

FORBES > INNOVATION

The CEO's Blueprint: Setting The Direction For The Smart Hospital



Narinder Singh Forbes Councils Member
Forbes Technology Council COUNCIL POST | Membership (Fee-Based)



Sep 26, 2024, 07:15am EDT

Narinder Singh is the CEO of LookDeep Health, a leader in using VisionAI to help nurses & doctors in hospitals better care for patients.



GETTY

We've long strived to make the world around us smarter—smart vacuums, homes, cities and even a smarter planet. However, we've often mistaken connectivity for intelligence. We relied on connectivity because genuine artificial intelligence (AI) was beyond our reach.

With the emergence of AI-capable systems, we must now match our ambition with execution. Think of our eyes and ears—they're crucial for sensing the world, but they aren't what makes us intelligent. They gather data, but it's the brain that processes and interprets this information. Similarly, in hospitals, the leap to becoming truly smart comes from AI that senses and shares context with the care team.

AI in the smart hospital helps doctors and nurses instantly apply their expertise to the right patients at the right time. If successful, it should unleash new care models and reorganize key financial pillars of all acute care.

This level of change surpasses even the challenges of implementing a new electronic health record system. Such a transformative shift must be driven by the highest levels of leadership. The goal of the smart hospital aligns directly with the CEO's core mission: to deliver continuously improved care while maintaining a sustainable financial model. For rural hospitals facing potential closure, the more urgent goal is to simply maintain the same level of care at a lower cost.

MORE FOR YOU

Hurricane Helene Makes Landfall In Florida As Category 4 Storm—Here's What To Know



Today's NYT Mini Crossword Clues And Answers For Friday, September 27



Trump And Zelensky Will Meet Friday At Trump Tower After Trading Criticisms



A Grand Vision Demands Grand Results

Dr. Fei-Fei Li, one of the pioneers in computer vision, laid out [an ambitious vision for the ambient sensing hospital more than six years ago](#) that recognized video as a universal adapter for sensing. If we can see what's happening, why couldn't a computer? Today, the technology to make that more than research is available to us.

Imagine a system that, in seconds, prevents a patient from falling by recognizing their attempt to get out of bed, prompts a sedentary patient to be turned to prevent pressure injuries and identifies changes in medication responses. These aren't futuristic fantasies—they're just the beginning of how AI can help patients *today*.

With such ambitious goals, we need grounded, actionable metrics to guide us. The key question is: Does this innovation truly bend the cost curve in healthcare delivery? Hospital CEOs historically haven't had Blockbuster versus Netflix levels of dramatic technology innovation choices to contend with. However, CEOs and their trusted CIOs can learn from analogous innovations in other industries to pragmatically steer through the hype and opportunity of smart hospitals.

Lessons From Other Industries

1. Connectivity And Openness As A Foundation

Smart homes started as a battle between legacy providers, Apple and Google. We quickly learned it was about ecosystems rather than individual initiatives. Even these behemoths can't provide the best lights, blinds, thermostats, appliances, cameras, doorbells and networks. They provided solutions where they could be the best and then seamlessly integrated dozens of others.

Successful platform-level shifts, including this one, have rarely been driven by a centralized standard or top-down mandate. We've even seen this in healthcare—[where connectivity has been legislated](#)—how well-intentioned centralized efforts fall short.

Your CIOs must demand openness in their solutions. If enough others follow suit, you've created the most powerful force in change—the free market.

2. The Power Of Cloud Computing And The Role Of Evidence

In cloud computing, Salesforce, Amazon and Google provided services that initially were thought of as only for small and medium businesses (SMBs). Over time, they discovered that nearly every desirable attribute—ease of use, flexibility, rate of innovation and even scale—favored this new model.

Yet, it wasn't a battle of visionaries or the power of persuasion regarding these attributes that led to the cloud takeover. It was simple, ruthless math. Customers saw clear financial value, and they embraced what worked. Only much later, when the evidence became undeniable, did companies make proactive, top-down, business-defining shifts toward this new computing model.

Hospitals should also follow evidence, not just broad visions from industry luminaries. In other words, show demonstrable value step by step. Only once there's clear, transparent evidence of bending the cost curve systemically should it become a top-down strategy.

3. Ambient Sensing Over The API

In the quest for smarter hospitals, the temptation is that only the newest equipment can deliver the innovation you need. For example, today, you can buy the latest beds that report when someone is in them, compression stockings that tell you their usage and even food trays that tell you what people have eaten.

Instead, hospitals can take a lesson from smart cities and homes where ambient sensing—using AI to observe and understand environments without direct integration—has proven to be a game-changer. In self-driving cars, we quickly realized it was never going to be practical to put sensors in roads, traffic signals and cars. So, we built AI that could sense the world around us.

AI-powered cameras as sensors can enable hospitals to skip landlines and go straight to cellular in how they create awareness of what's happening with their patients. There's a place for smart devices in specific circumstances, but relying on them to create a smart hospital is a dramatically more expensive and riskier strategy.

The Smarter Future Of Healthcare

Advanced navigation systems in cars provide drivers with real-time information to make safer, more informed decisions. AI in healthcare is about extending our ability to see, sense and understand everything happening with patients.

In the journey toward smart hospitals, it's crucial to address the real fears patients have. According to the 2024 Hospital AI Patient Survey, sponsored by LookDeep, [one of the biggest concerns patients have](#) is that AI will result in less time with doctors and nurses. However, a smart hospital—enhanced by AI—shouldn't mean less human interaction. Instead, it guarantees that your compassionate nurse or doctor arrives at precisely the right moment, with exactly the right context, words or actions.

This is healthcare's future: evidence-driven, smart, responsive and compassionate—where CEOs and their leadership teams shift from just caretakers to the architects of a new era in patient care.

[Forbes Technology Council](#) is an invitation-only community for world-class CIOs, CTOs and technology executives. [Do I qualify?](#)

Follow me on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#). Check out my [website](#).



Narinder Singh

Narinder Singh is the CEO of [LookDeep Health](#), a leader in using VisionAI to help nurses & doctors in hospitals better care for patients. Read Narinder Singh's full executive profile [here](#).

Editorial Standards

Forbes Accolades