



Houston can become a global hub for medical artificial intelligence, new report finds

HOUSTON, TX – October 17, 2024 - Center for Houston's Future released *Houston's Future: AI in Healthcare*, a comprehensive report that explores the transformative role of artificial intelligence in the region's medical ecosystem, highlights Houston's untapped potential for collaborative leadership and spells out concerns that must be tackled.

Find the report here: <https://www.futurehouston.org/ai-in-healthcare/>

The Center, with its expertise in a range of health, health care innovation and health equity topics, was motivated to publish this work by the growing recognition of AI's potential to revolutionize patient care and the clear opportunity and imperative for our region to lead in this field.

"AI, if done right, offers the potential to revolutionize healthcare and create a more efficient, effective and equitable system," said David Gow, president and CEO of the Center for Houston's Future. "If we work together, especially given the expertise and record of innovation in the region's medical ecosystem, we can take advantage of the opportunities AI presents while addressing its challenges.

The Center's report, based on extensive research and interviews with 33 experts in AI and healthcare and a survey of 10 major healthcare systems serving over 27 million patients, provides an in-depth analysis of current AI applications, challenges, and strategic recommendations for healthcare leaders.

Houston's healthcare sector is already leveraging AI to better patient care, the Center found. However, the report also identifies challenges, including data privacy concerns and the need to address potential biases in AI algorithms. Key findings from the report include:

- AI is revolutionizing healthcare in Houston, enhancing diagnostics, personalizing treatments, and optimizing patient care across various applications including medical imaging, patient monitoring, and personalized treatment planning.
- Houston's world-class medical institutions and diverse population position the city as a potential leader in medical AI innovation.
- Challenges include data privacy concerns, integration with existing systems, and the critical need to address potential biases in AI algorithms that could exacerbate existing health disparities.



- Investment costs as well as a need for comprehensive training among healthcare professionals remain significant hurdles to widespread AI adoption.

Center for Houston's Future recommends the following strategies to improve health outcomes equitably, enhance job satisfaction, and establish Houston as a medical AI leader:

- **Foster Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships among providers, AI engineers, academia, and tech companies to drive innovation.
- **Establish Robust Data Infrastructure:** Create a comprehensive, diverse dataset with standardized data on social determinants of health, shared standards, and secure data sharing platforms.
- **Prioritize Equity and Algorithmic Justice:** Develop AI solutions that address health disparities and mitigate bias.
- **Invest in Workforce Development:** Equip healthcare workers with AI skills and prioritize initiatives to reduce burnout.
- **Leverage Small and Big Data:** Use both large-scale and focused datasets to address various healthcare challenges.
- **Focus on "Raising the Floor:"** Prioritize AI applications that improve access to care for underserved populations in addition to "blue sky" initiatives to increase impact.
- **Support AI Innovation:** Create an ecosystem for AI startups with funding, mentorship, and resources.
- **Measure and Communicate Impact:** Develop frameworks to assess AI interventions and share results effectively.
- **Engage Policymakers:** Advocate for policies supporting AI innovation, data privacy, and equitable healthcare access.
- **Build Public Trust:** Invest in education and outreach to promote understanding of AI's potential in healthcare.

This paper is the latest in a series of healthcare-focused reports from the Center and was made possible with funding from St. Luke's Health, a nonprofit health system with 16 hospitals in Texas.



"The health care and artificial intelligence expertise in Houston is world-renowned so it's a natural fit for St. Luke's Health to sponsor this collaborative report that brings together leading minds to examine the transformative role of AI in health care," said Matt Brown, interim Houston market director of CommonSpirit Health, including St. Luke's Health. "As AI continues to advance, its impact on health care will only grow stronger, leading to even more innovative and transformative applications that revolutionize patient care and improve equity in the overall health care experience."

About the Center for Houston's Future: The Center for Houston's Future focuses on understanding future global trends and their impact on the Houston region. The Center brings business, government, and community stakeholders together to engage in fact-based strategic planning, collaboration, and action on issues of great importance to the region's success. It engages in research, holds community events and develops leaders. Its current strategic focus areas include energy, climate and energy transition; health and health equity; and Vision 2050, a strategic visioning plan for the region. The Center is an independent affiliate of the Greater Houston Partnership. Its leadership program has graduated more than 1,300 business and civic leaders.

About St. Luke's Health: St. Luke's Health is home to 16 hospitals covering Houston, Brazos Valley, Brazosport, and Lufkin and includes Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center, the research and teaching hospital for Baylor College of Medicine. St. Luke's Health is also home to the Texas Heart[®]Institute (THI), the top-ranked heart center in Houston, and the Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center, a nationally accredited, NCI-designated cancer center. Its integrated network of care includes more than 380 employed and 1,600 clinically aligned network providers, and more than 21,000 employees, providers, interns, and volunteers delivering high-value, nationally-ranked quality care within a Christian ministry of healing. St. Luke's Health is a part of CommonSpirit Health.



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