

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE

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



Beth Andersen
President
Anthem Blue Cross



Kristen Cerf
President & Chief Executive Officer
Blue Shield of California
Promise Health Plan



Jane Finley
*Senior Vice President
& Area Manager*
Kaiser Permanente



Patrick Frias
President & Chief Executive Officer
Rady Children's Hospital



Christopher D. Howard
President & Chief Executive Officer
Sharp HealthCare



David S. Karow, MD, PhD
*President & Chief of Performance
Medicine and Medical Imaging*
Human Longevity



Brett McClain
*Executive Vice President
& Chief Operating Officer*
Sharp HealthCare



HEALTHCARE

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Anthem Blue Cross

Anthem Blue Cross has been providing Californians with access to high-quality, affordable, whole person care since 1939. The Thousand Oaks-based health plan serves more than 8.6 million members statewide, including 1.2 million Medi-Cal members, and offers one of California's largest provider networks with more than 65,000 physicians across the state. Anthem Blue Cross and Anthem Blue Cross Life and Health Insurance Company are independent licensees of the Blue Cross Association. ©ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross Association. Also follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AnthemBC_News](https://twitter.com/AnthemBC_News) or on Facebook at [Facebook.com/AnthemBlueCrossCA](https://facebook.com/AnthemBlueCrossCA).



Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan

Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan is a managed care organization, wholly owned by Blue Shield of California, offering Medi-Cal, Cal MediConnect, Medicare Advantage HMO, and Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans. It is led by healthcare professionals with a "members-first" philosophy and committed to building a quality network of providers and partnering with community organizations for more than 400,000 members. For more news about Blue Shield of California, please visit www.news.blueshieldca.com. Or follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook.



Human Longevity

Human Longevity, Inc. (HLI) is the genomics-based, health intelligence company empowering proactive healthcare and enabling a life better lived. HLI combines one of the largest databases of genomic and phenotypic data with machine learning to drive discoveries. HLI's business focus includes the Health Nucleus, a genomic-powered, clinical research center which uses whole genome sequencing analysis, advanced digital imaging and innovative machine learning, along with curated personal health information, to deliver the most complete picture of individual health and wellness.

The Health Nucleus evaluation provides an unprecedented quantitative health assessment designed to explore individual risks of cardiovascular disease, cancer, neurological disease, trauma and/or degradation and metabolic health status. The Health Nucleus is designed for individuals to assess their health status, take preventative and proactive actions to mitigate disease risk, increase their healthy lifespan and maximize peak performance.



Kaiser Permanente

At Kaiser Permanente, San Diegans are supported by our top doctors, leading workforce health programs, and award-winning disease management. With more than 9,600 staff and more than 1,430 physicians, we offer a full range of services at 30 facilities throughout the county, including the Kaiser Permanente Zion Medical Center and the San Diego Medical Center in Kearny Mesa.

Our unparalleled size and scale, combined with the industry's leading electronic health record system, allows us to deliver high quality, fully integrated care.

For more than 50 years, we have brought high quality, affordable care to San Diegans when and where they need it. Our Mobile Health Vehicle can deliver care to any community throughout the county. Our partnership with retail giant Target provides the opportunity to seek medical care at convenient locations. Kaiser Permanente members have access to care through video and tele-health appointments with a physician and can also download our mobile app to make appointments, contact their physician, view their lab results, find our locations, and research health and wellness topics — anytime, anywhere.



Rady Children's Hospital San Diego

Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego is a 505-bed pediatric care facility providing the largest source of comprehensive pediatric medical services in San Diego, southern Riverside and Imperial counties. Rady Children's is the only hospital in the San Diego area dedicated exclusively to pediatric healthcare and is the region's only designated pediatric trauma center. In June 2019, U.S. News & World Report ranked Rady Children's among the best children's hospitals in the nation in all ten pediatric specialties the magazine surveyed. Rady Children's is a nonprofit organization that relies on donations to support its mission. For more information, visit www.rchsd.org



Sharp HealthCare

Sharp HealthCare has been widely acclaimed for its commitment to transform the health care experience for patients, physicians and staff through an organization-wide performance improvement initiative called The Sharp Experience. Under this initiative, Sharp's vision is to be recognized by employees, physicians, patients, volunteers and the community as the best place to work, best place to practice medicine, and best place to receive care.

Sharp is recognized for clinical excellence in cardiac, cancer, multi-organ transplantation, orthopedics, rehabilitation, behavioral health, women's health, home health and hospice services. The Sharp system includes four acute-care hospitals, three specialty hospitals, three affiliated medical groups, a health plan, and numerous outpatient facilities and programs. To learn more about Sharp, visit Sharp Health News.





WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

At Kaiser Permanente, we don't see health as an industry. We see it as a cause. And one that we very much believe in. During this extraordinary time we are especially thankful to the heroism of our frontline workers. And, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of our outstanding care teams and individuals who deliver on the Kaiser Permanente mission each day to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We are here to help you thrive. Learn more at kp.org.

HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE



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Although COVID-19 presented unforeseen challenges, Kaiser Permanente staff and physicians had trained for a pandemic event many times, and were ready.

Jane Finley
Senior Vice President & Area Manager
Kaiser Permanente



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Our goal was to effectively manage the expected surge of patients as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and through Teladoc [our telemedicine provider] we were able to aggressively expand our provider panels to handle the volume.

Kristen Cerf
President & Chief Executive Officer
Blue Shield of California
Promise Health Plan

In short, how has your organization responded to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Jane Finley, Kaiser Permanente:

San Diego is blessed with a strong network of health care providers. Each year we train for large-scale emergencies like earthquakes, wildfires, and yes, pandemics. Although COVID-19 presented unforeseen challenges, Kaiser Permanente staff and physicians had trained for a pandemic event many times, and were ready. We followed CDC and County Health Department guidance, as we cared for those who were ill with COVID-19, protected those who weren't, and continued to provide routine and emergency care to our San Diego patients. Our Hospital Command Center was activated on Feb. 24 to coordinate the response at our two hospitals and 28 medical offices. To ensure the safety of our staff and physicians, we procured and preserved personal protective equipment (PPE). We secured additional beds and equipment in the event of a surge. We implemented visitation and screening policies for those who entered our facilities; established testing locations; and created the necessary workflows to assess, treat and monitor COVID-19 patients. To support social distancing and the county's stay at home order, we consolidated services at certain medical offices, as we markedly expanded the availability of virtual care for our patients. The situation often changed daily. And our staff and physicians responded. As we look to the future, we will continue to work alongside local health officials to respond accordingly as the pandemic evolves.

Patrick Frias, Rady Children's Hospital:

Our number one priority has been to make sure we uphold our mission and support our team – day in and day out – to deliver on that mission. While we are fortunate that only a small number of children have required hospitalization due to COVID-19, as one of the large health systems in the community, we strive to do our part by working closely with our health care partners, sharing PPE, conducting research testing, opening up our beds to young adults and partnering to develop 3-D printed swabs and face shields. In the spirit of “mission first, people always,” Rady Children's has developed programs to support our staff through this pandemic and ensure we will always be here to provide care.

Christopher D. Howard, Sharp HealthCare:

Earlier this year when the world began to learn more about COVID-19, Sharp HealthCare's Highly Infectious Disease Committee was prepared to help us meet the challenge. The committee was already managing Sharp HealthCare's response to the flu outbreak occurring within San Diego. Focus quickly shifted to COVID-19 as the virus spread throughout our community, with the committee meeting every morning at 7 a.m. in our command center to plan and implement Sharp's response to the pandemic. All aspects of our response – from delivering patient care to protecting our caregivers – are coordinated in these daily meetings, which involve infectious disease specialists, nursing leaders, physicians, experts in supply chain, safety officers and information technology leaders, to name a few.

David S. Karow, MD, PhD, Human Longevity:
It is our strong belief at Human Longevity Inc.

that more testing will help quell the coronavirus pandemic. In conjunction with San Diego-based Genalyte, we are now offering COVID-19 antibody testing at the Health Nucleus in La Jolla to all of our clients and their adult family members.

The Health Nucleus is a precision health center. In addition to our private client suites we have implemented additional protections for our clients and our staff. Our clients are surveyed prior to their appointment and have their temperature checked when they arrive. We are limiting the number of our guests to only a few per day and all of our client rooms and imaging suites are disinfected between client visits every day.

Patients are growing more familiar and comfortable with virtual care or telemedicine. How is your organization learning from this and enhancing its delivery of health care?

Kristen Cerf, Blue Shield:

Blue Shield's and Blue Shield Promise's members turned to virtual doctor visits by the thousands. Last month, members logged more than 21,000 visits over a 17-day stretch with Teladoc Health, the telemedicine provider for Blue Shield. This represents approximately six times the recent historical volume, which averaged about 7,000 to 8,000 virtual visits per month. My colleagues have worked quickly to absorb the rush, recruiting more doctors to take care of our members. Our goal was to effectively manage the expected surge of patients as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and through Teladoc we were able to aggressively expand our provider panels to handle the volume. We are now seeing wait times at 5-10 minutes to see a provider.

Jane Finley, Kaiser Permanente:

Kaiser Permanente San Diego began providing virtual care in 2009 when we launched our TeleDerm program. Over the last decade our virtual care services have expanded to include other specialty care areas, as well as Primary Care. Before COVID-19, Kaiser Permanente provided about 35,000 virtual visits per month to San Diegans. Last month, the number was nearly 133,000. Approximately 86% of all outpatient visits are currently being provided by phone or video. The patient feedback on virtual visits is overwhelmingly positive. As we prepare for the county to “reopen,” we anticipate many of our patients who have experienced virtual care appointments will seek them again in the future. In-person visits are not going away, however, and our team is ready to welcome back patients who prefer or need an in-person appointment. Like telehealth appointments, mail order prescriptions have increased significantly – almost doubling – since the beginning of COVID-19. Kaiser Permanente members can order prescriptions by phone, online, or through the app. We expect that trend to continue.

Christopher D. Howard, Sharp HealthCare:

We are seeing dramatic growth in the area of telemedicine across our system. Telehealth visits at Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group locations have skyrocketed from just over 200 per month prior to the pandemic to more than 10,000 a month currently. Sharp Community Medical Group is also seeing a dramatic increase in telehealth. Our big takeaway here is that more

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focusing on the
future together.

Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan is proud to sponsor the San Diego Business Journal Healthcare Roundtable.



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One positive development from this sudden migration to telemedicine is it may allow health systems to establish an even broader regional, national and international presence.

Patrick Frias
President & Chief Executive Officer
Rady Children's Hospital



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The use of telehealth has increased dramatically and shown us a clear path to scaling cost-effective ways for the safe delivery of care to those who need it.

Beth Andersen
President
Anthem Blue Cross

than ever before, our patients are very satisfied in receiving care via technology instead of in person. It would seem the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for a fast-forward to the future of telemedicine, which is a positive development for health care overall.

David S. Karow, MD, PhD, Human Longevity:

We have seen an explosion of tools that together will further advance precision health and personalized medicine. HLI has clients visit us from all over the world for testing. With COVID we have increased our telemedicine consultations in addition to onsite testing. We have also rolled out our Longevity service, 100 Plus, for patients that are looking for concierge and longevity care delivered virtually.

With our partners we are making our telemedicine platform more engaging. We are delivering our clients their personalized health reports remotely, from advanced imaging, labs, to their whole genome sequencing reports. In addition, we have merged with DoctorsForMe.ai, a telehealth platform that connects clients with specialists from all over the world. Now, any of our clients can get a second opinion from specialists in the United States depending on their condition.

How are you addressing the health and well-being of your employees?

Kristen Cerf, Blue Shield:

Blue Shield of California created a task force to gain input from our 7,000 employees at 22 locations, to consider systematically what needs to be done to ensure everyone's safety when we return to our offices. We're offering an enhanced paid-leave program, work-from-home tools and reimbursement for teleworking costs. In addition, we knew our staff wanted to do their part in helping the communities that are even more in need. We launched the Shield Cares Giving Campaign in April to boost employee giving to any California-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a 2:1 company match, and since April 1, we've raised over \$345,000. Lastly, we launched Silver Linings, an internal photo-sharing campaign in which employees can connect about how they are living our company values – human, honest and courageous – during this time.

Brett McClain, Sharp HealthCare:

From the start of the pandemic, Sharp was acutely focused on the health, safety and well-being of our caregivers and our entire workforce. Having an adequate supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for our front-line workers was the immediate priority, given the nature of the disease and the disruption to the global supply chain.

We also conduct daily COVID-19 screenings of employees and visitors coming into our medical buildings and administrative offices, and we adhere to County Health Services guidance on masking and social distancing.

Sharp has expanded its telework program to keep as many employees working from home as possible, and we now have more than 2,000 employees working from home.

We realize that health and well-being goes beyond physical needs and recently launched a program called Caring for the Caregivers, which provides employees and physicians with a variety of resources and counseling to help them cope with challenges at work and at home during this time.

Will there be changes to the health care workforce following the COVID-19 crisis?

Kristen Cerf, Blue Shield:

I think it's about redeploying our workforce to support the changing needs of our members. There is a lot that we do not know today, so our focus is on addressing our members' needs right now and preparing for whatever may come tomorrow. We are always focused on our mission to ensure all Californians have access to high-quality health care at an affordable price. In addressing the current shelter in place environment, we have redeployed our staff to respond to changing member dynamics and needs. This includes:

- Working closely with our members to ensure their information is up to date, so they are not at risk of disenrollment when redeterminations come back online;
- Ramping up outreach efforts to members, who are most at risk, and connecting them to resources, or to our community or provider partners, for support;
- Providing assistance and answering questions for new members who just enrolled in Medi-Cal for the first time; and
- Committing more than \$200 million to support health care providers and hospitals facing financial pressures as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Patrick Frias, Rady Children's Hospital:

There will likely be changes to the categories of staff we employ and the way our day-to-day work is carried out. For example, we now need to have employees available to provide health screenings for everyone who enters our facilities – a requirement that did not exist before the COVID-19 crisis. While working together in person is best, we've all learned to work more effectively and efficiently with remote technologies. Virtually overnight, Rady Children's developed a remote work platform for more than 1,300 employees. Much the way telecommuting has altered our workforce, the emergence of telemedicine will forever change the delivery of care.

What do you think will be the biggest changes in health care that will come out of the COVID-19 crisis?

Beth Andersen, Anthem Blue Cross:

The pandemic has many learnings: it has provided additional data showing the impacts of disease are not the same on everyone, that we can be more agile in the face of rapidly evolving situations, and there are better ways for payers and care providers to safely deliver care, improve access and address health equity. The use of telehealth has increased dramatically and shown us a clear path to scaling cost-effective ways for the safe delivery of care to those who need it. To further expand our efforts to make it easier for providers to manage resources and capacity we were able to rapidly develop and deploy a COVID-19 symptom checker on Sydney Care, our app powered by artificial intelligence. We can embrace these learnings to emerge even stronger.

Kristen Cerf, Blue Shield:

For Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan, we have a tremendous opportunity to help

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Rady Children's

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wait, like getting
the right care for
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There will be many innovations to come out of the crisis that are yet unknown or are just beginning to take root.

Christopher D. Howard
President & Chief Executive Officer
Sharp HealthCare



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It's doubtful that the handshake will make a comeback anytime soon. That said, we are social creatures and we will have a need to come back together, safely, at some point.

Brett McClain
Executive Vice President
& Chief Operating Officer
Sharp HealthCare

the growing Medi-Cal membership – especially those who have lost employment because of the pandemic. This population is at the very heart of our mission. We've launched a new workstream focused on preparing to serve more members as unemployment numbers grow and our members' health is our top priority. We've expanded services available through our community resource centers and shifted our approach as the centers are closed while stay-at-home orders are in effect. Together with our providers and community partners, we have earmarked additional funding to continue addressing food insecurities, domestic violence support and community solution response efforts.

Jane Finley, Kaiser Permanente:

One of the most significant impacts of COVID-19 was the need to “flatten the curve” through physical distancing. Health care organizations adapted many of their physical spaces, as well as their workflows, to support physical distancing guidelines. Until transmission of COVID-19 slows down and the rate of new infections becomes more predictable and manageable, we will likely need to continue some form of physical distancing in our facilities. Another change will be the broader adoption of telehealth. In January, 14% of Kaiser Permanente appointments were virtual. That jumped to 86% by the end of April. Given the patient satisfaction surveys we have seen so far, many of those patients will likely continue to seek virtual visits. Lastly, COVID-19 reminded us of some fundamental health and hygiene rules – wash your hands often; avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow; get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, eat healthy foods, and manage your stress to keep your immune system strong – that hopefully we will all continue to follow.

Patrick Frias, Rady Children's Hospital:

The way we deliver care will probably be the biggest change we will see from this crisis. At Rady Children's, we went from about 20 telemedicine visits a week to 4,000 across our system. Families are becoming more comfortable with seeing their caregiver remotely and have developed a sense of familiarity with virtual visits of all kinds. One positive development from this sudden migration to telemedicine: it may allow health systems to establish an even broader regional, national and international presence. Hospitals with strong destination programs like Rady Children's (such as cardiology, orthopedics, genomic medicine and so on) will be able to attract more patients from around the world through telemedicine.

Christopher D. Howard, Sharp HealthCare:

Some of the leading candidates include the growth of virtual care as evidenced by the meteoric rise of telemedicine. We'll likely also see enhanced infection prevention measures, not only in health care, but in almost every aspect of society. Telework or telecommuting will become more prevalent in health care, especially for administrative functions, and in other sectors as employers witness positive productivity results from workers at home, resulting in a reduction of office space needs. There will also be many innovations to come out of the crisis that are yet unknown or are just beginning to take root. At Sharp, we are tracking the innovations we've developed to effectively deal with the current crisis and determining which of those will have broader applications moving forward.

David S. Karow, MD, PhD, Human Longevity:

COVID-19 is certainly going to accelerate major changes in health care. In the short term we hope to see further testing, both for active virus and antibody. This is going to be critical to start getting people back to their normal lives. We are seeing a great deal of innovation here, especially in San Diego to help make that happen.

In the longer term we are hopeful this may lead to more collaborations with regulators, researchers and biotech companies, to help speed up innovation. For patients, it certainly raises awareness and accelerates the adoption of preventive health tools and further empowers patients to take control of their health.

Several health systems had announced plans to expand or modify their campuses prior to the COVID-19 crisis. Are those plans still moving forward and how does the crisis impact/adjust the plans?

Jane Finley, Kaiser Permanente:

Kaiser Permanente was in the process of constructing our new Clairemont Mesa Medical Offices when COVID-19 hit. That building is now complete, and scheduled to open in July. We are also continuing with plans for our newest hospital – the San Marcos Medical Center – a 206-bed acute care facility, scheduled to open in 2023.

Patrick Frias, Rady Children's Hospital:

In the months leading up to the pandemic, Rady Children's received a historic gift from Ernest and Evelyn Rady to reshape Rady Children's campus and facilities. Those plans are moving forward. While COVID-19 will certainly alter the way we deliver some care, we are still going to grow and continue to build. Some of our original buildings from the 1950s are on the verge of outgrowing their useful life and capacity and will need to be replaced. Our new buildings may be a different size and shape than we might have initially envisioned, but we will continue to reimagine our campus in a planned and prudent manner in order to fulfill our mission to care for San Diego's children, now and in the future.

Brett McClain, Sharp HealthCare:

Because of the financial challenges of the COVID-19 crisis, and the way it appears to be reshaping many aspects of society, we are evaluating which, if any, of our capital investments we need to delay. One immediate area that comes to mind for us and other large organizations is our office space footprint. With more employees working from home, the need for extra office space to accommodate growth diminishes. Add to that the growth in telehealth, which could have an impact on how much space is needed for future medical offices if more people are comfortable “visiting” their physicians from home for certain conditions.

Providing care for patients with mental health challenges is one of the biggest issues facing health care systems today. How is your health system addressing those concerns for your specific patient populations?

Beth Andersen, Anthem Blue Cross:

We recognize mental health is critical to a person's overall health and the pandemic has further

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Here for San Diego



At Sharp HealthCare, it is our mission to improve the health of everyone we serve. As San Diego's leading health care provider, we're proud to touch the lives of more people in our community than any other health care system.

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In the next 20 years our grandchildren will have their whole genome sequenced at birth to understand where they may be predisposed to disease.

David S. Karow, MD, PhD
President & Chief of Performance
Medicine and Medical Imaging
Human Longevity

highlighted the need for support. That's why we developed new resources in partnership with leading community and health partners. We started a special campaign – #MeMinutes – to promote taking the necessary time for self-care and wellbeing. We are supporting the National Alliance on Mental Illness, creating awareness events and supporting their nationwide virtual walks. We are partnering with Aunt Bertha, a leading social care network that helps connect individuals and families to free and reduced-cost social services in their communities, and Psych Hub, a free digital resource that helps individuals and care providers address behavioral health. We've also waived fees for members who use LiveHealth Online to virtually connect to a doctor.

Kristen Cerf, Blue Shield:

Blue Shield has always understood the importance of mental health to overall care. Since last year, we have been working with schools and community-based organizations that focus on mental health. Last December, the company also launched BlueSky, a multi-year effort to enhance awareness, advocacy and access to mental health support for middle and high school students in California. A major part of the initiative was bringing therapists into schools to provide direct mental health support to students in need. Now, this service is available through video therapy sessions through our collaboration with Wellness Together. In addition, we enhanced the program to offer online access to mental health and COVID-19 resources for parents/guardians and their children. We will continue this effort and others as we start to transition into the new realities for our members.

Patrick Frias, Rady Children's Hospital:

Rady Children's recognizes that there is an immense need for mental and behavioral health services for children and adolescents. We are moving forward with all of our plans that were established before the pandemic, including: partnering with San Diego County to develop a Behavioral Health Hub adjacent to our main campus that will provide critically needed mental and behavioral health services to this population; opening the Copley Psychiatric Emergency Department, the region's first pediatric psychiatric emergency department in June; keeping our behavioral health urgent care location open during the crisis; expanding access to mental health services via telemedicine; and, though a transformational gift, launching and expanding our integration of mental health services with our primary care partners.

Christopher D. Howard, Sharp HealthCare:

Sharp HealthCare, through our behavioral health hospital, Sharp Mesa Vista, and our behavioral health unit at Sharp Grossmont Hospital, is the largest mental health provider in San Diego County. We've seen strong demand for our outpatient programs and are working diligently to make many of them "virtual" as appropriate. Just as we've witnessed growth of primary care telehealth visits, we expect to see similar growth for mental health services in the years to follow.

The pandemic brought several changes to public life. Social distancing and a strong focus on disinfecting are two of them. Which of these changes do you think will stick with us?

Beth Andersen, Anthem Blue Cross:

The pandemic has challenged much of what we had taken for granted in terms of how we

interacted with each other, and it will be hard for many of us to quickly undo the precautions we have had to take to flatten the curve. This is probably the most difficult to come to terms with since by nature we are social. We are not accustomed to seeing people wearing masks, and we are not used to other limitations imposed by these "new norms." Social distancing and the use of masks will likely be with us until a vaccine is developed, and even after, as I anticipate some of the mindset and behaviors we are now accustomed to will linger.

Brett McClain, Sharp HealthCare:

Certainly, for the foreseeable future, social distancing and enhanced disinfecting protocols in every sector of society will be here to stay. It's doubtful that the handshake will make a comeback anytime soon. That said, we are social creatures and we will have a need to come back together, safely, at some point. No doubt new businesses will spring up to meet these challenges.

What challenges do health systems and businesses face moving forward once the current crisis passes, especially in light of the threat of a resurgence?

Brett McClain, Sharp HealthCare:

We will have to be extremely vigilant on all fronts until there is a proven vaccine for COVID-19. The threat of a major resurgence will put a strain on health systems to ensure their supply of PPE, drugs and ICU beds are always at sufficient levels to effectively manage another outbreak. The upcoming flu season will be a major test if we do not see a dramatic flattening of the curve of COVID-19 cases, but we are hopeful that the lessons we are learning now – social distancing, stronger focus on sanitizing, etc. – will help us to be in a better position this fall.

Has the pandemic changed the way patients seek and receive care?

Jane Finley, Kaiser Permanente:

The pandemic has altered the way we live. It has also altered the way patients seek care. Kaiser Permanente provides several options for accessing health care, based on the patient's needs and preferences. Our hospitals and medical offices provide the same safe, high-quality, in-person care they always have. Virtual care – through phone and video visits – has increased significantly since the outbreak of COVID-19. Our Mobile Health Vehicle – a complete medical clinic on wheels – is still present in the communities we serve. On the phone, our care teams are available 24/7. And our robust website, kp.org, offers members E-visits. On kp.org members can also email their doctor, schedule an appointment, refill prescriptions, check past visit summaries and instructions, and find information on medical conditions and health topics. Regardless of the pandemic, Kaiser Permanente is here, and ready to care for those in need.

What planning should be done for ongoing disruptions if COVID-19 becomes an annual occurrence?

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HEALTH CARE ROUNDTABLE

**Beth Andersen, Anthem Blue Cross:**

As a health insurer, Anthem is an essential business. We maintain a comprehensive business continuity program that aligns the business requirements of our operating units and related support areas to help us meet our customer commitments during an unplanned event, such as a pandemic. As COVID-19 spread to more of our communities we were able to rapidly switch to a work from home environment and stress social distancing policies and increased personal hygiene. We also increased building hygiene measures and frequency, implemented travel restrictions, and limited access to and travel between our facilities. This pandemic has shown us the need for supplies of PPE, ventilators and the ability to test. But good planning for a situation like this means preparing for the unknown, which is difficult.

Brett McClain, Sharp HealthCare:

Health systems, and all businesses, need to carefully consider how to plan for ongoing or annual COVID-19 disruptions. In health care, as stated, key areas of focus will be on maintaining sufficient supplies of PPE and pharmaceuticals. At the national level, it seems that efforts are underway to bring these industries back to the United States, which would greatly strengthen the supply chain.

The growth of telehealth as a result of the crisis can be viewed as a silver lining and will only evolve and improve in the years ahead, paving the way for an easier transition if we're faced with another outbreak.

Health systems also need to look at structuring care of patients with COVID-19 and other highly infectious diseases, so they can continue the other types of emergency and elective care that people need.

San Diego is a biotech hub. What are some of the most interesting technologies that you are seeing locally that will become the future of healthcare? How do we leverage this ecosystem to advance these technologies?

David S. Karow, MD, PhD, Human Longevity:

There is such a great ecosystem in San Diego from biotech startups and therapeutics companies to some of the best hospitals in the world. We truly do have an incubator here to create the future of health care and collectively deploy these technologies to patients to help them live longer, healthier lives.

It is impossible to build the future of health care alone and we are closely working with partners in San Diego including Sun Genomics and Sleep Score, to provide some of these new technologies to our patients. We are also working with the J. Craig Venter Institute on some genomics-related research projects. We really think the only way to do this is through partnerships.

The cost of health care goes up every year. How do we bend the cost curve? What does the future of health care look like for my children in the next 20 years?

Beth Andersen, Anthem Blue Cross:

Health care affordability is one of the biggest challenges we face as an industry. We are working to accelerate growth in value-based payment models in which providers are rewarded for efficiency, coordination, health outcomes and care experience, rather than on the volume of care provided. We need to give customers more choices and greater affordability, with a focus on quality. That is why we are building out high-performance networks, featuring only top providers, to deliver on quality and cost. Lastly, this pandemic has shown us technology holds the promise to a health care future of greater access to transparency and data allowing the health care consumers, employers and other partners to make better-informed decisions.

Christopher D. Howard, Sharp HealthCare:

Our coordinated care model is probably the biggest lever in bending the cost curve. It allows us to improve population health through prevention and management of chronic conditions. If we are able to bend the cost curve while keeping patients healthier, we will all benefit – now and in the future.

We are also heavily focused on continuous quality improvement, which helps improve overall quality of care while reducing health care costs in general. In addition, we continue to look for ways to provide services in lower cost of care settings, including outpatient and virtual care environments when available and appropriate.

David S. Karow, MD, PhD, Human Longevity:

We believe to shift the cost curve, as a system, we need to shift more aggressively to preventive care. In the next 20 years our grandchildren will have their whole genome sequenced at birth to understand where they may be predisposed to disease. Screening exams will become less invasive and much more common for all diseases.

You will be able to complete your labs at home, have an annual screening exam to measure your whole body biomarkers, and a telehealth appointment with your physician. All these technologies will be aided by artificial intelligence and machine learning to enable your physician to offer more comprehensive testing at a lower cost than the care provided today. We are starting to do it now.



To our frontline health care heroes
in San Diego —

We are awed by your courage,
compassion and unwavering professionalism.
Because of you, your endless hours and
your sacrifice, we rise. Because of you, we
are comforted.

We see you and we are humbled by you.
If we have learned anything during this time,
it is that in moments of crisis, the brave
rush in.

With our most heartfelt gratitude, your
entire community salutes you.

IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES,
THE EXTRAORDINARY RISE