

# LIFE CHANGES

## CREATIVE RESEARCH



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### INTRODUCTION

The quest for health and wellness has never been stronger. More people than ever realize the importance of taking steps toward a healthier way of life, which will in turn create a healthier planet. As the global population ages and people's lifestyle changes lead to a higher prevalence of obesity, chronic conditions, and degenerative diseases, health care is in high demand. The health-care industry itself is also facing unprecedented change, and innovation is flourishing as advances in science and technology enable new, more effective, and nontraditional treatments.

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DOCTOR  
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THERAPY  
TRAINING  
GES  
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### THE CHANGING DEFINITION OF HEALTH

The health-care industry has experienced significant changes over the last decade. Perhaps the greatest change has been a shift in the way that most consumers perceive the idea of health. Today's vision of health is more holistic — encompassing mind, body, and spirit. Whether it's time spent with loved ones or connecting with other cultures, our own lifestyle goals motivate us to keep our minds and bodies healthy.

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### COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

People are realizing that making healthier lifestyle choices is a collective responsibility. Individuals are looking beyond themselves and their families to the health of their friends and neighbors, creating communities whose members support each other through activities like weight-loss groups and walking clubs. Technology is also expanding support networks through web sites that motivate people and hold them accountable for making healthier choices. As more online health communities appear, health care is becoming less of an individual pursuit and more of a social cause.

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### HOME CARE

Society continues to adapt to the changing needs of an aging population, and there is more support — and more options — available to seniors than ever before. Baby boomers — who place enormous value on their independence and vitality — see no reason to ever leave home, much less entertain the idea of an assisted living or nursing facility later in life. As a result, the home-care industry is booming and aging adults are outfitting their homes with the necessary safety equipment to allow them to live at home well into old age.

Others are building houses that feature wider doorways and flat entries that will accommodate wheelchairs, grab bars, and easily accessible appliances and cabinetry. Networks of community volunteers help with errands, trips to the doctor, and everyday household tasks.

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### **TECHNOLOGY: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES**

While technology has brought with it the benefits of a global support system, the news isn't all good. Sleep deficits and general declines in health and wellness are increasing as more people feel taxed by information overload. Still, technology and the Internet provide information on every health-related topic imaginable. Though many people find access to this information empowering, they're also encountering the stress associated with sorting through vast amounts of data — not to mention the growing number of incorrect self-diagnoses.

However, new technologies are enabling increased independence, safety, and health for many. For example, care workers can remotely monitor and check in with patients on a regular basis through video chats and other web-based communications. Floor-mounted cameras and motion detectors help detect falls, while advanced monitoring systems check temperatures and heart rates.

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### DOCTORS AND PATIENTS

One notable change to the health-care industry has been the evolution of the doctor-patient relationship. A shortage of primary care physicians has resulted in less face time between doctor and patient during office visits, creating a need for alternative modes of delivery such as virtual health care. As a result, patients have become health-care collaborators, armed with the knowledge they've gleaned through Internet searches and crowdsourcing efforts. Many doctors have welcomed this change by relinquishing their traditional role of authority and encouraging patients to become more active participants in their own health.

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### **GROWING TRANSPARENCY**

Due to greater public involvement and skepticism regarding administration and costs, there is a trend toward increased transparency in the health-care industry. Consumers are also taking control and providing a measure of transparency through web sites that rate or compare potential physicians, hospitals, and treatments.

Breakthroughs like these are just the beginning as the health-care industry continues to grow and evolve to meet the changing needs of society.

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### CONCEPTS AND KEYWORDS

Access	Individuality
Accountability	Innovation
Care	Knowledge
Change	Prevention
Choice	Protection
Collaboration	Responsibility
Communication	Security
Community	Strength
Connectivity	Stress
Encouragement	Support
Future	Togetherness
Happiness	Transparency
Healing	Trust
Health	Vitality
Hi-tech	Wellness

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