

Responsible AI Use Is the Foundation of California's Health Care Future

THE ISSUE

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used in hospitals to assist clinicians, improve patient safety, and enhance care delivery — and the results are saving lives.

With predictive analytics and early warning systems — such as sepsis detection tools — clinicians are able to identify patterns that may signal patient deterioration or infection sooner than traditional methods and enable earlier intervention. In some studies, AI was shown to improve radiographic detection of certain cancers by as much as 90% over radiologists. And language access and health-literacy tools are helping reduce barriers for patients with limited English proficiency.

At the same time, AI is helping reduce clinician burnout and improve patients' experience. By reducing time spent on documentation, AI allows physicians to focus on patients instead of computers during appointments, leading to higher patient satisfaction. Patient acceptance is high; one health system reports more than 95% of patients consent to the use of AI scribes and appreciate the increased attention.

Importantly, AI technologies are not replacing human judgment or clinical decision-making. Instead, they function as tools that help clinicians manage information, reduce non-clinical workload, and identify risks earlier — while preserving human oversight and accountability. AI is helping patients and clinicians with:

- Early Sepsis Detection
- Stroke Identification and Triage
- Medication Safety
- Cancer Screening
- Deterioration Prediction
- Readmission Risk Reduction

Health care providers ensure that a “human is in the loop” when using AI. Clinical decisions are made by licensed professionals, not algorithms, and clinicians retain full responsibility for patient care. For example, AI-powered ambient scribe tools draft clinical notes based on clinician-patient conversations, but physicians must review and sign every note before it becomes part of the medical record. Similarly, nurses must validate AI-generated shift summaries.

Hospitals are using AI cautiously and responsibly, guided by strong governance and transparency. Every AI tool undergoes formal review before deployment — underperforming systems are paused or deactivated until they meet established standards. Hospitals also require HIPAA compliance and legal accountability.

WHAT'S NEEDED

Policymakers should recognize that hospitals are already using AI in a careful, transparent, and clinician-led manner to improve patient care and support an overstretched workforce. Legislative and regulatory approaches must preserve flexibility for innovation and efficiency while reinforcing existing safeguards — such as human oversight, patient privacy, and equity protections.



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