Current research agenda for life sciences (pharmaceutical and medical device) leaders

Topic	What we're researching	Why it matters
Specialty care market trends	• What key changes in each of the major service lines (oncology, cardiovascular, neurosciences, orthopedics, obesity care, and women's) are the most impactful to care delivery and service line strategy?	On-the-ground dynamics of specialty care delivery are always changing. Life sciences leaders need to understand these dynamics to position their products to support health system and provider customers more effectively.
Geographic market archetypes	• How do different healthcare markets compare based on demographic, population, and healthcare supply factors?	Understanding market-specific volumes and growth profiles can help life sciences leaders tailor their commercial approaches to better meet the needs of unique customers.
Strategic planners survey	• What are the intentions of health system strategy leaders related to spending, growth, operations and partnership?	Learning about health system strategic planners' priorities helps life sciences leaders communicate their product's value story in a way that feels fresh and relevant for their health system customers.
Infusion market trends	• What are the latest care delivery trends in infused medications (oncology and non-oncology)?	Infusion care is evolving as clinical innovations and payer policies shift how and where infused medications are administered. Understanding the challenges and decisions facing providers enables life sciences companies to better support provider partners and optimize product positioning.
VBC in specialty care	• Which specialists are most engaged in value-based care today—and which will be in the next 3 years? • How are specialists participating in ACO-style models without overburdening primary care or disrupting hospital demand? • Where does it make more sense to prioritize procedural risk over specialist inclusion in ACO models?	Specialists are key decisionmakers when it comes to medication and device use. As value-based care models evolve to engage specialists, those specialists' payment and incentive structures are changing. Life sciences need to understand how VBC in specialty care is changing to support product positioning for future success.
AI for clinical and coverage decision-making	• How are stakeholders investing in AI for clinical decision-making? • What are their future plans, partnership strategies, and barriers to adoption? • What potential futures and inflection points should leaders anticipate?	AI is reshaping clinical decisions. Life sciences leaders must understand how the growing use of AI in clinical decisions will affect provider decision-making processes, evidence generation, and payer-provider dynamics.
AI in revenue cycle and payment integrity operations	• How is AI transforming revenue cycle management, including claims processing, coding, and prior authorization? • How does AI enhance payment integrity by detecting underpayments, fraud, and missed reimbursement opportunities?	The use of AI-driven RCM tools is changing how providers get paid and how product value is assessed. Understanding these tools – and how they are changing revenue cycle processes – is critical for life sciences leaders positioning their products for optimal market access.

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Site-of-care-shift trends	• Which high-value procedures are shifting from inpatient to outpatient settings? • Are shifts consistently moving toward lower-cost care sites? • What are the most common site-of-care switch types (e.g., clinic to HOPD)?	Amidst the broader trend for healthcare procedures to shift from inpatient to outpatient settings, there are significant variations by service and geography. Understanding the dynamics influencing shifts across the country helps life sciences leaders plan more accurately and be better partners to their customers as they navigate these shifts.
Health plans growth strategy	• What is the current competitive landscape in Medicare Advantage and employer-sponsored insurance? • What major initiatives are shaping the regulatory environment for these lines of business? • How are plans evolving product design and growth strategies? • What approaches are employers taking to manage high-cost drug spend?	Understanding payer growth strategies helps life sciences leaders anticipate coverage shifts, align contracting strategies, and support payer partnerships more effectively.
State of pediatric hospitals	• What is the financial outlook for pediatric hospitals, especially in light of OBBBA? • What cohort-specific margin insights can be drawn from pediatric hospital performance? • What pediatric-specific solutions are emerging to address financial sustainability, including strategies around margin management, family financial experience, and new growth avenues?	Pediatric hospitals face unique financial pressures and operational challenges. Life sciences leaders must understand these dynamics to better support pediatric care delivery, align partnership strategies, and anticipate shifts in demand and investment across pediatric service lines.
Health system purchasing	• How are hospitals and health systems evolving their purchasing priorities amidst financial sustainability concerns? • What are the top goals for VACs and P&T committees over the next year? • Which metrics do VACs and P&T committees use when making decisions? • How are purchasing decisions evolving to account for procedural cases shifting to ambulatory care settings?	Health systems are evolving their purchasing strategies in the pursuit of financial sustainability, using new tools and new measures of value to inform purchasing decisions for supplies, drugs, and medical devices. Life sciences leaders need to understand how purchasing priorities are evolving to ensure they are providing the right data to support their products' use.
Trends shaping life sciences strategy (pharma and med tech)	• Which challenges will have the biggest impact on pharma and med tech commercial strategy in 2026? • What key trends should commercial leaders be tracking across access, evidence, and distribution? • What actions can life sciences companies take to stay competitive in a shifting market?	The life sciences industry is at an inflection point. As pharma and medical device companies face mounting pressure they must adapt faster and more strategically to stay competitive in an evolving healthcare landscape.

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