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Moving toward smart ecosystems of care

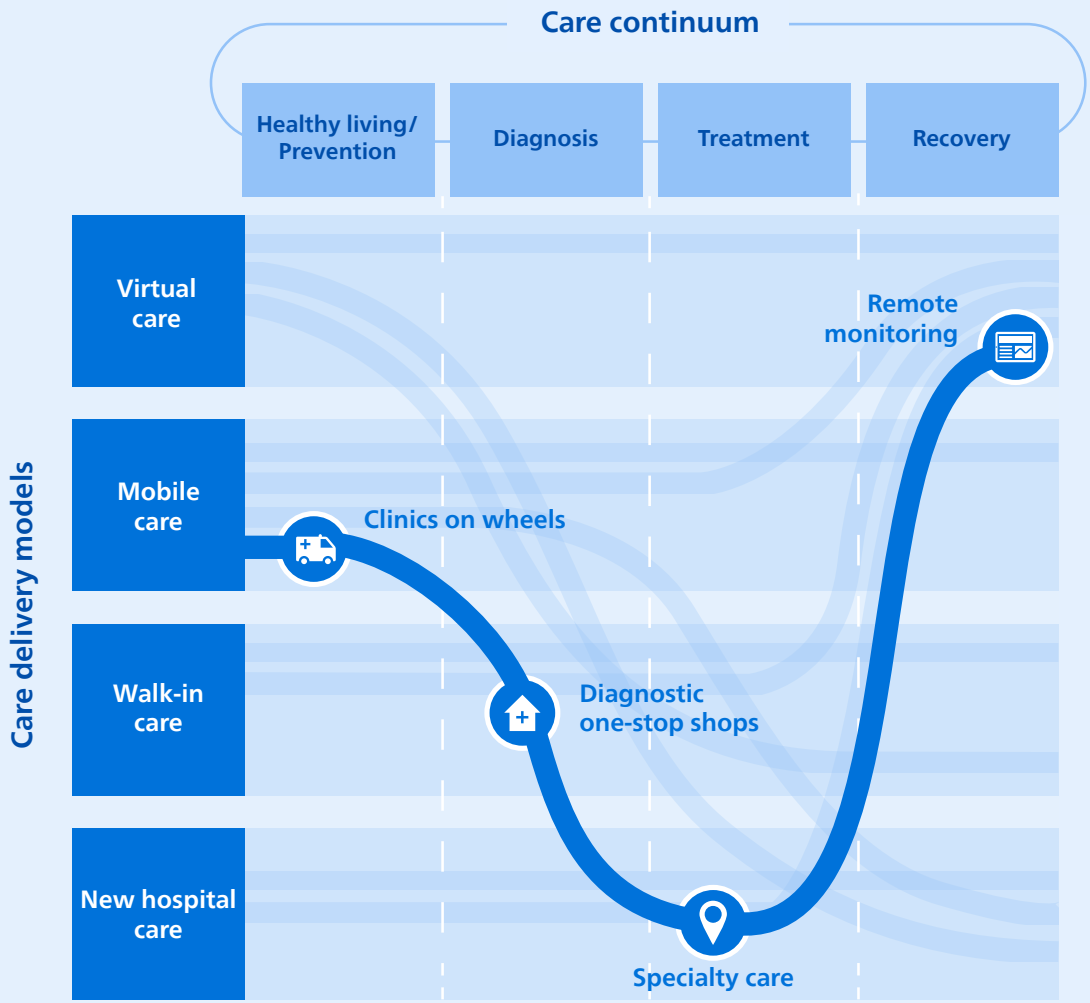
To meet the growing demand for affordable and accessible care, building more hospitals cannot be the only answer. Through smart and connected technology, healthcare providers can extend care delivery beyond hospital walls and bring it closer to the patient, whether that is virtually or physically, at home or nearby in the community.

The trend towards out-of-hospital care was already well underway before the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital triaging, telehealth, and remote patient monitoring. As the 2022 Philips Future Health Index report reveals, healthcare leaders now view extending care delivery beyond the hospital as their highest priority after staff satisfaction and retention.

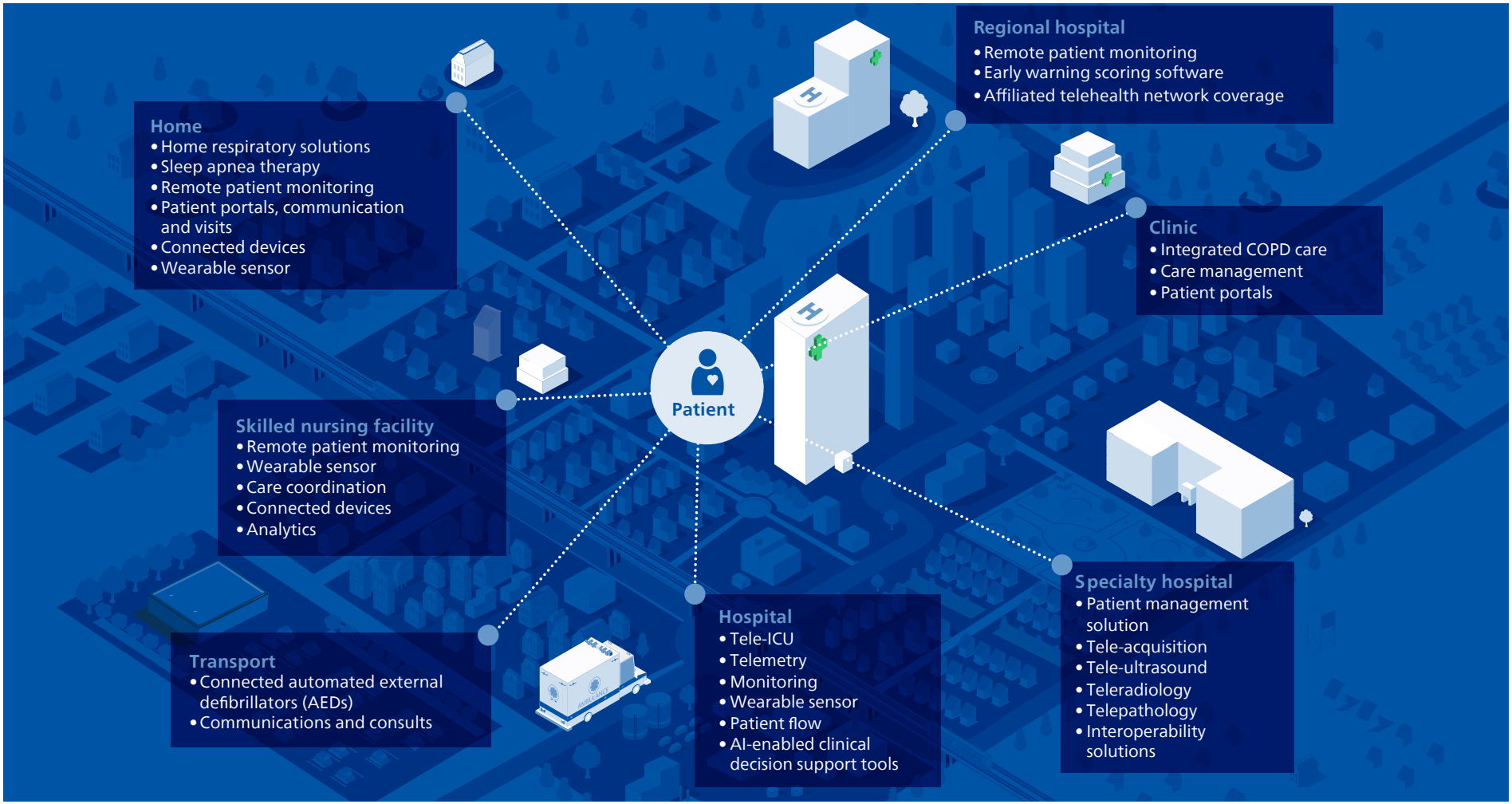
Increasingly, we will see healthcare being delivered through a distributed network of ambulatory clinics, retail settings, mobile care solutions, and home-based monitoring. What will make these ecosystems of care truly 'smart' is the ability to connect and integrate patient data across care settings – using AI, the Internet of Things (IoT), and cloudbased digital platforms to turn data into actionable insights at scale, when and where they are needed.

Smart hospitals will be an essential part of the healthcare ecosystem of the future, but they will no longer provide all services under a single roof. Instead, they will focus on delivering a narrower set of highly specialized services, including diagnosis and treatment of acute, severe, and complicated conditions. At the same time, hospitals will take a more prominent role in managing population health in the community and at home. The smart hospital of the future will not be bound by walls – it will offer seamless experiences that follow the patient wherever they go.

Four emerging care models in a distributed healthcare system



A potential care scenario across emerging care delivery models along the care continuum.



Bringing care closer to the patient

In lockstep with the rise of virtual care, we expect to see a further increase in healthcare services being delivered in walk-in settings such as department stores or community clinics.

During the pandemic, pop-up clinics have played a pivotal role in relieving the strain on overwhelmed healthcare systems by providing testing and vaccinations on a large scale. There are many other routine exams and medical procedures that could also be delivered in community-based settings to relieve hospital resources, improve access to care, and support early detection and diagnosis of disease.

For example, the NHS in England is planning to build one community diagnostic center for every 300,000 people – amounting to up to 150 diagnostic hubs. These "one-stop shops", which are located away from hospital sites closer to patients' homes and often on the high street or in retail locations, will provide specialist services for cardiovascular patients, people with cancer, and those with respiratory illnesses – supported by expert teleconsultations where needed.[1]

Similarly, in the US, where people in rural or remote areas make up one fifth of the population, we have designed virtual care stations that allow patients and providers to connect remotely through a secure, clinical-grade environment. In addition, we are bringing innovations in imageguided therapy closer to patients through out-of-hospital settings such as officebased labs or ambulatory surgery centers, which can perform routine procedures at lower cost while offering patients greater convenience. Through mobile health technology solutions such as mobile ICUs health trucks, we can make care even more accessible to patients while connecting healthcare professionals with more experienced peers in a specialty hospital for remote support and guidance.[2]

1. https://www.philips.co.uk/healthcare/resources/landing/community-diagnostic-centres 2. https://www.philips.com/a-w/about/news/archive/standard/news/press/2020/20200707-philips-introduces- rst-of-a-kindmobile-icus-in-india-to-tackle-covid-19-and-other-emergencies.htmlLorem ipsum