

## FIRST-TIME CEOS

# Arora thrives at health care and technology intersection

*Association for Advancement of Medical Instrumentation CEO is mission-driven in new role*

By Michael Berman

It's often true that opportunity knocks in surprising ways. Pamela Arora, president and CEO of the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI), a standards development organization, has had this very experience. Approached to lead when she least expected it, Arora accepted the role in March 2022, aiming to serve AAMI's community on a global scale.

Drawing from her history of C-suite roles and service on AAMI's board, Arora drives the organization forward through her passion for its mission and her technology expertise.

"Being CEO gives you a wonderful opportunity for the kinds of impacts you can make," Arora said. In her case, the role has afforded her the opportunity to facilitate digital transformation to better serve her industry.

### Leading with experience

Arora's business acumen has always been apparent. She recalled writing a business plan in her MBA program at Southern Methodist University for a travel company that is still in business. Arora has held C-suite positions for organizations such as Perot Systems, LiquidAgents Healthcare, Children's Health, and UMass Memorial Health. It is at AAMI, however, where she has found her niche.

"The intersection of health care and technology (is) the opportunity I find most gratifying," Arora said.

Arora creates new spaces for technology adoption at AAMI. She proudly accelerates the organization's mission — the development, management and use of safe and effective health technology — because that's where her passion is.

Arora served on AAMI's board for six years. She knew the CEO position was open but wasn't sure she wanted to make a change. When approached by the chairman of the board to apply, Arora considered her priorities, ultimately concluding she could "make a global impact around health care, with the standards as well as the training."

She'd been serving a local community in her previous role and recalls thinking, "Here's an opportunity to not only do more in the U.S., but also to do more globally, as far as safe, effective application of technology to help save lives or make lives better. And she decided to proceed.

### Elevating care with compliance

AAMI creates standards for the medical device industry. The nonprofit also offers information, support and guidance for health care technology and sterilization professionals. These standards help health care organizations best serve their patients.

It's a collaborative community dedicated to care. "Whether you work in a care delivery location, like a hospital or clinic, or whether you're part of the health care ecosystem, we all have a path to the patient," Arora said. In an industry fraught with uncertainty, AAMI offers protocols for productive and safe care.

According to a report from technology vendor SAI360, the health care industry is facing such compliance issues as rising patient data security breaches, underskilled staff and more regulatory scrutiny. Arora's approach to tackling such issues focuses on using technology as a primary tool to increase layers of cyber protection, train staff and communicate with precision.

### Spearheading reinvention

Arora's specializations — technology and health care — position her to lead the organization's digital transformation. The health care industry in continuously adopting digital tools for as many tasks as possible. "When you think of the revolution of what's happening in health care with technology, it requires new standards, and exciting areas like AI are rethinking methods of training," said Arora.

Arora has also reinvented her organization's media relations tactics. "We've been looking at alternative methods of outreach for news. All this requires new processes and approaches," she said.

Since Arora became CEO, AAMI has opened a new studio. "We primarily use it to film and produce AAMI News in Conversation interviews that accompany our original news stories on developments related to the medical device industry and medical device standards," she said.

Studio activities also include "producing promotional materials related to AAMI events, education and individual podcast episodes with AAMI staff and volunteers who help (facilitate) or adopt our industry guidance."

"We have amazing communicators. And that's where our studio really helps to get the



Arora

word out (globally) as far as why you should be excited and adopt" AAMI standards, Arora said.

Arora said her team has had great success with capturing interviews and meetings from various locations on iPhone videos. This has increased engagement with communications resources. "We've had an uptick in consump-

tion of our articles by 30% just by having a video link, whether they open the video link or not," she said.

### Maximizing collaboration

Arora facilitates collaboration that helps team members grow their skills. "We have the pleasure and the honor to gather multidisciplinary folks of experts that just know that area so well and can share it and are creating standards. So, everyone can advance much more quickly," she said.

Arora emphasizes that collaboration isn't limited to internal teams; partnerships with vendors, government agencies and other nonprofits are important as well. Among a multitude of strong relationships, Arora said she is particularly pleased with AAMI's collaborations with the Food and Drug Administration and the American National Standards Institute.

### Pro tips

Arora has plenty of guidance for individuals seeking to hold a C-suite position. First, she said to "make sure you're very interested in the mission. And then the other stuff falls into place. You need to be excited about what those impacts are. And if you do so, you'll end up finding that you're able to move further towards these different opportunities."

She also emphasizes the importance of hearing what industry members and stakeholders need: "Listen first, then work your plans with your team."

Reflecting on the success she had with her first business, Arora stressed the importance of education: "Don't underestimate what you might be able to learn from some of the programs that are out there as far as college education." ■