancer among adults at younger ages. How is your organization combatting cancer in our community?**

**Chad T. Lefteris, UCI Health:** UCI Health and UC Irvine School of Medicine cancer experts were among the first to highlight this increase, especially in colon cancer, one of the most preventable cancers. UCI Health has increased screening and has targeted Lynch syndrome, one of the most prevalent and underdiagnosed hereditary conditions that leads to a higher risk of colon cancer. The increasing need to treat these and all cancers was the driving force behind the new Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer and Ambulatory Care building that opened last year at the \$1.3 billion UCI Health — Irvine medical campus. This state-of-the-art facility triples the space available for cancer care in the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center based in Orange County. In addition, the UCI Health Family Health Centers are participating in CalOptima's inaugural program to increase cancer screening in underserved communities, further meeting our objectives to expand access to care across the community.

**What are the barriers to healthcare access, and how can we overcome them?**

**Phil Franks, Be Well OC:** Families are facing increasing challenges related to mental health and substance use disorders, often with devastating catastrophes. Orange County has the potential to serve as a model for how communities can unite to ensure optimal mental health and wellness for all. Our goal has always been to collaborate alongside partners to build a robust system of care that addresses gaps in the current continuum and expands access to essential mental health and wellness services for all OC residents. While CalOptima and County health care recipients have a well-defined system of care, privately insured individuals struggle to gain access to the behavioral health care they need. BWOC is developing new private partnerships to ensure

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# Oral Health Means Better Health

PDS Health supports clinicians across the country in delivering comprehensive, whole-person care. We provide the business services, clinical education, and advanced, proven technologies that enable dental and medical professionals to focus on what matters most — creating healthier, happier patients.

Our work goes beyond traditional practice support. We're advancing dental-medical integration by connecting oral health and primary care, improving how providers collaborate, detect disease early, and guide patients toward better outcomes. Through integrated electronic health records, predictive insights, and innovative care models, we're shaping a future where care is preventive, personalized and seamlessly connected.

Today, we serve over 1,000 practices and more than 4,600 clinicians nationwide. After 30 years of service and growth, we're just getting started.



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## HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



Many people face challenges accessing the care they need — whether due to lack of transportation, language barriers, or unmet social needs.

**Michael Hunn**  
CEO  
CalOptima Health

behavioral health services are available to all those in need.

**Chad T. Lefteris, UCI Health:** Barriers like transportation, cost and limited local access prevent patients from receiving timely care. UCI Health is meeting patients where they are — literally — through partnerships with Dispatch Health and Sprinter Health that provide in-home urgent and preventive care. We're also growing our digital health capabilities and expanding care in underserved communities. Whether through virtual visits, house calls, or targeted programs, we're breaking down access barriers with creative, community-driven solutions.

**Michael Hunn, CalOptima Health:** Many people face challenges accessing the care they need — whether due to lack of transportation, language barriers, or unmet social needs. At CalOptima Health, we are committed to removing these barriers by addressing social determinants of health, such as housing instability and food insecurity, which impact overall well-being. To improve access, we offer transportation services to medical appointments, helping members get to the care they need. We also provide flexible care options, including telehealth, so members can connect with providers from home. Additionally, interpreter services are available to ensure communication in a member's preferred language. Our goal is to deliver equitable, preventive-focused care that supports the whole person and meets members where they are.

**Emmanuelle Schwartzman, Chapman University:** Barriers to healthcare access include high costs, lack of or inadequate insurance, language and cultural differences, and low health literacy. High out-of-pocket expenses often prevent patients from seeking care until issues become acute and costly. Promoting preventative care and outreach programs can help reduce long-term costs. Utilizing healthcare professionals to the fullest, especially pharmacists, can improve primary care access and address gaps. Language and cultural differences also limit access, but providing translation services and culturally competent care can help bridge these gaps. Additionally, low health literacy makes it difficult for many patients to understand their options or navigate the system effectively. Improving patient education, outreach, and support services can empower patients and enhance overall access to care.

**As sustainability becomes a greater priority in healthcare, what steps are being taken to create more environmentally friendly facilities and reduce the carbon footprint of hospital operations?**

**Phil Franks, Be Well OC:** Be Well's Irvine Campus, opening this summer, is intentionally

designed to support recovery. Its low density, modern, and inviting design incorporates several sustainability measures while seamlessly integrating indoor and outdoor spaces. All three buildings are pursuing LEED certification, a globally recognized way to measure and certify a building's sustainability. The campus will include eco-conscious features, including bicycle accommodations, infrastructure for 24 EV charging stations, and outdoor spaces with native landscaping and horticultural therapy programs. Water-efficient landscaping will use 100% recycled water, while the selection of furniture and building materials prioritizes human and environmental health. Site preparation prioritized material reuse, salvaging 80% of lumber and repurposing 100% of concrete and asphalt. These initiatives reflect Be Well's dedication to a healthier, more sustainable future for Orange County.

**Chad T. Lefteris, UCI Health:** Sustainability is built into the growth strategy of UCI Health and has been a guiding principle at UC Irvine for decades. Our new UCI Health — Irvine medical campus includes an all-electric central utility plant to reduce emissions and LEED-certified building design to maximize energy efficiency while protecting the vital neighboring marsh. When the new inpatient hospital opens in Irvine later this year, it will be only the sixth LEED Platinum inpatient facility in the county and the first in Orange County. We're also reducing operating room emissions and waste through "Greening the OR" initiatives. These efforts reflect our belief that delivering excellent healthcare goes hand-in-hand with preserving the health of our communities and the environment.

**How can patients and local communities have a bigger voice in shaping the healthcare system?**

**Emmanuelle Schwartzman, Chapman University:** Patients and local communities can shape the healthcare system by actively engaging in public policy and advocating for reforms through forums and interactions with legislators. Supporting bills which affect their care such as Senate Bill 40, a legislative bill aimed at expanding healthcare coverage for insulin, ensuring that individuals with diabetes have access to essential medication is one such example. Collaborating with healthcare entities on community-driven health programs can address specific local health challenges and prioritize the most pressing issues. Additionally, through education and advocacy, communities can better understand their healthcare rights and options, empowering them to demand improved care and services. These collective efforts enable communities to play a significant role in shaping a more responsive and equitable healthcare system.