

Meet the trailblazers

By Farhana Chowdhury

he rapid evolution of healthcare services in the Middle East in the last decade owes itself to leaders who, as visionary architects of business and modern medicine in the region, continue to dedicate time, energy, and resources to raise the standard of quality and care. This has further raised countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a hotspot for top-class healthcare treatments, and attracted the best of the best medical professionals and smart solutions that are collectively redefining the value healthcare providers bring to the forefront.

Saudi Arabia's surge in healthcare investments is further enhanced by the country's Health Sector Transformation
Programme, part of its Vision 2030 strategy. As the Kingdom's plans to dedicate over US\$65 billion to develop its healthcare infrastructure, its healthcare market value is projected to reach US\$486.2 million by 2027, according to the US International Trade Administration, giving global healthcare leaders a prospective playing field to enhance healthcare services.

In the next pages, Omnia Health pays homage to some of the region's renowned visionaries, some of whom have gone above and beyond to create a sustainable, future-ready foster rich culture of patient-centred care and compliance in Saudi Arabia.

Armed with strategic insight and experience across multiple sectors, read on to learn about each leader's unfaltering commitment to collaboration and improvement in the everevolving landscape of healthcare.



Dr. Fouziyah Mohammed Al-Jarallah

Position / Chief Executive Officer
Company / Al-Inma Medical Services Co., owner
and operator of Hayat National Hospitals Group

am honoured that my role in the healthcare sector has also led to high-profile board memberships including Consultant in the National & Gulf Center for Evidence-Based Health Practice, Vice President of the National Committee for Private Hospitals in the Council of Saudi Chambers, and Member of the National Health Committee, all of which are national organisations that focus on improving and developing the Saudi healthcare sector, and which add huge responsibilities to my duties.

Thoughts on the healthcare industry in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, an ambitious roadmap for the country's future, includes significant healthcare reforms. The vision aims to achieve a world-class healthcare system that provides accessible, high-quality care to all citizens. This commitment to reform and improvement is a driving force in propelling the healthcare industry forward and positioning Saudi Arabia as a regional healthcare hub.

Biggest opportunities and obstacles for innovation in healthcare

While innovation in healthcare brings forth immense opportunities such as technological advancements, personalised medicine, remote patient monitoring, and data analytics and predictive modelling, challenges remain in terms of regulations, data security,

resistance to change, costs, accessibility, and interoperability. Addressing these obstacles is crucial to foster a culture of innovation and maximise potential benefits.

Top priorities for the organisation in the coming year

Enhancing patient experience:

We will focus on implementing initiatives that prioritise patient satisfaction, comfort, and convenience. This includes reducing wait times, improving communication channels, enhancing the hospital environment, and ensuring personalised care. Implementing patient feedback systems and actively listening to the needs and concerns of patients can also help in identifying areas of improvement.

Embracing technological innovation:

Allocate resources to implement and leverage technologies such as electronic health records (EHRs), telemedicine, artificial intelligence (AI) for diagnostics and decision-making, and remote patient monitoring. Encouraging collaboration between the IT department and healthcare providers can help identify and adopt technologies that improve patient care and optimise hospital operations.

Investing in workforce development:

The success of any healthcare organisation depends on its workforce. This involves implementing training and

development programmes to enhance the skills and knowledge of healthcare professionals and ensuring they stay up to date with the latest advancements and best practices. Creating a positive work environment, promoting worklife balance, and nurturing a culture of innovation and continuous learning that can help attract and retain talent. Additionally, consider initiatives to address employee burnout, promote diversity and inclusion, and foster a sense of purpose and fulfilment among the workforce.

Biggest influence on career path and overall success

The biggest influence as the first Saudi lady to lead a mega group of hospitals as CEO in KSA could be attributed to my family background in the Saudi healthcare industry and the support I received from my father, Mohammed Bin Naser Al larallah

Besides a strong educational background, my passion for medicine, continuous learning, and international certifications in business development have shaped my career trajectory and prepared me for leadership positions in the healthcare sector. Furthermore, my involvement in high-profile board memberships, reflects a commitment to improving and developing the Saudi healthcare sector. These roles indicate my passion for influence and dedication to advancing the healthcare industry in the country.



Dr. Ahmed Babaeer

Position / Chief Executive Officer
Company / Dallah Health

r. Ahmed bin Saleh Babaeer is at the forefront of the rapidly growing health sector within the Kingdom. With a PhD in agricultural machinery engineering, Dr. Babaeer says: "Being at the helm of a healthcare system does not necessitate a medical degree."

Commenting on his career trajectory, he says: "My path into management began with Jazan Energy and Development Company, a public joint stock company from 1994 to 1999. Following that, I led AlJawf Agricultural Development Company, a public joint stock company between 2000 to 2005. I joined the healthcare sector when I transitioned to Dallah Healthcare Company on March 28, 2008, with an aim to transform it from a limited liability firm to a public joint stock entity — a vision realised on December 17, 2012."

Regarding challenges in the health sector, Dr. Babaeer notes: "The path is getting smoother, thanks to the regulations by the Ministry of Health, the Insurance Authority, and the Council for Health Insurance. Regular dialogues and updates from the Ministry of Health help us to ensure we are abreast of new legislation. One of the key challenges, we are resolving is the concentration of insurance companies originating from a limited number of health insurers and escalating operating costs. However, the Insurance Authority oversees the

relationship between health service providers and insurance companies to ensure that beneficiaries of hospital services are not affected by these challenges.

Dr. Babaeer is optimistic about the private sector's role in healthcare. He believes that the sector is full of opportunities for investors, particularly in the growing areas. The private sector can strategically tap into these areas, given the Kingdom's demographic and rising lifestyle diseases including diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, etc.

Emphasising Dallah Healthcare's principles, Dr. Babaeer states: "Our guiding star is to provide safe and superior medical quality care while ensuring fair returns to our stakeholders without compromising patient welfare or misusing insurance policies. We aspire to be

Our guiding star is to provide safe and superior medical quality care without compromising patient welfare. where patients need us the most and to complement the Ministry of Health's initiatives"

Today, part of the achievements for Dallah Health includes 11 Centers of Excellence, accredited by the Surgical Review Corporation (SRC).

On a personal note, when asked about his inspirations, Dr. Babaeer reflects: "It is difficult to name a specific influence. My foundational years were shaped by my parent's encouragement towards higher education. Professionally, numerous individuals have marked my journey, but my upbringing and the blessing of leading three public joint stock companies, all growth-focused, have been pivotal. In addition, since 2008 I have been influenced by Engineer Tariq Alkasabi. His strategic vision, aligned with the company's forwardlooking growth and development strategy and supported by a well-integrated work system, played a pivotal role in my 15-year journey with the company. Moreover, we have a robust board of directors who understand the keys to success and maintain a close relationship with the executive management."

In his closing remarks, Dr. Babaeer expresses gratitude: "I am deeply honoured to be recognised by Omnia Health among the top leaders in private healthcare. This acknowledgment is as much a tribute to the Dallah Health team as it is to my journey."



Dr. Walid Fitaihi

Position / Founder, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Directors
Company / International Medical Center
Hospital (IMC)

have been pioneering the development of the IMC project since its inception in 1997, starting from the conduction of the initial market research and feasibility studies to finding the right private investors who share the same vision, raising independently SR350 million for the financial guarantee of the project's success and achieving the CCF Partnership. My integral role in the foundation of the IMC included the creation of the mission and vision, overseeing the design and construction of the facility, guiding it through a successful accreditation, setting up guidelines for recruitment, quality, and policymaking while instilling the IMC culture and values to all involved.

My mission in life is to bring a breath of a new vision that would enhance the quality of healthcare and ensure that the IMC truly represents a major paradigm shift in healthcare delivery in the region.

Thoughts on the healthcare industry in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision is the motive and support behind the development of the healthcare industry in the private sector. Another contributing factor is the population's growth. Saudi Arabia's strength lies in its high percentage of youth and adding that to the recent opening of foreign investments gives us a great base for our aspirations.

Biggest opportunities and obstacles for innovation in healthcare

The biggest opportunity lies in the overall growth across all industries, population expansion, and the fact that Saudi Arabia is now more open to foreigners and foreign investments. The main obstacle now is the acquisition, retention, and attraction of talent in healthcare. For example, we are facing a global healthcare crisis in nursing, which requires increased investment to encourage more Saudis to enter the nursing industry.

Top priorities for the organisation in the coming year

The top priority is the manpower. We must work on the retention and development of talents as well as Saudisation, which involves bringing the new Saudi workforce to a high level that helps the hospitals become quality providers. The global healthcare crisis in nursing is also one of

the top priorities and all institutions need to develop Saudi nurses and retain them.

Biggest influence on career path and overall success

The one person who has had the greatest impact on me is our guide, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), as a way of life. In addition, my father, who appreciates medicine and hard work, is the person who encouraged me to pursue a career in healthcare and supported my education to study medicine and open a hospital. My mother also dedicated her life to us. She taught us the value of knowledge and reading. Furthermore, I always try to gain wisdom from anyone and everyone. Every person I learned from has had an influence on shaping me into the person I am today.

Final notes

Many investors are choosing the healthcare industry to build hospitals in Saudi Arabia. We need to focus on rewarding high quality via specialised tools, and I believe that the Saudi government and the Ministry of Health are doing a great job with the DRG concept to establish hospitals of better quality.



Yaseen M. Mallawi, MD

Position / Acting Chief Executive Officer - Healthcare Delivery, and Chief Risk and Compliance Officer - Risk and Compliance, HQ Company / King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSH&RC)

n his over 30 years of professional experience, Dr. Yaseen Mallawi has a diverse background as a Clinician, Entrepreneur and Healthcare Executive. He has been a member of the Royal College of Physicians – UK since 1994 and became a board-certified in Internal Medicine in 1995. He completed his Fellowship for Adult Cardiology and Cardiac Electrophysiology in Cleveland Clinic Foundation in 1997, along with obtaining certifications as ACLS instructor and Balanced Scorecard Professional (BSP). In 1998, he was one of the pioneers for Cardiac Electrophysiology in the Kingdom and has been a Senior Consultant for Cardiology & Cardiac Electrophysiology for over 16 years.

In September 2020, Dr. Mallawi was appointed as Acting Chief Executive Officer for Healthcare Delivery, KFSH&RC to oversee supervising the healthcare activities and services across the organisation. This is in addition to his title as the Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, which he

assumed in February 2020, to oversee the risk and compliance functions of the organisation.

He showcases substantial leadership and demonstrates a remarkable ability to identify successful strategies to develop strong teams and deliver measurable results.

During his tenure as Chief Operating Officer in KFSH&RC from 2018 to 2020, he strongly advocated the 'One Team, One Goal' initiative and has been one of the major key stakeholders involved in executing and achieving the Hospital's objectives and operational plans.

Besides Riyadh and Jeddah, Dr. Mallawi also provided his service and expertise at King Abdullah Medical Center, MOH – Makkah as Executive Director (2011-2013), Chief Executive Officer (2013-2014), and Advisor to the Health Minister for Planning and Development (2015).

In addition, Dr. Mallawi also serves as a member of the Executive Committee for KFSH&RC Board of Directors, KFSHI – Board of Directors, and the Advisory Board for Health Cluster.



Mohanned Alrasheed

Position / Chief Executive Officer
Company / LEAN Business Services

ith over 15 years of experience spanning various industries, Mohannad Alrasheed is a visionary leader. He's not only founded significant government and private but currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer at Lean Business Services.

His journey began in software development and has since led to leadership roles in management consulting, education, digital transformation, and technology.

Additionally, Mohannad contributes as a board secretary and advisor to the boards of NUPCO and Takamol Holdings, underscoring his commitment to strategic leadership and innovation.

Thoughts on the healthcare industry in Saudi Arabia?

The healthcare industry in Saudi Arabia is experiencing rapid growth due to several pivotal factors. The government, as articulated in Vision 2030, is taking proactive measures to boost funding and implement policies that enhance healthcare services, and it's also actively promoting public-private partnerships to stimulate innovation and investment in the sector.

Furthermore, the Healthcare Sector
Transformation Program holds a central
role in the broader transformation of
the Kingdom's healthcare system. It
places significant emphasis on achieving
financial sustainability, fostering
innovation, and preventing diseases.
Concurrently, this program is driving the
advancement of e-health services and
digital solutions, collectively raising the

overall quality of healthcare services and aligning the healthcare system with the modern demands of the nation.

This transformation in the Saudi healthcare industry is not only bringing it in line with international standards but is also being propelled by the rapid evolution of technology. The integration of health informatics, electronic health records (EHRs), and the application of artificial intelligence (AI) is fundamentally reshaping healthcare in Saudi Arabia. These innovative initiatives and technological advancements have yielded substantial success in the Saudi healthcare sector, significantly improving healthcare accessibility, elevating service quality, and ultimately enhancing the lives of patients.

Biggest opportunities and obstacles for innovation in healthcare?

In the realm of healthcare, the interplay of opportunities and challenges within the sphere of innovation is particularly noteworthy. The healthcare industry, known for its intricacies and stringent regulations, paradoxically serves as a fertile ground where innovation holds the potential to yield profound benefits, including improved patient outcomes, cost reduction, and the overall advancement of medical services.

Key opportunities for innovation in healthcare encompass the burgeoning field of telehealth, personalized healthcare and genomics, data analytics, and the empowerment of patients. Telehealth, for instance, extends the reach of healthcare services, offering substantial advantages for individuals in remote or underserved

Healthcare innovators are those who skillfully overcome challenges while steadfastly prioritizing patient safety and the quality of care.

regions. Personalized healthcare and genomics provide the means for tailored treatments, enhancing the precision and efficacy of patient care. Data analytics, on the other hand, unleashes the potential of information to drive more informed and effective decision-making. Meanwhile, patient empowerment fosters a proactive role in one's healthcare journey, fostering a sense of control and involvement.

Nonetheless, significant hurdles must be surmounted. Regulatory constraints, data security concerns, and the innate resistance to change pose formidable challenges on the path to healthcare innovation. Successfully navigating these barriers is of paramount importance.

In this dynamic landscape, healthcare innovators must not only embrace the winds of change but also place an unwavering focus on patient safety and the delivery of high-quality care. The true measure of success in healthcare innovation lies not only in its capacity to advance the industry but also in its ability to enhance the well-being and lives of individuals.

Top priorities for the organisation in the coming year:

In the year ahead, Lean is set for a remarkable leap in its development journey. Our 2024 plan unveils top priorities:

- 1. Amplifying Impact: Our steadfast commitment centers on propelling substantial change by empowering individuals and unlocking the full potential of data-driven solutions. We are dedicated to catalyzing a transformative shift within the healthcare ecosystem, aligning with the Health Sector Transformation Program (HTSP) to bring about significant change in Saudi Arabia's healthcare landscape.Creating successful collaborations with nongovernmental organisations for the implementation and promotion of appropriate health transformation in Saudi Arabia.
- 2. Community-Centric Solutions: Our commitment to sharing knowledge and advancing research in Saudi Arabia is underscored by compelling case studies that uplift lives, nurture the local healthcare industry, and make a profound impact on our community's well-being.
- 3. Empowered Ecosystem: At the core of our portfolio lies the establishment of unified medical records. This pioneering initiative is dedicated to streamlining clinical data exchange among healthcare professionals throughout the Kingdom. Moreover, our relentless exploration of artificial intelligence (AI) solutions promises enhanced collaboration, faster decisionmaking, and a new era of healthcare marked by unprecedented efficiency and effectiveness.

Final notes

As the Pioneers of Innovation for a Smarter Healthcare Ecosystem, we are dedicated to enhancing lives in Saudi Arabia and beyond. Our commitment lies in providing innovative solutions, propelling the healthcare service industry forward, and creating a profound, positive impact.



Dr. Abdulaziz Saleh Alobaid

Position / Chief Executive Officer
Company / National Medical Care Co.

obtained a bachelor's degree in medicine from King Saud University and chose to specialise in Obstetrics and Gynaecology through different residency and training programmes both locally and internationally.

In 2002, I completed a Fellowship of the Royal College of Physician and Surgeons of Canada FRCS (C), and in 2005 I completed three years of fellowship in Gynaecologic Oncology and was recognised as a Certified Gynaecologist Oncologist by the Royal College of Surgeons in Canada (GOC). I obtained a fellowship from the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ACOG) in 2007 and enrolled in a Master of Health Administration (MHA) from the University of Minnesota in 2011.

I started my professional career in 2005 when I joined King Khaled University
Hospital as a Consultant in Gynaecology
Oncology. The following years were
fruitfully spent as I joined King Fahad
Medical City, practicing as a doctor, and
then given a chance to explore leadership
skills as I was appointed as the Medical
Director of the Women's Specialized
Hospital, a tertiary care centre in Riyadh
that has 236 beds.

During the years at King Fahad Medical City, I have been engaged not only in administrative and clinical tasks, but also spent time on scientific studies and organising committees that aimed to educate students through lectures and workshops. I have had several articles published in international peer-reviewed journals as well. I joined the National Medical Care company as the Chief Medical Officer and later became the Chief Executive Officer in January 2019, which involved administrative work alongside clinical duties.

Thoughts on the healthcare industry in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's healthcare market presents considerable opportunities, underpinned by these key trends:

- Market underpenetration
- Ageing population
- Health challenges linked to
 urbanisation and socioeconomic
 shifts

Biggest opportunities and obstacles for innovation in healthcare

Vision 2030 with its emphasis on public health improvement and the growing population. The challenges (not obstacles) are always to be able to adapt to ongoing developments and changes in the medical field and provide the best care that is in line with our customers' expectations.

Top priorities for the organisation in the coming year

As part of our strategic journey, we aim to be at the very forefront of healthcare in Saudi Arabia by pioneering advancements and setting standards for others to follow. Responding to the unique opportunities in the Saudi Arabian market, our strategic objectives encompass:

- Expanding and enhancing our presence in Riyadh by diversifying and amplifying our suite of health services.
- Engaging and serving untapped population segments, extending our gold-standard care to new regions of the Kingdom.
- Providing unparalleled value to our patients and partners.
- Establishing integrated value networks across our business divisions to ensure a cohesive service delivery and an improved patient experience.

These ambitions are supported by a meticulously crafted set of initiatives.

Biggest influence on career path and overall success

Being a citizen of Saudi Arabia, I had exceptional support from my government to obtain training in great institutions abroad. My family has always supported me, especially my parents, wife, children, and siblings, as well as my teachers throughout my career — from school to specialisation.

Final notes

We look forward to being able to positively contribute to the healthcare of our people and work to achieve the 2030 vision, which we are all passionate about.



Prof. Aws Alshamsan

Position / Secretary General
Company / Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS)

rofessor Alshamsan is an accomplished academic and the esteemed Secretary General of SCFHS. With a rich background in academia, he previously served as the Dean of the College of Pharmacy at King Saud University, where he led numerous research projects and supervised graduate

Over the years, Professor Alshamsan has published over 60 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, cementing his position as a thought leader in the pharmaceutical industry. As an esteemed reviewer and editor for numerous reputable journals, he is well-respected by his peers.

Professor Alshamsan has also lent his expertise as a consultant for Vaccine, Biologics, Biosimilars, and Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products at the Saudi FDA. He is a key figure in many committees and has contributed significantly to the advancement of the pharmaceutical field in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Thoughts on the healthcare industry in Saudi Arabia

Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia is indeed transforming healthcare into a peoplecentred ecosystem, placing the health and well-being of Saudis at its core. This ambitious plan aims to achieve several key objectives — preventive healthcare, telemedicine and digital health, access to care, quality of care, healthcare workforce development, research and innovation, and community health.

Biggest opportunities and obstacles for innovation in healthcare

The healthcare sector presents both obstinate challenges and incredible opportunities for innovation. These are centred on regulatory hurdles, data privacy and security, and resistance to change.

On the other hand, opportunities involve healthcare innovation, improved patient care, preventive medicine, efficiency and cost savings, global health impact, empowering talents for an innovation-oriented healthcare system, education and training, and research and development. It also promotes collaboration, incentives, regulatory reform, and patient engagement.

In conclusion, healthcare innovation holds immense promise for improving patient outcomes, increasing efficiency, and addressing global health challenges. Empowering talent through education, collaboration, and a supportive ecosystem is the key to building an innovation-oriented healthcare system that can navigate obstacles and seize opportunities to benefit patients and society as a whole.

Top priorities for the organisation in the coming year

To streamline the accreditation and classification process for practitioners, we are exploring the implementation of Decision Intelligence. This technology has the potential to significantly reduce turnover time and increase accuracy. Additionally, we are investing in research

and development to create the Clinician Investigator Program (CIP). This program will foster research aligned with Vision 2030's aim to cultivate research and innovation in healthcare. Our roadmap to the future is installing a seamless and supportive experience for healthcare professionals, and guide them through a path of innovative healthcare that this country aspire to realise.

Biggest influence on career path

My parents have been my biggest influence because they embody the qualities I most admire. They have shown me what it means to be a good person, a loving parent, and a responsible member of society. They have set the bar high, but they have also shown me that anything is possible with hard work and determination.

Final notes

SCFHS' success is centred around healthcare practitioners' success. Nothing we do would be of value if healthcare practitioners are not proud to be part of healthcare.



Assaf Alsaab

Position / Chief Executive Officer
Company / Waseel

y entrepreneurial drive and desire to work on something impactful led me to the healthcare industry. After close to 10 years of a successful career in IT and banking, I decided to leave it all to start a healthcare clinical laboratory company in the US. We built the company from the ground up and grew it from zero to US\$18 million to date. After four years of being in the US, I decided the time has come for me to move back home to Saudi Arabia to help and contribute to our ambitious Vision 2030.

I have since been leading Waseel as the pioneer in transforming the health ecosystem in Saudi Arabia. When I joined the company back in 2019, we had only one product that was diminishing due to market forces. Since then, Waseel's product lines grew substantially to seven products and services to date and the growth in revenues set a record growth every year.

Thoughts on the healthcare industry in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is a significant factor driving the healthcare industry forward. The Saudi government has been making substantial investments in healthcare infrastructure which aims to improve the accessibility and quality of healthcare services for the country's growing population, as well as encouraging private sector involvement in healthcare, aiming to increase

competition, improve efficiency, and expand access to healthcare services. This will certainly make technology the driving force behind healthcare as part of Vision 2030.

Biggest opportunities and obstacles for innovation in healthcare

I believe that the most impactful innovations in healthcare will revolve around technologies enhancing the quality of care and the patient experience. On the other hand, the biggest obstacle I see is the adoption of those technologies and the change management to the stakeholders of the healthcare delivery continuum.

Top priorities for the organisation in the coming year

Top priorities would be to fulfil our company's mission and get us closer to our purpose of enabling technology to serve our communities and humankind. We are scaling the company, maintaining an engaged team, building new products, and driving new revenue records.

Biggest influence on career path and overall success

I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by people from all walks of life throughout my career, who continuously inspire me to do better and become a more effective leader for my organisation. Waseel's product lines grew substantially and the company's revenues set a record growth every year.



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