

Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, FAMIA, FASA

AMA Board Chair

Professor of Anesthesiology, Surgery, Biomedical Informatics, and Health Policy

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

Driving the future of medical innovation to improve patient care

Telemedicine, remote monitoring tools, wearable devices and other disruptive technological advances such as artificial intelligence will dramatically change – for the better – the practice of medicine.

During this period of rapid and exciting change, the AMA is an outspoken proponent and advocate for smart innovation that aligns with its core principles of: confronting the chronic disease burden and improving health outcomes; removing obstacles and burdens that interfere with patient care; and educating physicians to meet the challenges of patient care in the digital age.

Physicians are open to new technologies, so long as they can affirmatively answer four key questions:

- Will it work?
- Will it work in my practice?
- Will I be fairly compensated?
- Will I be legally protected?

Physicians understand that to incorporate digital solutions in the clinical setting, those innovations must be evidence-based, validated, actionable and connected. For health technology to work properly, physicians must be involved throughout the innovation cycle – from initial design, to testing and prototype development, to market adoption of the new technology.

To give physicians a ‘seat at the table,’ the AMA is developing a strong and growing innovation ecosystem in partnership with industry leaders.

For example, we partnered with the health-tech incubator MATTER in Chicago and designed an interaction studio where entrepreneurs and physicians can collaborate on creative digital solutions to common health care challenges. MATTER is currently home to about 200 health care start-ups.

The AMA also founded the pioneering innovation company Health2047 in Silicon Valley, a for-profit enterprise that is building and commercializing solutions to health care challenges in data liquidity, reducing chronic disease, and improving productivity and value. The goal: to spin off independent companies that offer targeted solutions to these challenges.

- It's first venture, Akiri, launched last year, is developing a cloud-based framework to promote data liquidity and facilitate the secure movement of health information.
- Another spinoff company launched last fall, called First Mile Care, provides community-based, 24/7 online access to peer-to-peer coaching to help people with prediabetes make the lifestyle choices that can keep their condition from advancing. The platform is based on the proven National Diabetes Prevention Program that was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Also promising is a recent spinoff called Zing Health, a Medicare Advantage plan geared toward those who are underserved by existing health insurance plans. The Zing plan has the flexibility to address patients' circumstances outside the clinical setting – difficulty with transportation, for example – to ensure that they receive the care they need.

The AMA is also a co-founder of Xcertia, a collaborative effort to establish and promote guidelines to improve the quality, safety and effectiveness of mobile health applications. Xcertia's Board of Directors includes top executives at Accenture, the Mayo Clinic, IBM Watson, and elsewhere.

Innovation-minded physicians may want to consider joining the AMA's Physician Innovation Network, an online hub where physicians collaborate with tech entrepreneurs on the next digital health breakthrough. More than 4,800 users have already connected on <http://innovationmatch.ama-assn.org> to share their clinical expertise or advance their digital products, with help from leading physicians across specialties.

And last fall, the AMA added the Digital Health Implementation Playbook to its growing catalog of practice transformation tools, helping physicians better integrate technology solutions into clinical practice and extend care beyond the exam room.

The pace of change in medical technology is unprecedented in human history. For us to take advantage of the promise of technology for the betterment of patient care, physicians must be involved in its design and development. The AMA is leading this work, and we encourage all physicians to stay informed and get involved.

###