It's an exciting, yet challenging time in healthcare.

Medical research has advanced further in the past decade than at any time in human history. The decoding of the human genome has spurred research like never before—treatments and cures are starting to be tailored to the individual rather than the disease.

Yet, one of the greatest challenges that healthcare systems continue to face is patient safety. According to the report [1], *Visibility: The New Value Proposition for Health Systems*, medical error is the third leading cause of death in North America, behind heart disease and cancer.

This report suggests that medical error is often an outcome of an inadequate supply chain in clinical environments—a well-developed supply chain could protect patients by making it nearly impossible for errors to happen. It calls on healthcare stakeholders to transform their supply chain processes with GS1 standards, creating environments that are highly visible so that risks can be identified for intervention before errors can take place.

It's clear: The industry is listening and taking action. There's a great deal happening around the globe to improve healthcare supply chains, making them much more efficient and safer for patients.

Healthcare systems in about 70 countries and regions are implementing GS1 standards—in Australia, Brazil, Europe, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, UK, United Arab Emirates, U.S. and many more.

Today, nearly all EU countries are using GS1 standards to identify pharmaceutical products in support of the EU Falsified Medicines Directive. The Department of Health in England is driving the implementation of GS1 standards throughout its NHS Trusts.

As of June 2017, more than 85 percent of medical device records loaded into the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Global UDI database are using GS1 standards as the primary identifier.

And in 11 countries across Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East –where no regulatory requirements exist—barcode surveys have been conducted. They identified that a significant 70 percent of medical device secondary packages and 88 percent of pharmaceutical drug secondary packages now carry GS1 barcodes.

Most recently, CEN/ISO TS 18530, the global standard for patient and caregiver identification using GS1 standards, is being implemented in a range of hospitals worldwide, sometimes as part of national programs.

Indeed, GS1 standards are being widely used today--constant progress is being made!

On the following pages, read how healthcare stakeholders are making compelling changes to their supply and clinical environments. Learn how challenges are being turned into exciting opportunities, delivering better outcomes for healthcare operations and ultimately, for patients.

Get involved in GS1 Healthcare, our global user community, at **www.gs1.org/healthcare** where you will learn from peers, participate in webinars and conferences, and be able to use all the resources available to you, as a global member.

---

1   Dr. Anne Snowdon, RN, PhD and Dr. Charles Alessi, LRCP, MRC, *Visibility: The New Value Proposition for Health Systems*, *World Health Innovation Network, http://worldhealthinnovationnetwork.com/our-work/publication*