



# 5 Key Trends from HLTH 2025

# Bringing Vision Innovation to

The VSP Global Innovation Center (GIC) is proud to return to the largest healthcare innovation conference in the U.S.



2022



In its inaugural year, the VSP Global Innovation Center established inroads with Techquity, a new health equity initiative, as a national research partner. In addition, the team seeded front-door engagements with eye care startups and healthcare investors and evaluated potential on-site opportunities for 2023. Read the Techquity Coalition Report [here](#).



2023



In its second year, VSP led a fireside chat on vision and dental as a "front door to care" and shared insights from the GIC's Future of Benefits Report. The GIC hosted a booth, showcasing recent work, inviting attendees to take a personalized eye health quiz, and asking them to share their *vision* for the future of care through an interactive exercise. Watch the 2023 recap [here](#).



2024

Back for a third year, the GIC presented a Tech Talk on the Future of Senses and supported VSP's booth presence to elevate its role in overall health and well-being. The GIC facilitated meetings with industry leaders, including Topcon Healthcare, to explore ways to support future programs such as the VSP Vision Innovation Challenge. Watch the 2024 Teck Talk [here](#).



2025

VSP Vision immersed itself in the HLTH 2025 program and community, participating in various panels and meetings with industry leaders and partners, including CareQuest Innovation Partners and KITE Scouting. The GIC also delivered a presentation within the Diagnostic Zone on "The Eye as the Ultimate Diagnostic Tool." Watch the presentation [here](#).

## 5 Trends from HLTH 2025

**HLTH** is the largest healthcare innovation conference in the U.S., bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders across the entire industry, with over 12,250 attendees, 950 sponsors, and 500 speakers.

The [VSP Global Innovation Center](#) (GIC) was on-the-ground at HLTH 2025 to engage with cutting-edge startups and technologies, source next-gen perspectives, and promote its innovation efforts.

The team generated 20+ insights over the week by attending sessions, canvassing the show floor, and connecting with industry leaders from around the globe.

In addition, the GIC brought vision innovation to the conference, presenting insights from its [Future of Oculomics](#) report to amplify vision care's growing, evolving role across the entire healthcare continuum, and deepening its network with key industry leaders like [Topcon Healthcare](#), [CareQuest Innovation Partners](#) and more.

*Read on to dive into the conference's top trends.*

## Trend 1:

# AI Homogenizes the Digital Health Ecosystem

**Insight:** The HLTH floor and program reflected the state of the digital health ecosystem, with funding and energy focused on one thing: **AI**. Gone are the days of a category-diverse floor, once populated with sleep tech, fem tech, wellness, etc., in equal measure; today, nearly every digital health company is an AI-enabled.

**Why It Matters:** As AI becomes an expected utility, companies without AI-enabled value are struggling for capital; according to [CB Insights](#), digital health companies accounted for six of the 11 new AI-focused unicorns created across all sectors in Q1 2025, signaling that investors are prioritizing platforms that deliver immediate, automated operational efficiency.



Day 1 HLTH Panel: AI-Enabled Engine Solves Prior Auth Inefficiency

**Notable Number:** AI-enabled startups captured a [majority 62%](#) (\$3.95B) of digital health venture funding in H1 2025.

**HLTH Panel to Check Out:** [AI That Actually Delivers on Redefining Healthcare](#)

**HLTH Indicator:** AI had a dedicated focus area on the exhibitor floor with activations and experiences such as an AI Innovation Theater, sharing case studies in precision medicine, workflow automation, and predictive analytics.

## Trend 2:

# Diagnostics Shift from Lab-centric to Life-centric

**Insight:** Driven by technological advancements in connected devices, wearables, and AI-enabled diagnostics, consumers are demanding that testing move out of traditional clinics and meet them where they are. This empowers the patient and shifts the focus from episodic, reactive screening to continuous, proactive health management.

**Why It Matters:** Fragmentation is the number one consumer pain point in testing; health systems must "unhook growth from real estate" and build highly connected diagnostic ecosystems. This decentralization of diagnostics is critical for capturing long-term consumer loyalty and accelerating the potential shift to **value-based, preventive care**.



Axios' Brock Turner and Oura CEO Tom Hale discuss building trust in preventative health.

**Notable Number:** [65% of consumers](#) surveyed by PwC, reported they want the entire healthcare system built around prevention, not treatment.

**HLTH Panel to Check Out:** [The Bigger Picture: Scaling Personalized Medicine For All](#)

**HLTH Quote:** "New testing models and technologies are shifting diagnostics from being lab-centric to life-centric." – James York, Chief Commercial Officer with Molecular Testing Labs

### Trend 3:

## Specialties Democratize Access to the Front Door

**Insight:** While primary care and labs have typically served as the "front door" to the healthcare system, specialties like eye care, oral care, and behavioral health are stepping into that role, as well. Driven by advancements such as oculomics, the study of the eye as a window into overall health, and salivary diagnostics, these specialties are becoming first-touch screening hubs for chronic conditions.

**Why It Matters:** Escalating chronic care costs demand low-cost preventative gateways. Investors recognize this, with [52% of 2025 Digital Health 50 winners](#) focusing on specialty diagnostics, affirming that these providers are an effective access points for early intervention.



Attendee receiving free chairside screenings at the HLTH 2025 Oral Health Pavilion

**Notable Number: 20%**— The share of **specialty care** that **Houston Methodist** executives plan to shift to a **virtual model within the next three years**.

**HLTH Panel to Check Out:** [Oculomics: The Eye as the Ultimate Diagnostic Tool](#)

**HLTH Indicator:** The **Oral Health Pavilion** featured live clinical demonstrations of medical-dental integration, including A1C testing and saliva-based diagnostics

#### Trend 4:

## Agentic AI Bridges the Patient-Provider Experience

**Insight:** AI agents are rapidly emerging as the connective tissue in healthcare, filling the gaps between doctor appointments and transforming the patient experience via continuous, personalized digital engagement. Agentic AI serves as the critical middleman between the overwhelming abundance of patient data and clinicians, translating raw data into actionable, real-time insights.

**Why It Matters:** By acting as a "middleman," Agentic AI helps to address several critical issues, such as physician burnout. This shift allows clinicians to focus more on patient care, with studies showing Agentic AI tools significantly [reducing the time physicians spend in the EHR at home.](#)



GE Healthcare announced its latest AI research projects and partnerships at HLTH

**Notable Partnership:** At HLTH, [GE HealthCare showcased its Agentic CareIntellect platform.](#) Deployed at Queen's Health Systems, the solution achieved a 22% jump in patient transfer admissions and a 41% decrease in ED length of stay in 10 months.

**HLTH Panel Recording to Check Out:** [At the Frontier: Shaping the Future of Agentic AI in Healthcare](#)

**HLTH Quote:** "Data is like eating a pufferfish. If it's clean and managed well, it will taste good. If not, don't eat it." – Lauren Riplinger, JD, Chief Public Policy & Impact Officer, AHIMA

## Trend 5:

# Biowearables Go Upstream to Address the Root Causes of Poor Health

**Insight:** Biowearables, an advanced category of health wearables that measure physiological biomarkers from inside the body, is experiencing explosive growth, buoyed by the commercialization and rise of continuous glucose monitoring systems.

**Why It Matters:** Biowearables allow patients to manage their health more effectively, providing real-time, continuous data from the body. The category improves patient outcomes and increases efficiency by enabling more proactive, personalized care, potentially lowering costs by moving the needle upstream and addressing root causes of poor health before they lead to medical crises.



Siphox Health offering onsite blood test, showcasing new ways to perform such tests from home

**Notable Number: \$8.4 Billion** –The projected U.S. Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) market size by 2033, [representing a 9.5% Compound Annual Growth Rate](#) (CAGR) spanning 2025-2033.

**HLTH Panel Recording to Check Out:** [Biowearables 3.0: Context is Everything](#)

**HLTH Indicator:** HLTH 2025 featured a Diagnostics Zone on the show floor, elevating advanced devices (like CGMs/biowearables) and signaling that real-time biometric data collection is a foundational pillar of health tech investment and strategy.

# Amplifying Vision Innovation at HLTH 2025

## Oculomics – The Eye as the Ultimate Diagnostic Tool

October 21st, 3:05-3:20 PM PT | Diagnostics Stage



**WILL FLANAGAN**  
Head of Programs & Partnerships  
VSP Global Innovation Center

## Inside Vision Care's Evolving Role as a Front Door to Healthcare

**Presentation Insight:** Recent advancements in AI and imaging technologies are accelerating **oculomics**, the study of the eye as a window into overall health. New startups and solutions are leveraging oculomics, examining the association between ophthalmic biomarkers and systemic health and disease states, to unlock net new health insights from the eye and expand the scope of care delivered within an optometric setting.

**Why It Matters:** A standard comprehensive eye exam can already detect signs of more than 270 chronic conditions and diseases. AI is now poised to amplify the eye's diagnostic potential, elevating the role vision care plays in the healthcare continuum.

**Read More:** Dive deeper with the Global Innovation Center's Futurist Report, [The Future of Oculomics](#)

Watch the HLTH presentation recording [here](#).



HLTH 2025 is an annual opportunity for members of the VSP Global Innovation Center to engage with next-gen healthcare startups and entrepreneurs, bolster VSP's pipeline of potential partners, identify and synthesize key industry trends, and position both the enterprise and vision care industry as leaders in the healthcare innovation community.



## Our Call to Innovators

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At VSP Vision™, we are constantly reimagining the way eye care and eyewear are delivered to the world.

To fulfill this promise, the VSP Global Innovation Center is actively seeking new startups and technologies to collaborate with on forward-looking innovations, especially around access to eye care.

Interested in connecting? Let's talk.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US AT: [globalinnovationcenter@vsp.com](mailto:globalinnovationcenter@vsp.com)

## About VSP Global Innovation Center

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At VSP Vision, our purpose is to empower human potential through sight. As the first and only national not-for-profit vision benefits company, VSP has been the leader in health-focused vision care, providing affordable access to eye care and eyewear for more than 85 million members through a network of more than 41,000 providers.

The VSP Global Innovation Center (GIC) is VSP's lens into the future.

Through emerging technologies, new business exploration, and strategic connections within the innovation ecosystem, the GIC is a hub for reimagining the way eye care and eyewear are delivered to the world.

To learn more, please visit [www.vspglobal.com/innovation](http://www.vspglobal.com/innovation)