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**Keck School of Medicine of USC's Interim Dean, Dr. Rohit Varma, Speaks on  
Telemedicine's Future at *U.S. News & World Report* 'Healthcare of Tomorrow' Leadership Forum**

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WASHINGTON – The fourth annual *U.S. News & World Report* Leadership Forum, “[Healthcare of Tomorrow](#),” features national thought leaders, including [Rohit Varma, MD, MPH](#), interim dean of the [Keck School of Medicine of USC](#) and president of USC Care physician medical group, speaking on a range of topics that will shape the future of America’s health care system. Varma, who also serves as the director of the [University of Southern California \(USC\) Roski Eye Institute](#) and is the only ophthalmologist speaking at the event, will be featured on the panel, “Telemedicine Comes of Age.”

The telemedicine panel is one of the highly anticipated discussions during the conference, an event that unites the nation’s top health care leaders to exchange ideas, share best practices, and set new standards for patient care. Varma will highlight Keck Medicine of USC’s [Virtual Care Clinic \(VCC\)](#), a unique, holistic approach to providing patients access to medical experts anytime, anywhere using the latest digital health tools. He will also discuss the current [pilot study](#) between USC and VSP Global using the world’s first eyeglasses with a wearable sensor for biometric tracking.

“Technology moves fast and medical systems need to keep pace by offering innovative solutions that patients deserve,” says Dr. Varma. “I’m honored to speak at the *U.S. News & World Report* Conference and especially on this topic. This event gives us a glimpse into our health care future and telemedicine is just the beginning. Digital health is driving the medical community to offer patients more access, improved communication and better engagement in their own health outcomes. And it’s offering an exciting new era in training our next generation physicians.”

For the last decade, Keck Medicine of USC has stayed one step ahead by supporting a dedicated program, the [USC Center for Body Computing \(CBC\)](#), that delivers on the promise of digital health solutions. The USC CBC, founded by executive director, Leslie Saxon, MD, is the digital health incubator at Keck Medicine of USC and is leading the USC Virtual Care Clinic.

The USC VCC goes beyond traditional telemedicine to include a smartphone app allowing patients to talk to their virtual doctor – an avatar of the real physician – that offers thousands of answers to typical patient questions for numerous diagnoses. The virtual doctors use the advanced technology in virtual human creation developed by the USC Institute of Creative Technologies and answers are based on artificial intelligence (AI). This borderless, on demand access to world-class medical experts forms the foundation of the VCC but does not replace the actual medical experts, rather it complements their care and sets a new standard in remote patient health care.

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Dr. Varma Speaks at Annual *U.S. News & World Report* “Healthcare of Tomorrow” Leadership Forum

The USC CBC will launch the VCC as a seamless, integrated digital health program with internal partners, such as the experts at the USC Roski Eye Institute and the USC Institute of Urology, as well as curating external partners to provide comprehensive digital health solutions. The external VCC partners bring wearable sensors, HIPAA-compliant cloud computing, digital medicine with sensors included in prescription pills, the most comprehensive, evidence-based, peer-reviewed medical data including clinical trial outcomes, mHealth app analysis and evaluation for trusted use, “medicine made beautiful” design and Oscar and Emmy-winning filmmakers to create engaging patient content.

One of the VCC ‘s recent solutions was the launch of a pilot study between USC CBC, USC Roski Eye Institute and VCC partner VSP Global. Using VSP’s innovative and first-ever seamlessly embedded sensor in its Level™ eyeglass frames, the study tracks participants’ biometric data from daily eyeglass wear.

From an education perspective, the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the USC CBC and one of its VCC partners, Dr. Evidence, announced the nation’s [first digital health fellowship](#) aimed at training the next generation of physicians in the latest technology innovation for patient care.

The digital health sector has seen exponential growth over the last few years with 2015 venture funding in the space totaling \$4.5 billion according to Rock Health. Two-thirds of all Americans (200 million people) and 2.6 billion people worldwide own a smartphone according to Pew Research and a report by MobileFuture stated use of mobile devices as health tools and remote patient monitoring could save the U.S an estimated \$36 billion in health care costs by 2018.

*U.S. News & World Report* brings its legacy of health care reporting, analysis and industry insights, such as annual rankings including its “Best Hospitals,” issue, to this annual conference.

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