



The new CEO of health care: How prevention and wellness are redefining growth

About the authors: *Bill Siren, Ryder Riess, and Andy Davis are leaders within Deloitte’s Health Care Strategy practice. This editorial explores how health care leaders can align growth strategies with the rise of the “consumer as CEO”—translating wellness and prevention priorities into sustainable business opportunities that position their organizations for growth.*

Introduction: The new CEO of health care

In the past, the traditional health care consumer had limited knowledge of treatment options and deferred to their health care professionals as the central care decision-maker. However, a Deloitte [Life Sciences and Health Care report](#) from November 2025 shows that consumers are increasingly taking agency over care priorities and decisions, becoming “CEOs” of their health and wellness.

As this shift accelerates, health system **chief strategy officers (CSOs)** play a critical role in repositioning their organizations to meet evolving consumer expectations and capture value in preventive care models.

Deloitte research shows that consumer priority-setting centers on wellness, with objectives like weight management, nutrition, and expectations for seamless experiences across health care players that enable preventive health. While this shift in traditional health care roles could be viewed as disruptive, our study found traditional players like physicians (59% influence) and health insurers (29% influence) still hold significant sway over consumer wellness purchase decisions, outranking sources such as social media (18% influence). Health care organizations can maintain this level of trust by transitioning from business models based on reactive care (treating issues post-symptom) to a preventive care focus (mitigating issues pre-onset) associated with wellness priorities. This also has the potential to reap considerable financial opportunity: Deloitte estimates that the shift to preventive care (mitigating issues pre-onset) could unlock \$500 billion in annual Medicare savings and more than \$2.2 trillion across the US health system by 2040.¹

In this blog, we outline specific opportunities and business model plays that CSOs can activate, showing how preventive care strategies can align to consumer wellness priorities while expanding margin potential for health organizations.

CSOs should focus on developing strategies for metabolic health and food as medicine, given their increasing growth potential within preventive health care.

Strategies for metabolic health

Many consumers are increasingly focused on preventing chronic illness associated with metabolic health, especially as novel GLP-1 treatments continue to proliferate in the market. Between 2019 and 2024, the proportion of US adults with a GLP-1 prescription increased from 0.9% to 4%, a 363% relative increase.² In addition to being a key consumer focus, chronic conditions including those related to metabolic health, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes, could represent more than \$349 billion in annual avoidable spend by 2040.³

Health care companies can meet consumer demand for improved metabolic-related offerings and unlock savings with an effective preventive health strategy:

- Differentiate plan benefits by pairing GLP-1 coverage with metabolic coaching and participation in weight management centers of excellence that integrate medications with nutritional and behavioral support to drive sustainable outcomes and cost control.
- Incorporate consumer subscription models into current business models via digital coaching and continuous condition monitoring.
- Leverage artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics to identify at-risk populations and proactively offer wellness solutions catered to consumers for metabolic needs to mitigate condition onset.

In addition to addressing the consumer CEO's priority for metabolic health solutions, health care organizations can potentially generate a boost to their bottom line: protecting margins from expensive chronic care spend and creating additional revenue streams from in-demand products and services.

Strategies for food as medicine

Many consumers also exhibit rising expectations for nutrition and healthy choices. Food as medicine is emerging as a central priority for daily health management: 48 million US households have a member whose health condition needs to be managed through diet, and 76% of Americans prefer to use food over prescription medications to support their health.⁴ Beyond its health impact, this shift represents a major economic opportunity. The cost of treating diet-related disease exceeds \$400 billion annually,⁵ and as consumer spending on healthy eating, nutrition, and weight management grows, "food as medicine" is rapidly becoming both a health care imperative and a growth engine for the wellness economy.

Health care companies can address this demand while reframing nutrition as a revenue play through strategies including:

- Reassess benefit designs to include coverage options for medically tailored meals, nutrition coaching, grocery incentives, and broader wellness products (e.g., functional foods, supplements).
- Offer continuing education and digital tools to doctors, pharmacists, and other clinicians. With only 14% of physicians feeling adequately trained to provide nutritional counseling, despite being trusted by consumers to influence nutrition decisions,⁶ doing so may help them be better prepared to guide patients toward optimizing food and nutrition decisions.
- Activate retail and grocery store partnerships via shared-savings programs and medically tailored meal purchase initiatives.

These strategies offer ways to create new, margin-accretive wellness offerings that can be efficiently embedded into payer and provider core business operations, with nutrition-based prevention aligning improved health, consumer preferences, and margin improvements from reduced medical costs.

CSOs should also consider how their existing assets and growth opportunities can be captured through ecosystem integration and partnerships to deliver on consumer expectations for connected care.

Strategies for ecosystem convening

Consumers increasingly expect seamless, coordinated experiences, similar to what they encounter in technology, retail, and hospitality. Health care organizations can meet this demand by acting as ecosystem conveners, orchestrating an integrated network of health, wellness, and community partners to deliver unified, end-to-end experiences. This structural shift not only can enhance satisfaction but also could unlock operational and financial efficiencies across the system.

Health care leaders can operationalize this convener role through deliberate partnership strategies that:

- Monetize partner orchestration through integration fees, premium wellness bundles, or licensing.
- Create value from shared-savings contracts across convened players.
- Leverage brand trust by anchoring partnerships under the credibility and scale of incumbent payer or provider brands.

In doing so, the consumer's needs could potentially be met faster, enabling adoption of healthy, wellness-focused behaviors in and out of the traditional health care setting. These strategies can broaden revenue streams and expand market share by positioning the organization as the trusted hub for consumer-driven health. At the same time, long-term margins can be hedged by spreading investment risk across ecosystem partners.

Closing: CSO imperative

Consumers as CEOs of their health is not a passing trend; it is a new operating reality. For CSOs, the mandate is clear:

- **Embed wellness as a growth engine, not an adjacent offering.**
- **Redesign products, benefits, and partnerships around preventive health priorities.**

- **Balance affordability, margin expansion, and long-term sustainability through consumer-driven strategies.**

Wellness, paired with preventive health, is not just about keeping pace with consumer demand. It is a strategic lever for competitive differentiation—and the organizations that embrace it may be better prepared to set the terms of growth in the next era of health care.

Interested in learning more? Read recent Deloitte insights here!

1. [Safeguarding Medicare: Proactive care could unlock \\$500B in annual program savings](#)
2. [Health Forward Blog: 2026 Life Sciences and Health Care industry insights report](#)

Please reach out to Bill Siren, Ryder Riess, or Andy Davis with any questions.



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Endnotes

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2. Paige Twenter, [“8 GLP-1 updates,”](#) *Becker’s Hospital Review*, May 30, 2025.
3. Davis et al., [“Safeguarding Medicare: Proactive care could unlock \\$500B in annual program savings.”](#)
4. FMI, The Food Industry Association, [The food as medicine opportunity in food retail](#), 2021; Rider Riess et al, [“Consumers want to eat their way to better health. How can health and business leaders help?”](#) *Deloitte Insights*, July 15, 2025.
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6. Marion L. Vetter et al., [“What do resident physicians know about nutrition? An evaluation of attitudes, self-perceived proficiency and knowledge,”](#) *Journal of American College of Nutrition* 27, no. 2 (April 2008): pp. 287–98.

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