THE PERFECT STORM

A perfect storm is converging on academic health systems.

The health care crisis is calling for increased accountability and control of rising health care costs. The complexities of educating practitioners and researchers exceed current available resources. Moreover, despite the ever-increasing costs of research and scientific discovery, funding for research has not kept pace with inflation. These challenges come at a time when both demands and opportunities are high. Our aging Baby Boomers require more healthcare than ever. Scientific and technological advances, like precision medicine, promise to impact our communities. Global competition for our research workforce is rising. At the confluence of these challenges academic health systems are forced to reexamine our core missions and to redefine our strategies not only for success, but also for survival.

NAVIGATING CHANGE

At the University of Utah we see the opportunity to lead. The convergence of crises calls for new models of care, education and research. Innovation and creativity, teamwork and collaborative culture, and accountability and transparency are key to defining a new and sustainable model for academic health sciences. These challenges suit our pioneer spirit and legacy of innovation and cooperation. We have already proven that we can contribute to positive change, whether embracing best practices pioneered by others or by defining them ourselves. We take pride in delivering high quality results. By embracing change, we ensure our success.

For our health care delivery system we see a future that looks like this:

For our local, regional, and national communities, we will continue to provide world-class expertise for some of the sickest and most complex patients in our region. Through integrated, coordinated, and interprofessional systems of patient-centered delivery, the care we provide can continue to be exceptional in its quality, consistency, accessibility, and affordability. We can imagine and aspire to a more perfect care—a model of care more precisely aligned to patient needs.

For our communities, we will focus more on wellness and prevention, address acute and chronic care needs, support rehabilitative needs, and when the time comes, respect and satisfy individual wishes at end-of-life. By investing wisely in infrastructure, tools and human capital, our processes and management systems can be even more efficient, agile and responsive to the demand for continuous improvement. Transparency and effective communications assure alignment and synergies across the system. Our values of inclusion, trust and respect make us strong partners to and employers of people in our community.
Our competitive advantages are rooted in our talented workforce, our values and our culture. As an integrated health sciences campus we are well supported by our trainees, faculty, research programs and strong community bonds. We harness the strengths of our institution to translate the discoveries of basic science into effective treatments, clinical trials into personalized therapies, technologies into new diagnostics, devices and apps, and data into informed approaches to population health science and health system innovation. Partnerships with business school faculty help us be better managers and business leaders. Engineering partners help us innovate and maximize the power of technology. Basic science colleagues complement and enhance our research initiatives. Our alumni and community leaders keep us connected to the real world and help us dream of greater heights. Our trainees drive us toward the future and disseminate a new and sustainable model of health care for the nation.

We are optimistic about the future because of our past. Already, the University of Utah health system has proven itself a remarkably capable and responsive organization. Our focused efforts to advance the quality and safety of our care have distinguished us as a health system among our peers nationally:

- Through our exceptional patient experience initiative—including our pioneering move as the first academic health center to put physician reviews online—our providers now consistently lead the nation in patient satisfaction
- Our focus on quality, accountability and patient safety have placed us consistently in the top tier of academic health systems in the nation
- Our efforts to manage costs through greater efficiencies and global improvements in the delivery of care have enabled us to “bend the cost curve” using our unique Value Driven Outcomes tools.

As a truly integrated university health system, the University of Utah Health Sciences is empowering providers, researchers and students to be the agents of change.

_Do not fear to pioneer, to venture down new paths of endeavor._
—Ralph J Bunche, Nobel Peace Prize 1950
University of Utah Health Care exists to improve the lives of patients and future generations worldwide. Empowered by our community, our aim is to integrate our academic and clinical resources to advance health, to deliver patient-centered and quality care, and to train the next generation of providers, researchers and educators in a high-value health system.
Clinical Strategy 2015-2020

#1 – Deliver high value health care focused on better outcomes

The University of Utah health system will continue to deliver exceptional value through broad-based engagement of the organization to ensure we provide **consistently high quality care** and **deliver seamless continuity** in our services, in the context of an **exceptional patient experience**.

Partnering with the Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah, process improvement training (LEAN) will extend further to front lines and leadership to improve the processes through which we deliver care. We will continue to enhance measures of success based on outcomes that are meaningful to patients, and refine how we define positive outcomes. Two years ago, we built the Value-Driven Outcomes (VDO) tool using our enterprise data warehouse to measure the costs associated with patient outcomes throughout our system. The VDO platform will be developed further so access can be expanded. Patients entering the University of Utah health system can benefit from a provider workforce empowered to make informed, evidence-based advances to care pathways and best practices for patient care.

By sticking to our core principles—delivering the highest quality patient-centered outcomes with reasonable costs—we will continue to prepare for a new model of health care. Through evidence-based best practices and innovation, we can position our institution to be a successful partner with payers—federal and state government, insurance companies, and employers in the service of our patients and communities.
#2 – Partner with patients and communities for life-long health

In FY14, University of Utah Health Care increased new patient visits by 12%, resulting in an increase of 135,000 new patient visits. To successfully engage our patients, new and old, as life-long partners in health, our approach is three-fold.

First, we will continue to develop a more coordinated system of care—one that more efficiently manages a patient’s access to and experience across the continuum of care, from wellness to primary care to acute care and to rehabilitation or hospice care. We will continue to expand a coordinated network that provides better access for patients, through geographic expansion of our ambulatory care facilities and technological expansion of our telehealth and virtual facilities.

Second, we will continue to re-organize our care model to deliver coordinated patient-centered care across primary care and specialty providers. Organized around the patient and a condition, rather than departments and divisions, our integrated practice units can coordinate care to minimize wasted resources, improve patient experience and maximize outcomes. The integrated team approach to care can ensure providers and staff are working at the tops of their licenses in the delivery of patient-centered care.

Third, we will continue to develop a broad network of community and regional partners that can enhance an individual patient’s ability to navigate the health care system and will improve our collective ability to better manage the health of our populations. We will continue to develop a premier, physician-driven delivery system with partners who share our commitment to providing quality, patient-centered care for our populations. Locally, our patients can receive care from providers close to home who are affiliated with the University system. Regionally, we will continue to be the tertiary/quaternary referral center for communities who need our advanced specialized services, and can collaborate with local providers to ensure seamless transitions back home.
Our academic expertise gives us a distinct advantage in advancing a new model of patient-centered health care.

To provide patients with the most cutting-edge and personalized care, we will continue to develop a pipeline for streamlining the translation of basic science to clinical care. Our Program in Personalized Health, the Utah Genome Project, the USTAR Center for Genomic Analysis, ARUP, the College of Pharmacy and the Center for Clinical and Translational Science provide a robust infrastructure and platform for translation. We can look to the success of the world-class Huntsman Cancer Institute as a model of clinical and academic integration and excellence in cancer care and apply this model to cardiovascular, neurology, diabetes and metabolism, and immunology among others. We will continue to advance technological and engineering innovations in partnership with the Colleges of Engineering and Business through the Center for Medical Innovation and GApp Lab—developing new devices and digital platforms to enhance the way care is delivered and accessed. We will measure the impact of new advances in diagnostics, therapeutics and delivery models through robust health services research partnerships.

A key component of this transformation is the energy and momentum we can derive from our trainees. Embracing new models of teamwork, technology, and patient-centeredness, our students teach us and they push us. As we move toward more broadly interprofessional teams, our trainees across the health professions will help us define future models of practice. Whether through challenging current models of health care, advancing medical innovation or championing interprofessional education, today’s students will be tomorrow’s leaders and will be the key to our success.
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Our greatest strength is the engagement of our faculty, staff, employees and students. To execute the University of Utah Health Sciences Clinical Strategy successfully, we will rely on the following conditions for success:

- **Patient-centered in all our decisions** – Building on the success of the Exceptional Patient Experience, we will launch a new way of framing our daily work to innovate, collaborate, and re-imagine our entire clinical care delivery system from the patient’s perspective—referred to as, Imagine Perfect Care

- **Aligned as an organization, around our goals** – Developing a shared purpose and a common direction to work collaboratively and efficiently to achieve our strategic imperatives. Continue to work toward meaningful integration and collaboration.

- **Committed to a culture of continuous improvement and learning** – Recognizing that our daily work can be excellent because of the knowledge and practices that came before us. We will continue to build on that knowledge and practice to the benefit of our patients and future generations.

- **Data-driven, responsive organization with clear decision rights** – Utilizing data as a key component in improving our systems. Investing in the systems to ensure robust, comprehensive, accessible sources of data. Establishing clear lines of accountability and cultivating a responsive organization that evolves as the environment evolves.

- **Developing infrastructure, tools and systems that work** – Creating systems that inform the delivery of care and improve patient and employee experiences. Investing in the construction of systems that remove barriers to efficiency and quality outcomes, and support comprehensive patient care coordination.

- **Well-trained, engaged employees who reflect a diversity of abilities and perspectives** – Investing in ourselves, developing faculty, staff and students to support the mission of our organization.

- **Use space efficiently to support our goals** – Aligning and prioritizing the use of space around the goals of the institution. Committing to space allocation models that reflect the values of the collaboration and innovation in the organization.

- **Practice financial responsibility** – Using resources wisely and strategically to ensure the long term sustained financial health of the system.

- **Manage risk effectively** – Evaluating and managing the wide range of risks facing a complex organization.

THE WAY FORWARD

Every generation faces great challenges. We face a crisis in health care. To respond to this great challenge, we must build on our strengths and take advantage of opportunities. Some challenges require change. Ours requires a transformation.

**At the University of Utah, we see the transformation of health care as an opportunity and as a chance to lead.**