THE IMPACT ON NURSING
The use of robots, as AI agents, is a fairly new and dynamic aspect of the care environment with very little evidence studying the impact to nursing and patient care. Of the various types of robots, service robots have increased in numbers and are making an impact in the patient care environment by assisting the care team. These robots are rapidly enhancing their capabilities and will soon be advancing along the continuum of care in settings where they are being deployed, such as home care, outpatient clinics, and skilled care.³

The nursing implications of working alongside service robots requires thoughtful consideration. How will the care team work with a robot colleague? How will the AI agent work among patients? How will the AI agent’s work get assigned and tracked? These questions are rapidly evolving and need to be thought through before robots become regular members of the care team. Nurses will soon recognize that adaptation will need to occur in order to modify their practice and behavior from facilitating connections (nursing care) to solving technology issues in order to smooth the transition the overall care team and network.¹

“Coordination in the new system and adoption of new roles and behaviors will allow for continuation of the organizational innovation trajectory.”¹

Nurses working with robots should become familiar with their capabilities, as well as limitations, and learn how to leverage them as a means to improve patient care and efficiency. Nurses will find that the impact of this tireless new colleague performing the “hunting and gathering” is more efficient use of their time and allows for an incremental increase in direct patient care. Ultimately, freeing clinical staff up from these menial, albeit necessary activities could lead to improved patient outcomes and improvements to overall nursing satisfaction. Robots are not replacements for their human colleagues, rather a way to improve their efficiency and to allow them the time to do what they do best, spend time with patients.

CALL TO ACTION
Now is the time to change the way that we educate new nurses to the utilization of robots as members of the care team, through both curricula and clinical experience. As robots become a more common occurrence, the first time a nurse encounters a robot working alongside him or her shouldn’t be in their first job, but rather, in their student clinical experience, even if virtually.

Additionally, nurses should be included early in the process of the design and development of these types of innovations, not only as the “end users,” but also because they understand the complexities of the patient care environment. As valued members of design teams, nurses working along with the engineers and robotics experts have valuable insight that can leverage their knowledge to