



# Advancing Health in America

*Our vision is of a society of healthy communities, where all individuals reach their highest potential for health.*

*Our mission is to advance the health of individuals and communities. The AHA leads, represents and serves hospitals, health systems and other related organizations that are accountable to the community and committed to health improvement.*





*“We are working with AHA members to continue the evolution of our strategies to prioritize and address the opportunities and challenges that face our field. For example, we recognized a rising need to address innovation and affordability, so we created a member-driven committee to explore these issues and work on developing real solutions. We are translating our strategy into tangible, actionable tactics and resources to provide our members and stakeholders with support and value.”*

**Nancy Howell Agee**  
**President and CEO, Carilion Clinic**  
**2018 AHA Chair**



*“Amid rapid change and uncertainty, health care is too often discussed in abstract terms. During these times, it’s more important than ever that we remain centered around real people – our friends, neighbors and family – whom we are called to serve. Our strategic plan supports this core mission and provides guidance, allowing us to help all individuals reach their highest potential for health.”*

**Eugene A. Woods**  
**President and CEO, Carolinas HealthCare System**  
**2018 Immediate Past Chair**



## **AHA Advancing Advocacy**

AHA advocacy efforts center on providing a supportive and modernized public policy environment. Working with Congress, the administration, the courts, other agencies, member organizations and individual members, the AHA advances key issues facing hospitals and health systems such as:

- *Protecting patient access to care and coverage*
- *Advancing health system transformation and innovation*
- *Enhancing affordability and value*
- *Accelerating quality and patient safety*
- *Promoting regulatory relief*



# Last year we began implementation of a bold strategic vision and plan.

This strategic plan has served as our guidepost as we navigate the changing legislative and regulatory environment, as well as other equally significant transformations in technology, science, new care models, consumer preferences and chronic diseases. These five commitments serve as a rallying point for our field:

- America's hospitals and health systems want to ensure **coverage and access** for all.
- We want to deliver **high value** care.
- We want to provide services in a **coordinated, seamless manner**.
- We want to promote **well-being and prevention**; and
- We want patients, families, and other stakeholders to be involved as **partners**.

Through this lens, hospitals and health systems can proactively address issues that are pillars of our field. Some examples of what we stand for include:

- Ensuring all individuals can access and afford health care.
- Promoting administrative simplification and easing of regulations.
- Providing the highest quality of care possible, continually implementing quality improvement processes.
- Ensuring our hospitals and health systems reflect the communities they serve by promoting a diverse workforce and providing cultural competent care.
- Advancing solutions for population health and community health management.
- Investing responsibly in innovation, which will improve care coordination and efficiencies, decrease the cost of care and improve patient outcomes.



Our strategic plan is a living document. We have updated this 2018 edition to reflect our priorities for the year ahead, but the core commitments remain the same. A notable change is that we have added **Advancing Affordability** to our strategic priorities. We recognize that, as a field, we cannot solve this challenge alone, but we can do our part to address the cost of care. We will collaborate with other entities who can also make a difference. The AHA will provide our members with information and resources throughout the year to help you address this issue.

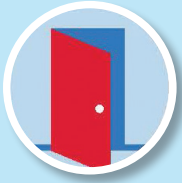
Our field is reimagining health care delivery. We are already on the path to our future, serving people inside and outside the hospital's walls. We are working to empower patients and provide care in new and convenient ways. We envision hospitals and health systems as innovative change agents in our journey to transform payment and delivery systems and revitalize our entire health care system for all individuals. We see our members working hand in hand with individuals on their health journey.

Our work, day in and day out, gets us closer to realizing our vision of a society of healthy communities where all individuals reach their highest potential for health. Thank you for your efforts to achieve this vision.

**Rick Pollack**  
**President and CEO, AHA**

# Our Commitments

In this time of change, our field does not waver from our enduring commitments. Hospitals and health systems are committed to these five essential elements that form the core of the AHA's vision of a society of healthy communities where all individuals reach their highest potential for health.



## Access

Access to affordable, equitable health, behavioral and social services



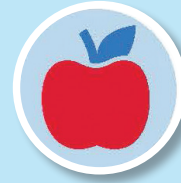
## Value

The best care that adds value to lives



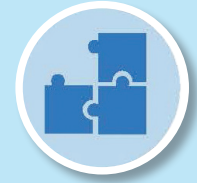
## Partners

Embrace diversity of individuals and serve as partners in their health



## Well-being

Focus on well-being and partnership with community resources



## Coordination

Seamless care propelled by teams, technology, innovation and data

# Driving Forces

Environmental forces significantly impact the work of hospitals, health systems and health organizations. The AHA and its members must recognize these shifts and trends when planning for the future. These changes influence how the field will pursue our commitments.

- ✓ **Affordability** - The rising cost of health care for individuals, the field, business and government
- ✓ **Coverage** - The need to preserve coverage and improve access to integrated, comprehensive behavioral health care
- ✓ **Consumerism** - The demand for convenient, transparent, customer-focused, personalized and cost-effective health services
- ✓ **New Technologies** - The development and implementation of technologies that reshape the patient-provider relationship, health data and the design of health care delivery
- ✓ **Payment for Value** - The transition from fee-for-service to value-based care
- ✓ **Chronic Care Management** - The treatment of chronic disease to improve overall health, reduce health care utilization and provide seamless care
- ✓ **Consolidation** - The increase in traditional and nontraditional partnerships to advance and achieve scale to meet the needs of patients and communities
- ✓ **Community Benefit** - The expansion of services inside and outside the walls of the hospital, collaborating with community organizations to address social determinants of health, and the associated development of new payment forms beyond uncompensated care
- ✓ **Population Health Management** - The process of improving clinical health outcomes of a defined group of individuals through improved care coordination and patient engagement supported by appropriate financial and care models.

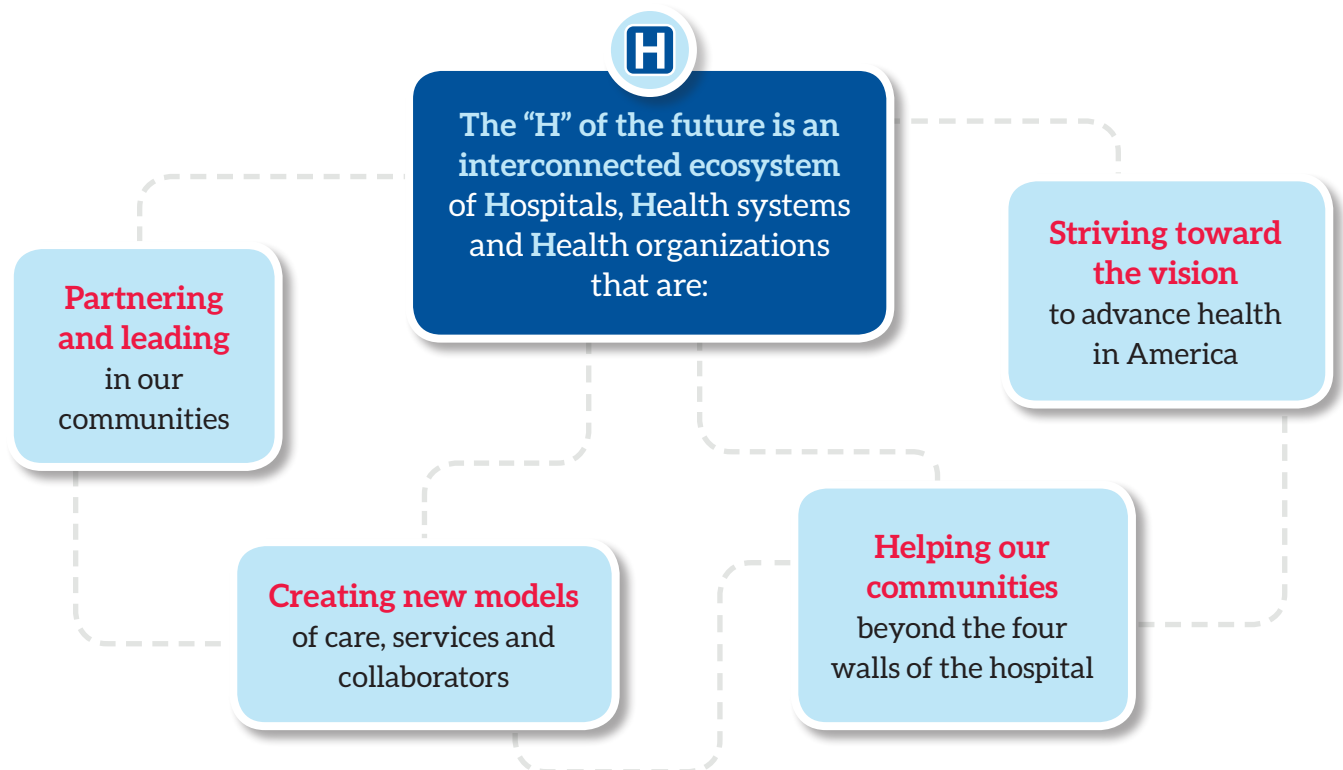
# Redefining the “H”

Hospitals and health systems are on the leading edge of transformation in health care as a result of changes taking place in science, information technology and care management.

The blue and white “H” sign, found on every highway and present in communities across the country, serves as a beacon for every person who needs help. The hope and healing that this symbol evokes remain constant. But the underlying direction and strategy of the hospital is changing. Redefining the “H” in the future means moving from episodic to continuous patient engagement, and partnering with other organizations and the community to improve health more broadly. It means providing increased value to individuals, connecting with them in ways that make sense in the digital age, and coordinating and integrating care. It means recognizing that the scope of the “H” includes hospitals, health systems and health organizations.



Now is our time to redefine the “H” to meet the demands of today and tomorrow... in ways that best serve patients and communities as an access point and anchor of health care services.



# Strategic Priorities

The AHA is addressing the environmental driving forces by advancing these essential issues, which further our commitments and foster the “H” of the future.

## Advocating for Access and Coverage

Preserving access to health care through existing and alternative models and extending integrated behavioral health services to meet the needs of all individuals within the health care system.



**Strategic direction**

Educate and partner with stakeholders regarding innovations in access to ensure that the public can attain high-quality, coordinated care and that payment models keep pace with modern health care delivery.

## Delivery and Payment Reforms

Enhancing how health care is delivered and paid for, while ensuring adequate resources for hospitals to do their jobs well.



**Strategic direction**

Understand and support treatment of patients across all care settings, from wellness to long-term care and end-of-life care (seamlessness across all settings). Encourage, promote and facilitate adoption of successful models of redesign and transformation that provide sufficient funding and resources for hospitals.

## Performance Improvement

Promoting high-reliability organizations by improving efficiency and outcomes that lead to positive, measurable change for the better regarding costs, patient outcomes and production.



**Strategic direction**

All stakeholders are aligned toward patient-centric performance improvement goals.

## Advancing Affordability

Exploring the societal, systematic and operational factors influencing affordability and developing strategies to address the cost of care, with specific focus on the ability of the consumer to afford health care services.



**Strategic direction**

Examine affordability through the innovative value-based strategies of redesigning the delivery system, improving quality and outcomes of care, pursuing payment reform and managing risk and implementing operational solutions. Collaborate with other stakeholders who play a role in this issue.

## Shaping the Future Workforce

Ensuring human capital – physicians, nurses, community health workers, volunteers and staff – meets the needs of individuals and communities through training, support of future workers and talent management.



**Strategic direction**

Increase diversity at all levels of the workforce to reflect the community served, and offer forward-thinking workforce strategies and guidance to ensure the right competencies for high-quality patient care.

## Shaping the Narrative

Detailing the transformative work of hospitals and their benefit to the community through their work outside hospital walls.



**Strategic direction**

Advance community outreach, population health and new models of care, while addressing social determinants of health to further demonstrate the critical value of the hospital to a community.

# Fostering Advancements for Members and the Field

Just as hospitals and health systems are undergoing transformation, the AHA is also changing to meet the needs of our members and to proactively explore the trends of the future.

Working with our membership and other stakeholders, the AHA is focused on providing value, guidance and forward-thinking solutions through the key strategies of:



**These pillars guide the implementation of our strategic priorities to:**

- **Champion** regulatory reform, alleviating excessive and out-of-date burdens that prohibit innovation and collaboration between hospitals, physicians and other caregivers
- **Protect** individuals' access to care and coverage
- **Advocate** for funding, payment and care delivery reforms
- **Foster** dialogue on emerging policy issues and environmental trends
- **Expand** meaningful educational and networking opportunities
- **Offer** best-in-class tools, products and services to assist the field
- **Lead** data analytics and insights for the field and harness new technologies
- **Enhance** equity of care, quality and patient safety
- **Mobilize** members for a variety of issues that impact the future of the health care system
- **Raise** standards for the field and advance positive field reputation



*“This strategic plan provides the AHA with a compelling path forward, proactively focusing on priority issues while allowing for a rapid and nimble response to the changing nature of health care and the evolving political landscape. Through collaboration, innovation and data-driven thinking, we are excited to work with hospitals, health organizations, government, business and communities to reimagine the health care ecosystem for the well-being of today’s population and future generations.”*

**Maryjane Wurth**  
**Executive Vice President and**  
**Chief Operating Officer, AHA**  
**President and CEO, Health Forum**

## Connect with us:



[www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org)



[@AHAhospitals](https://twitter.com/AHAhospitals)  
[@AHAadvocacy](https://twitter.com/AHAadvocacy)



[facebook.com/  
ahahospitals](https://facebook.com/ahahospitals)



[@ahahospitals](https://instagram.com/ahahospitals)



Follow the American  
Hospital Association



**American Hospital  
Association®**