How and why will hospitals have changed in Colombia by 2029?

The three major challenges which will transform hospitals in the ten coming years will have a huge impact on the way in which we build and strengthen relationships with our patients, and on our ability to adapt. The first one has to do with digital evolution and transformation. It will be a totally disruptive process that will change patient experience and access to healthcare services, and their power to take control of their clinical condition and/or treatments.

The second challenge which we consider critical is management of healthcare human resources. Future organizations will have to work towards being more humane, differentiated and experiential. This means striking a balance between scientific/technical processes, patient experience, the ability of healthcare staff to serve with their knowledge but also exceed the expectations of patients and families alike, as well as to convey and create value.

Finally, rethinking infrastructure as a vital component of healthcare services. Healthcare organizations will no longer have one or several facilities, but multiple spaces with different types of infrastructure and technology. They will have to be much better organized and prepared to provide fast solutions, more homogenous clinical outcomes with no variability, always ensuring that in all environments - the home, the workplace, and public areas - services are as preventive and anticipatory as possible.

These three transformations will create great opportunities. Hospitals will have to evolve in their ability to cope with these changes. They will require all the necessary structures and the ability to adapt those structures so that they can respond to different fronts in an integrated fashion.

The challenge is to acquire the necessary capabilities in an orderly and systematic way in order to revolutionize healthcare provision, through digital transformation and a huge component of cultural adaptation. All processes will have to be redesigned, and comprehensive care will have to be ensured by focusing care flows and infrastructures on clinical conditions. Therein lie the opportunities for facing these changes.

In a country like Colombia, the main uncertainty has to do with the implementation of the right regulations and incentives in the health system to ensure that organizations are recognized for their quality, comprehensiveness of health service provision by clinical conditions, and care continuity.

We must find the way to overcome access barriers prevailing in our health system, and implement mechanisms that will enable us to focus on population and individual health, creating a virtuous circle.

Financial considerations are another challenge for our sector. The Colombian health system is under pressure to become more efficient and there is no balance yet in our country between insurance coverage and service provision, all the way from prevention to cure, in terms of healthcare spending.

Finally, as relates specifically to digital transformation, relentless technological advances in medicine and information systems mean that hospitals need to be prepared to purchase technologies that communicate among themselves and are relevant for the future. They need to be flexible to look out for new technologies that are just in their incubation stage at this time but promise to be revolutionary in the future.

ABOUT THE COLOMBIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

The Colombian Association of Hospitals and Clinics was created 61 years ago as a non-profit professional organization. Its mission is to further the technical and administrative strength of its members by means of coordination, information, communication, training and representation activities. Its membership includes more than 300 institutions, 64% of which have received accreditation.