As the various sectors within the health care industry continue to evolve and adjust, many questions remain regarding the state of the industry and how our businesses and local population are affected. To help answer some of those questions, the San Fernando Valley Business Journal turned to three leading experts who work at the forefront of the health care industry in our region.

What follows is a series of questions the Business Journal posed to these health care stewards of the Valley and the unique responses they provided – offering a glimpse into where health care stands today – from the perspectives of those in the trenches delivering and facilitating health services for the people of the San Fernando Valley.
“I knew the Henry Mayo staff was on my side and that they believed in me.”

Jamie A.  
Henry Mayo Patient

THIS IS QUALITY HEALTHCARE

henrymayo.com/qualitycare
HEALTH CARE ROUNDTABLE

Workforce health programs are important because poor lifestyle choices increase the risk of chronic conditions, which have a negative effect on the lives of employees and can also raise health insurance premiums.

KATHY KIGERL

Cultivating the right culture and environment for the patient experience should always be one of the top care values for any service provider.

PRECIOUS MAYES

What are the current trends impacting health care? What major trends do you expect in the next 3-5 years? How will the landscape be different?

CASILIGURI: The current trends impacting healthcare, I believe, are related to health care consolidation, which ultimately leads to fewer and fewer choices for consumers. There is a potential danger with this trend that it may create an environment where patients are given lower cost options with less attention to the best clinical outcomes. We will need to be careful that we don’t start to define healthcare value only around cost. We should ensure that we are always looking for the best clinical outcome for the best price. Those two variables should always be linked in order to deliver the best affordable care. Another, more exciting trend is the harmonization of cancer patients’ genomic data with cancer patients’ clinical data in larger systems. The utilization of this resource will enable us to better predict who will get cancer and what treatment will likely cure the patient, but it will likely take upwards of a decade to move this into routine practice. Nonetheless, the promise of this level of precision medicine will have great impact on outcomes for many diseases.

MAYES: Health care continues to evolve and trend with impacting changes in operational strategies. Some of the major trends in healthcare include value based care and payment models, concierge model of service, data analytics and expanding Medicaid program. With these trends, there will be increased focus on patient experience, data analytics to create strategic changes and expansion of partnerships with independent physician groups and managed care organizations.

KIGERL: One major trend impacting health care now that will likely be around for the next three to five years is mental health and wellness. Mental health is a pressing public health issue across the nation, and its important for businesses to prioritize employee mental health and embrace holistic wellness approaches. Things like anxiety, depression, addiction, and stress are affecting not only our immediate communities, but our workforce, too. As health care professionals, we need to encourage an ecosystem for health, to go upstream and address these causes before they have detrimental effects impacting generations to come. The mind and body are connected, and we need to help those who struggle with depression, anxiety, addiction, and other mental or emotional issues that can interfere with daily life. Addressing and providing care early, or before mental health issues become a problem also aids in creating a culture of kindness to oneself, breaking stigma, and allowing for an open dialogue for those who are affected.

Health insurers and delivery systems are often seen as adversaries. Can the relationship be redefined? Is it possible for them to work together?

MAYES: Absolutely, health insurers and delivery systems can collaborate and partner together to provide optimal care to achieve expected outcomes. One of the key strategies in developing relationships between insurers and providers is transparency with expectations and individual goals as an insurer and provider.

KIGERL: Kaiser Permanente has redefined the relationship with health insurers and delivery systems, because Kaiser Permanente is an integrated system that brings together all of the elements of care – the health plan, hospitals, physicians, home health, and support functions – into the country’s largest nonprofit integrated health care delivery system. Our unique structure puts people and systems together in ways that result in better health care quality outcomes for our members. Our integration is supported by sophisticated information technology, and thanks to our innovative HealthConnect electronic medical record system, we have records that move along with each member, ensuring all appropriate medical information moves smoothly from clinic to hospital, or from primary care to specialty care. Within our integrated model of care, we also have an intense focus on prevention, health education, and care management. These programs have allowed us to notice patterns in care and ailments of our members. Because our goal is to keep people healthy, we have systematically reduced death rates of cardiovascular disease and colon cancer significantly below the California average.

With Millennials changing jobs so often, why should employers invest in employee health and wellness?

KIGERL: Workforce health programs are important because poor lifestyle choices increase the risk of chronic conditions, which have a negative effect on the lives of employees and can also raise health insurance premiums. They also make it harder to be productive, lead to more sick days, and increase costs for workers’ compensation. Research continues to show that effective wellness programs can lead to employees having better lives. Throughout Southern California, Kaiser Permanente is committed to the health and wellness of its more than 76,000 employees and physicians. Every day, we have an opportunity to improve the health of our staff by providing a safe, healthy workplace. We approach workforce health from a holistic point of view, with encouragement for everyone to start where they are. We have resources, tools and programs — including wellness coaching and topical webinars — to help our physicians and employees be the best they can be, in mind, body, and spirit. Kaiser Permanente in the Panorama City Medical Center Area also works with employers in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys to develop their own workplace wellness initiatives.

What does the future look like for the viability of small or independent hospital systems?

CASILIGURI: I think the future can be quite bright for small or independent hospital systems, especially if their clinical outcomes are good and as a society prioritize those outcomes. We should not be convinced that mergers into larger systems is the best way to deliver care, especially if the data do not support that position. Value in healthcare should pertain to many factors – getting to the right treatment faster and delivering better clinical outcomes with less side effects and at the best cost. Small or independent hospital systems can focus on high quality care in a way that larger systems may not be able to, which can lead to better outcomes and a better patient experience. To me, all of this points to a very bright future for small or independent hospital systems.

MAYES: Small or independent hospital systems can be successful in the future. It is critical we define our healthcare lane as we cannot service all things to everyone. Also having the right leadership team in place to operationalize strategies are key to the success. Understanding the needs of the community and insurers is important for growing specialized programs and services.

What role does patient experience play as it pertains to the delivery of healthcare services?

KIGERL: We are committed to providing the type of patient experience that meets people where they live, work, and play to help them live healthier, longer lives. To do that, we are expanding our care experience into the daily lives of our patients. At Kaiser Permanente we aim to empower our members to choose where, when, and how they get their care – motivating them to be more proactive about their health, lowering overall health care costs and increasing patient satisfaction. Our focus is on creating a patient experience that is intuitive and meaningful and we aim to keep our members healthy in addition to treating them when they are sick. In addition to our members seeking care in person, we have great tools — our kp.org website, the Kaiser Permanente mobile app, and phone appointments, to name a few. Our members who use our online and telemedicine tools say they are more confident and less intimidated by health care services.

MAYES: Patient experience is a very important factor in care delivery across the continuum. Cultivating the right culture and environment for the patient experience should always be one of the top care values for any service provider. Identifying custom approaches to provide a “concierge” level of service to the patients/families is a key strategy. The core of healthcare is putting the patient first and applying effective processes to promote positive outcomes and service.

CASILIGURI: One thing we know is true. Patients are always waiting – for an appointment, for a diagnosis, for a viable treatment option, for a time when their life can get “back to normal.” It is up to us, at every level of a healthcare organization, to reduce that waiting and hasten the cure – through the delivery of innovative discoveries in our research labs, through shortening our initiation times for life-saving clinical research trials, and through viable treatment options that offer few side effects, as patients can get back to living as normal as possible the life they want to live. These are our goals when delivering healthcare services and this is how we ensure the best possible patient experience.
A healthier workforce creates a stronger business.

Get the tools you need to establish a healthier workplace culture, helping your employees manage stress, sleep better, and exercise more. Learn more at kp.org/choosebetter.

Choose Better. Choose Kaiser Permanente.
Mental health continues to be an issue for many people. What are health care organizations doing to proactively address this need and provide the required resources?

KIGERL: At Kaiser Permanente, our priority is on delivering a high-quality patient care experience. Our integrated system allows us to work together across every department, specialty, or sub-specialty to support the total health of our members and deliver a consistent, high-quality care experience. Our advanced electronic medical record system enables our physicians and care teams to deliver world class care and strive for clinical excellence. Physicians at Kaiser Permanente are able to focus 100% on patient care, because we are supported by a service-oriented administrative team that handles day-to-day business operations. We take pride in providing patient-centered care that is team-delivered and evidence-based. In addition, our newest facilities are designed to improve the member experience even further. We have open-space waiting areas designed to educate, entertain, and reinforce Kaiser Permanente’s commitment to total health.

CALIGIURI: For us at City of Hope, the patient experience is paramount and we recognize that people access information in different ways and at different times, which can influence their overall experience, including their level of anxiety. We generally discourage internet searches regarding disease and treatment because the information is unfiltered and often is not relevant to a particular cancer patient’s diagnosis. Our physicians always follow national guidelines for cancer treatment to be certain we have an approach to cancer treatment across the City of Hope with the intent to achieve superior outcomes. For example, having an expert in every specific cancer at City of Hope, who in turn works with every doctor in our system helps us achieve consistency in care, a better outcome and leads to an exemplary patient experience.

How is your system leveraging technology, old and new, to improve the patient experience and patient outcomes across ambulatory and in-patient settings?

KIGERL: Leveraging and improving technology is part of our commitment to transforming care and delivering better experiences. Through a variety of telehealth offerings, we make it easier to get care, increase quality, manage costs, and deliver better care experiences. In ambulatory settings, our telehealth suite includes phone appointments, video visits, secure emails with care providers, access to medical records, an online pharmacy, and our Kaiser Permanente mobile app. More and more of our patients use telehealth, and since 2012, we have delivered more telehealth touchpoints than in-person visits. Last year, 62% of our outpatient touchpoints were through telehealth. In our hospital, we have a “telestroke program,” which synchronizes technology to deliver life-saving care as fast as possible. With this use of technology, Kaiser Permanente stroke patients receive life-saving medicine twice as fast as the national average. Ultimately, telehealth is central to how we practice medicine at Kaiser Permanente and we use it to improve outcomes and deliver better care experiences every day.

Outpatient care is still trending upwards as both a convenience and cost-saving focus for consumers, employers and health plans. How have you addressed this transition and how has the growth of outpatient care advanced value in health care?

MAYES: At our hospital, Pacifica Hospital of the Valley, we offer outpatient services to increase access for our communities. We provide outpatient surgeries, laboratory, physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy services. Additional outpatient support services are in development that will meet the increasing needs for mental health well being. Additionally, partnering with community organizations to support preventative care services as well as follow up care post-acute hospital stays are essential value add programs.

CALIGIURI: Core to our belief is that we can deliver premier cancer care no matter where a patient may live, and yes, outpatient cancer care is growing rapidly. Practically, City of Hope has realized this through acquiring more than 30 community practice sites around Los Angeles and Southern California, with a fully integrated electronic medical record to maintain consistency no matter where you are seen in our health system. In addition, we are bringing our cancer care model to the work place via our partnerships with employers throughout the United States who utilize our expert cancer services to enable employees to receive the right care at the right time in the right place, which is usually close to home near friends and family. As treatments become safer, outpatient cancer care has become more the norm and as technology has become more sophisticated, we can now enable access to cancer experts regardless of geography. This is true value in health care.

KIGERL: It is our mission to provide high-quality, affordable health care to our members – and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. The health care environment is evolving rapidly and to keep up and stay successful, we need to increase our value. We do that by providing care in different ways – with multiple touch points – away from the traditional outpatient clinical setting. Over the past few years, we have been opening clinics in select Target stores, known as Target Clinic, care provided by Kaiser Permanente. We opened a Target Clinic in Northridge last year and have plans to open clinics in Burbank and Santa Clarita later this year. The clinics are conveniently open 7 days a week (including evening hours) and staffed by Kaiser Permanente nurse practitioners and licensed vocational nurses. Most importantly, they are open to both Kaiser Permanente members and non-members. We understand that in order to keep our members and communities healthy, we need to cus tomize the care experience and allow them to receive care “how and when” they want it – whether it is by telephone, video, in-person, or at a Target Clinic.

Medicine has made so many advances in the past few decades. Yet, we have yet to find cures for the big health problems –cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. What will it take to get us to a cure for these health concerns?

CALIGIURI: 30 years ago, many people died of cancer. Today, most people know a cancer survivor, i.e., someone cured or living successfully with cancer. This is true for lung cancer, colon cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer as well as many blood cancers. This is remarkable, and this number increases every year as mortality from cancer decreases. Furthermore, we now have a vaccine to prevent cervical cancer and the majority of head and neck cancers. We know so much more about cancer, as well as the intersection between cancer and diabetes, as our medical knowledge on how to treat and eventually cure these diseases increase exponentially every year. Coupled with our expansive knowledge on genomics and the use of big data and artificial intelligence (AI), precision medicine (giving the right treatment to the right patient at the right time) will further increase the number of people who will either not get cancer in the first place or will be cured. Finally, our increased collaboration with cancer centers around the country and the world moves our collective progress toward the best outcomes.
IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND MAKING LIVES BETTER.

At Pacifica Hospital we combine exceptional patient care, the latest medical advances, and novel education to create an innovative approach to health care. Patients can rely on receiving the best treatment from board-certified and experienced physicians, nurses and on-site diagnostic testing experts for immediate laboratory results.

Our Subacute programs offer cutting edge techniques while providing individualized therapy services to help you achieve your highest potential for independence and ability.

We’ve built a reputation for the highest quality outpatient rehab services, and individualized therapeutic interventions enable patients to optimal function and recovery. Learn more at pacificahospital.com or call 818.767.3310

PACIFICA HOSPITAL OF THE VALLEY
A COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AND MUCH MORE
SUN VALLEY, CA
www.pacificahospital.com

By Dr. John Pham

Self-improvement is always a hot topic, and teeth-straightening is one health-related trend getting stuck by opposing forces. On one side are sellers of plastic aligners pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into consumer advertising pitching the convenience of DIY therapy. On the other side are members of the orthodontic industry touting the importance of a doctor-supervised route to a new, beautiful smile. In the middle are consumers with a growing awareness of the personal, social and economic benefits of straight teeth, who know there’s more to a healthy smile. What’s really at stake?

Orthodontists have legitimate reasons for stressing the health benefits of straight teeth beyond their own reputations as clinicians. Poorly aligned or crooked teeth lead to a host of very real health issues, from heart disease to low self-esteem. A straight, healthy bite is a great beginning to a holistic approach to overall good health. A great deal can be said about looking your best, too.

“As an orthodontist, the first thing we do in a patient exam is look at the health of the patient’s teeth and make sure they are healthy enough to move,” said Dr. Lisa Guo of Westwood Orthodontics, an INBRACE provider based in Westwood. “We want to ensure that your teeth, your gums and your bones are healthy. Then we move onto treatment options for your individual case.”

Digging a little deeper into the success of plastic aligner therapy among today’s smiling Angelenos, you’ll find the driving factor based in Westwood. “We want to ensure that our patients are happy and proud of their personal, social and economic benefits of straight teeth,” added Dr. Dovi Perro of Perro Orthodontics, an INBRACE provider based in Beverly Hills.

INBRACE is a new, lingual treatment option compared to other options. The INBRACE technology will have a tremendous positive effect on the worldwide ESRD population that needs this procedure. A truly remarkable advancement for dialysis patients and clinicians, the Ellipsys procedure transforms an open surgery connecting an artery to a vein into a minimally invasive procedure using a needle and a catheter. Using a percutaneous approach, the Ellipsys procedure replaces a long skin incision with a needle puncture, surgical dissection with ultrasound imaging, and sutures with tissue fusion. The procedure can be performed in the physician’s office, hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. After it’s performed, the patient leaves with just a band-aid.

Ellipsys technology in 216 of his patients. Ellipsys, an innovative, minimally invasive catheter-based system for End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patients requiring hemodialysis, provides physicians and patients access to a unique non-surgical option for AV fistula creation, a necessary procedure for patients who require dialysis. In his heavily attended presentation, considered to be among the highlights of this year’s SVS event, Dr. Mallios outlined the benefits of using the Ellipsys System to create a percutaneous AV fistula.

In his presentation, Dr. Mallios described how functional dialysis access was established within an average of 4 weeks, allowing for the lifesaving blood cleansing to begin. He also explained that no major complications were encountered related to the procedures. “It appears that thanks to a moderate flow and low pressure that we see in these percutaneous fistulae, patients can now have peace of mind in the long-term, avoiding repeated operations and other common chronic problems that patients get when they have a regular surgical fistula,” said Dr. Mallios.

“We found percutaneous AV fistula creation using the proximal radial artery for inflow offers prompt maturation times, excellent technical success and patency rates with a very high safety profile,” added Dr. Mallios of his experience to date with the technique and technology. “Our patients are happy and proud of their percutaneous fistulae, having their arms preserved with a normal appearance avoiding the formation of aneurysms while providing an excellent access for hemodialysis. Based on the data we have gathered after treating 216 patients, we believe this revolutionary new technique and technology will have a tremendous positive effect on the worldwide ESRD population that needs this procedure.”

Dr. Mallios’ compelling data adds to the rapidly mounting evidence that Ellipsys has clearly emerged as the gold standard for end-AVF procedures,” said Mark Ritchart, President of Avenu Medical. “Because there is currently a shortage of dedicated vascular access surgeons who can create AV fistulae, our Ellipsys System can increase the number of clinicians performing vascular access procedures, which can in turn improve patient care by dramatically reducing the waiting time from request for fistula to usable access for dialysis. This, in turns, reduces the morbidity associated with temporary catheter access. In short, it represents a significant quality of life improvement opportunity for this patient community.”

A truly remarkable advancement for dialysis patients and clinicians, the Ellipsys System transforms an open surgery connecting an artery to a vein into a minimally invasive procedure using a needle and a catheter. Using a percutaneous approach, the Ellipsys procedure replaces a long skin incision with a needle puncture, surgical dissection with ultrasound imaging, and sutures with tissue fusion. The procedure can be performed in the physician’s office, hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers. After its performed, the patient leaves with just a band-aid.

Learn more about the Ellipsys System at avenumedicalex.com.
It’s not enough to promise future cures. We have to find them today. This is the passion that drives us. We are City of Hope doctors and researchers, advancing science that saves lives. Our work has led to the development of four of the most widely used cancer-fighting drugs. We’ve pioneered CAR T cell therapy and are turning your immune system into cancer’s worst enemy. We’re making precision medicine a reality by using your genes to determine the best treatment for your cancer. At City of Hope, our patients depend on us for extraordinary answers. That’s why we work like there’s no tomorrow. Find out more at CityofHope.org