

[View this email in your browser](#)



Health Systems Initiative

HSI Newsletter: May 2026

In this issue, we highlight the results of a [Healthcare Lab pilot at Boston Children's Hospital](#). Last year, a student team worked with the hospital's [Neurosurgery Department](#) to improve operational efficiency. Within a year of implementation, the team's recommendations contributed to measurable gains in patient access, scheduling efficiency, and clinic utilization. Miracles do occasionally occur outside of PowerPoint decks. Rare, but documented.

Congratulations to all new MIT graduates, with a special shout-out to those who completed the [Healthcare Certificate](#) program. On May 14, we hosted a certificate ceremony for these recipients. Below, we share [reflections and advice from this year's speakers](#).

Under [Notes](#), you'll find links to [new research and research updates](#) on AI in healthcare and worker mental health. There is also a request from the MIT Sloan Healthcare Club calling for volunteers to share their work experience. [Details below](#).

This is our final newsletter before classes resume in the fall. We wish you a restful and enjoyable summer.

As always, questions and suggestions are welcome at healthsystems@mit.edu.

NEWS

MIT Sloan Healthcare Lab Project Improves Patient Access at Boston Children's Hospital



Projects in the [MIT Sloan Healthcare Lab course](#) give students the opportunity to work directly with healthcare organizations on operational and strategic challenges. At [Boston Children's Hospital](#), one student team's recommendations led to measurable improvements in patient access, scheduling efficiency, and clinic utilization within one year of implementation.

Executive Summary

As patient demand increased in the [Department of Neurosurgery](#) at Boston Children's Hospital, appointment lag times for new patients grew to as long as 40-47 days, substantially exceeding the department's target of 14 days. Frequent appointment rescheduling further disrupted physician schedules, delayed care, and increased administrative burden.

Boston Children's partnered with a Healthcare Lab team to analyze the operational drivers behind these delays and identify opportunities to improve scheduling efficiency and patient access. Using quantitative analysis of more than 25,000 appointment records, along with interviews with physicians, administrative staff, and scheduling personnel, the team developed recommendations focused on scheduling flexibility, documentation workflows, communication standardization, and provider utilization.

Boston Children's subsequently piloted several recommendations, including redesigned 20/40-minute scheduling templates and standardized clinic preparation workflows. One year later, participating providers experienced a 12% increase in patient volume without additional clinic hours, while cancellations declined by 26%. Patient satisfaction scores related to scheduling also improved.

This project illustrates how Healthcare Lab student teams can apply operational analysis to real-world healthcare challenges and produce measurable organizational impact.

Read about the [team's specific recommendations and the host's results](#) on our website.

Healthcare Certificate Recipients Encouraged to "Move the Needle"

On May 14, 2026, 11 MIT students received the [Healthcare Certificate](#) in a ceremony led by HSI Director [Anne Quaadgras](#) and HSI Faculty Director [Joe Doyle](#). HSI Advisory Board Member and Sloan alumna [Rebecca Schechter](#) was the featured speaker. The recipients represented a cross-section of MIT programs, including MBA and Executive MBA students, a Sloan Fellow, Leaders for Global Operations (LGO) students, and a PhD candidate.



Anne opened the ceremony by describing the Healthcare Certificate program's focus on one of the most stubborn problems in American life: how to deliver better healthcare at a lower cost. She also shared that even relatively small operational changes can have very real consequences. A recent [Healthcare Lab project](#) hosted by [Boston Children's Hospital](#) led to recommendations that were later implemented in a pilot program, ultimately saving the department approximately \$200,000 while improving operations. In healthcare, where inefficiency often feels baked into the walls, a measurable improvement that actually survives contact with the real world counts as a genuine accomplishment.

Joe Doyle followed with remarks on the extraordinary scale of healthcare spending in the United States. The country spent \$5.3 trillion on healthcare in 2024, he noted, and projections suggest that figure could rise to \$9 trillion by 2033. At the current pace, healthcare spending threatens to consume an increasingly unsustainable share of the economy. But Joe also emphasized that the demand for high-quality care remains remarkably strong. Patients, employers, and health systems, he argued, are still willing to invest heavily in care that truly improves lives.

He encouraged students to think boldly about where they might contribute, whether by starting companies, improving healthcare operations, or redesigning systems within existing organizations. The stakes, he noted, extend beyond efficiency metrics and cost curves. Healthcare work ultimately affects whether people receive better care, recover more quickly, and live longer lives. He also reminded graduates that HSI collaborates closely with alumni on projects aimed at improving healthcare costs and outcomes. He encouraged students to remain connected to the broader MIT network as their careers develop.

organizations ranging from \$100 million to \$5 billion in revenue and spoke candidly about the realities of healthcare leadership. The most important lessons in her career, she explained, were not about glamorous technology or visionary strategy decks. They were about execution, persistence, and learning how to make difficult systems function under real-world pressure.

She pointed to three MIT lessons that proved especially valuable throughout her career: using analytics to break down complex problems, developing “systemic grit,” and prioritizing impact over ego. As she explained:

“I have spent my career navigating the space between a visionary idea and a scalable, sustainable business model. I’ve seen firsthand that in healthcare, strategy and innovation without execution are just expensive hallucinations. To move the needle on the Quintuple Aim, you have to be more than just a strategist; you have to be a navigator of systems, clinicians, regulators, and patients.”

Rebecca urged students not to lose the systems-level perspective they developed at Sloan. Healthcare organizations, she noted, are deeply interconnected, and solutions that look elegant in theory often become far messier in practice. She challenged graduates not to chase every shiny new technology or management trend, but instead to become the people who can make promising ideas actually work at scale for patients and providers.

Across all three speeches, a common theme emerged: healthcare may be one of the most frustratingly complicated sectors in the economy, but it is also one of the few where operational improvements can genuinely change lives. The recipients were encouraged to see themselves not simply as entering an industry, but as joining a larger network of alumni, researchers, and practitioners trying to make a deeply imperfect system function a little more intelligently, efficiently, and humanely. Which, in healthcare, is practically radical optimism.

[Back to Top](#)

NOTES

Coffee Chat Request from The Sloan Healthcare Club

The Sloan Healthcare Club is organizing a series of small-group coffee chats

for a few informal ~20-minute conversations.

If you'd be interested in participating this fall, please reach out to Healthcare Club co-presidents [Kenji Yoshi](mailto:kenji18@mit.edu) (kenji18@mit.edu) and [Smrithi Raman](mailto:smrithi@mit.edu) (smrithi@mit.edu).

Professor Kate Kellogg's Research on AI in Clinical Settings Featured in Spectrum Spring 2026

"At the MIT Sloan Health Systems Initiative (HSI), MIT Sloan School of Management professor [Kate Kellogg](#), PhD '05, studies what happens once new technologies arrive in health care and collide with real patients, busy physicians, and high stakes."

"My research examines how people adapt to new technologies, especially AI, and how organizations can redesign work in ways that protect human expertise, autonomy, and well-being," says Kellogg, the David J. McGrath jr (1959) Professor of Management and Innovation. "I'm an ethnographer. I go into the world people are living in and spend enough time there that I really understand where they're coming from."

Continue reading on the Spectrum website [HERE](#)

Professors Kelly and Rahmanadad's Research on an Employee Participation Initiative to Improve Mental Health Featured on the MIT Institute for Work and Employment Research (IWER) Site

"Can giving low-wage workers more of a voice on the job improve their mental health?"

[A just-published paper in the American Journal of Public Health](#) finds signs that the answer may be "yes."

In this study, a team of researchers that included MIT Sloan School of Management Professor [Erin L. Kelly](#), who is Co-Director of the MIT Institute for Work and Employment Research (IWER), and MIT Sloan Professor [Hazhir Rahmanadad](#) compared the experiences of employees in warehouses that launched a new employee participation initiative called [Health and Well-Being Committees](#) (HaWCs, for short) with colleagues working for the same company in control sites that didn't launch HaWCs. The study used a group-randomized controlled trial method within a company with multiple e-commerce fulfillment center warehouses."

Continue reading on TWFR's website [HERE](#)

[Back to Top](#)



Copyright © 2026 MIT Sloan Health Systems Initiative, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

