

Future of Health (FOH) Research Displays How Partnerships Can Reduce Preventable Patient Harm

New Health Affairs Scholar study identifies real-world strategies to improve patient safety through collaboration, technology, and patient engagement

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, February 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Future of Health \(FOH\)](#), a

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Prof Eyal Zimlichman, Study Co-Author, Founder and Co-Chairman, FOH

global community of senior health leaders shaping the future of healthcare, today announced the [publication of a new peer-reviewed study](#) in Health Affairs Scholar examining how strategic partnerships can significantly advance patient safety and reduce preventable harm across diverse health systems. The paper, “Partnerships to Advance Patient Safety and Address Preventable Harm: Case Studies from International Health Care Leaders,” presents international case examples that demonstrate how collaboration across health systems, technology partners, and patient organizations can deliver measurable improvements in safety outcomes.

Authored by experts from the Duke-Robert J. Margolis Institute for Health Policy, the Federation of American Hospitals, Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital, patient advocacy organizations, and additional FOH member institutions, the paper draws on real-world experiences shared through the FOH global community. The analysis identifies three key approaches to strengthening patient safety: providing real-time measurement feedback through predictive analytics, engaging and empowering patients and families, and leveraging advanced digital technologies to reduce clinical errors.

“Patient safety has been at the core of my clinical and leadership work for many years, and I know firsthand how difficult it is to achieve lasting reductions in preventable harm,” said study co-author Prof. Eyal Zimlichman, Chief Transformation, Innovation & AI Officer, Sheba Medical Center, Founder & Director of ARC , and Founder & Co-Chairman, Future of Health. “This research shows that meaningful progress requires more than isolated efforts within individual organizations. By building strong partnerships between health systems, technology providers, and patient communities, we can move toward more proactive, predictive, and effective safety

strategies that protect patients and improve outcomes.”

Despite notable improvements in recent decades, patient harm remains widespread, driven by growing care complexity, aging populations, and fragmented delivery systems. While emerging technologies offer new tools to identify risks earlier, the study emphasizes that no single organization can address patient safety challenges alone, and that partnerships are essential to scaling solutions across settings and regions.

One case example described in the paper highlights health systems in the United States and Australia partnering with a patient safety organization to use electronic health record data and predictive analytics to identify adverse events in near real time, enabling earlier intervention and significant reductions in patient harm. Other case studies focus on engaging patients and caregivers as active partners in safety improvement efforts, and on the use of AI-enabled tools to reduce medication errors while minimizing alert fatigue for clinicians.

“Patient safety is fundamentally a systems challenge, and systems improve faster when organizations work together,” said Dr. Mark McClellan, Founding Director of Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy, Duke University. “These case studies show that partnerships can accelerate learning, spread effective practices, and help health systems overcome barriers that are difficult to tackle alone. The Future of Health community provides an important platform for this kind of global collaboration and shared problem-solving.”

The research was conducted as part of FOH’s annual research initiative, which brings together senior healthcare leaders from around the world to identify priority challenges and translate collective experience into evidence-based policy and operational guidance. FOH members participated in virtual workgroups, in-depth interviews, and an in-person FOH summit in Cape Town, South Africa, where members reached consensus on key patient safety priorities through facilitated discussions and voting.

“Too often, patient safety efforts rely on retrospective reporting after harm has already occurred,” said Prof. David W. Bates, Professor of General Internal Medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School, and Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “What is encouraging about these examples is the shift toward proactive approaches, using data and technology to anticipate risk and intervene earlier, while also recognizing the essential role of patients and families in identifying problems and co-designing solutions.”

The paper also addresses implementation challenges, including alert fatigue, workflow integration, data quality, and concerns about legal and reputational risk, and notes that disparities in resources across health systems can limit access to advanced safety technologies.

The authors conclude that advancing patient safety will require coordinated strategies that combine real-time measurement, patient and family engagement, and technology-enabled

clinical decision support, supported by leadership commitment and cross-sector partnerships. As care increasingly shifts beyond hospital walls into outpatient, home-based, and community settings, the importance of scalable and adaptable safety approaches will only continue to grow.

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About Future of Health (FOH)

Future of Health (FOH) is a global community of more than 60 senior leaders from health systems, academia, government, and industry, united by a shared vision to redesign healthcare for 2035 and beyond. Co-chaired by Prof. Eyal Zimlichman of Sheba Medical Center and Chip Kahn of the Federation of American Hospitals, and under the direction of Executive Director Oranit Ido, FOH convenes hospital executives, policymakers, payers, and researchers to confront shared challenges and develop practical recommendations. Through annual summits, high-impact publications, and collaborative research, FOH transforms global consensus into policy, pilots, and measurable change, building more resilient, equitable and innovative health systems worldwide.

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