

A Global Healthcare Brand Experience

An Interview with Tahera Jaffer, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Health Innovation Investors Group

EDITORS' NOTE *As a co-founder of Health Innovation Investors Group (HIIG), Tahera Jaffer is a visionary healthcare entrepreneur with over 15 years of experience driving innovation in healthcare delivery and operations. Previously, Jaffer co-founded Hospitalists Direct, creating an international professional resource conduit supporting major hospitals across eight states. After establishing Hospitalists Direct, she spearheaded the formation of a real estate development company aligned with healthcare services, focusing on transformative strategies. Jaffer holds multiple degrees from Drexel University and had a corporate finance career with global industrial brands.*



Tahera Jaffer

COMPANY BRIEF *Health Innovation Investors Group (HIIG) is a U.S.-based company active in developing, acquiring, servicing, and transforming healthcare delivery models. HIIG operates a brand called VitaLuxe Health. The brand aims to redefine healthcare by infusing traditional healthcare service and treatment models with hospitality, technology, and education.*

Will you provide an overview of Health Innovation Investors Group?

First, I'd like to begin by thanking you for inviting me to contribute to *LEADERS* – it's a huge honor for me and I'm very excited to share our story with such an impressive readership. Health Innovation Investors Group (HIIG) is a U.S.-based company that operates a brand called VitaLuxe Health. With this brand we are provoking a paradigm shift in the global healthcare industry by fusing traditional healthcare with hospitality, technology, and education. Our mission is to make healthcare delivery work as if it were designed in the 21st century. That requires that we use elements of the existing system that are effective, but deliver them in ways that modern consumers want. We do this by creating a stack of services that fills gaps in care, coordinates them as a cohesive experience, and leverages both physical properties and virtual experiences. This way you get the best outcome with the best experience at the best price, which is what people want from their healthcare investment.

Will you provide an example of this effort?

Absolutely. One example is our concept called a MediHotel. This is a hospitality property that has additional features and services which deliver a far more compelling experience for someone who may be in need of pre- or post-surgical care. Let's say it's someone who is about to have surgery, or someone coming out of childbirth, or any number of situations in which staying an extended time in a hospital is not ideal, and homecare treatment and support is not a viable option. The MediHotel offers pre- and post-operative services through the VitaLuxe Signature Stay Experience, one of our brand segments. Through VitaLuxe, we network providers and systems to extend care capacity, train and develop talent, and blend ancillary services together. There are clinical attendants and specialists on the property, along with services such as nutrition guidance, medication management, diagnostics, and advanced recovery and rehabilitation. In addition, we provide a VitaLuxe Well-being Studio – a whole ecosystem built to provide you with what you need for your unique situation – all available at the touch of an app. This is delivered in the confines of an upscale extended stay hotel rather than a hospital. Nobody wants to stay one minute in a hospital if they can avoid it. However, we all think of a hotel as a great place to relax and recharge in a hosted environment.

What led you to develop this concept?

We have a lot of experience working with hospitals and providers and helping them to balance resources and investment to drive

outcomes, often in challenging environments. This comes from years of solving problems for hospitals in managing resources and maximizing revenues. We understand the delivery system and we know its strengths, as well as its faults, very well. We are constantly being asked to provide more innovation and capabilities in these areas by our partners to help them grow and differentiate. We also have investments in real estate and hospitality, so our products and services have the insight of owners to blend what's possible with how to make it profitable. These markets also have a need for innovative growth and differentiation. Our first MediHotel is located in suburban Cincinnati, Ohio. It was initially conceived to be an upscale extended stay Hyatt House. The real beauty of this property is it sits within a five-mile radius of seven world class hospitals. As we developed the business plan for the hotel, our strategy shifted. As a MediHotel, located in proximity to such a large healthcare community, the demand is already built in. What we began to see was better metrics on the real estate investment side, due to higher room yield and higher occupancy. As we detailed out the ecosystem of services, partners began pouring in. It is fully supported by the greater Ohio healthcare community because they're excited to free up resources and drive more value for their stakeholders. And Hyatt, a global leader in hospitality, sees the additional value and differentiation for their brand and is investing heavily in the space of wellness. The entire hospitality industry is discovering and investing in health and wellness concepts. The MediHotel becomes an anchor in the community for a lot of other things that live within that ecosystem. For example, we leverage

“Our mission is to make healthcare delivery work as if it were designed in the 21st century.

That requires that we use elements of the existing system that are effective, but deliver them in ways that modern consumers want.”

“I see a continued investment in expanding partners and strengthening those relationships. As we do that, we will create something unique and very compelling – a global healthcare brand experience.”

the property for training and education services. We run a nursing exchange program that hosts people from all over the world to engage in healthcare career development or certifications. The MediHotel houses the VitaLuxe Health Center which offers the physical spaces for Flex physicians' offices, culinary medicine kitchens, and VitaLuxe Well-being Studios with multiple spaces for programs. Because of this, we see better operating metrics and hence, better returns for our investors on both the real estate assets as well as the operating services that fuel the ecosystem. Investors have the option of participating as deep or as wide as they want, with superior returns.

How are you incorporating virtual services as part of the MediHotel?

Technology is essential and is baked in by design. Remember our goal is to fuse care and hospitality. The only way to do this at scale is with technology. Our innovation here is using technology to unite multiple services together seamlessly and present a cohesive experience for each stakeholder. That's not just the patient, although that's a vital one. It includes providers and payors as well. Each stakeholder has a unified window into the ecosystem and can orchestrate what they need as they need to. The VitaLuxe experience leverages AI and can even proactively do things on your behalf if you want. Healthcare, particularly in the U.S., is highly fractured, and navigating it is almost beyond anyone, particularly when you're in the middle of a difficult period in your health journey. No one wants to try scheduling multiple providers or services or figuring out what anything costs when you're about to get a procedure done. It's confusing and scary. VitaLuxe takes that burden away by synthesizing services together and making it easy to research, schedule, track, and pay. That's all available to the user at any time, and it continues even after your stay is done. Even after you leave the MediHotel, the VitaLuxe experience goes along with you, keeping you connected with the ecosystem. VitaLuxe becomes a foundational component to your health journey over time, helping you to navigate the system smartly and confidently.

How have you been able to gain such strong support from the community?

By proactively looking for ways to solve problems that the community is facing. We

start with the model of delivering healthcare services in ways that resonate with constituents. We looked for ways to bolster education and career development of the clinicians we work with and added capabilities there, like our nursing exchange program. We're always on the lookout for finding gaps and seeing what we have in the ecosystem that can fill them. For example, we're engaging with a veterans organization to develop care and training programs for U.S. veterans. On the care continuum, the veteran system is overburdened and addressing areas such as mental health and preventative care is a logical way to release pressure on the system and maximize resources while addressing spiraling costs. In the training area, our training expertise can help upgrade active and retired healthcare personnel to expand skills that are focused on emerging needs and technological changes. We strive to give back to those that have given to us.

Do you see HIIG and the VitaLuxe branded services as disruptors?

I guess I prefer the term “proactive innovator” to the term “disruptor.” If you think about our MediHotel concept, at its heart is just a superior performing real estate asset. The services we bundle together in the ecosystem are not novel on their own. The innovation is in the packaging and experience delivered to the customer. This is something that hospitality and other industries have known for a long time. We are bringing that to healthcare delivery and we're seeing exciting opportunities develop because of it. This is not just a U.S. healthcare opportunity. Health is global. We all want it to be better. You can easily take this model and scale it anywhere in the world because it takes what works well in that region and packages it the way people want to engage in the 21st century. We make it easy, compelling, and comfortable.

You mentioned your investor partners earlier. How does this work as an investment?

What we've learned from creating HIIG is that there are many synergistic opportunities that spring forth from the core VitaLuxe concept and the components in the stack that enable the ecosystem. There is also a “network effect” from bringing locations together operating as

a cohesive whole. We package investments in a simple way so that partners can participate as deep or as wide as their portfolio needs determine. If they want to stick to something simple such as the financing for the real estate assets, we have a place for them. If they want to participate in the operating cash flow from the ecosystem services once a location is online, we have a place for that as well. If they want to participate in the technology development that fuels all of this, then there is that upside too. We are actively expanding our scope for each of these roles, both in the U.S. and abroad, and there's a place for partners regardless of what their risk profile is.

What is your vision for the future?

Obviously, growing HIIG and the VitaLuxe experience is our focus. Within that are many moving parts which all play a vital role in delivering a superior experience. Technology scales that, but it's our partner relationships that enable it. I see a continued investment in expanding partners and strengthening those relationships. As we do that, we will create something unique and very compelling – a global healthcare brand experience. One that is built to be proactive and nurture vitality, rather than reactive and monetize poor health. Along the way, VitaLuxe will break down many barriers – having access to all your health experiences in the palm of your hand, knowing what your health risks are and how to manage them at any given time, not having to spend all your time and money and be confused and scared of how to navigate the healthcare system. These are things that will change, and we will be the catalyst for that change.

How important has it been to build a strong advisory base for the company?

It's essential. Success does not happen in a vacuum. It takes many people working together to achieve a common goal, especially when you are challenging the status quo. Partnership and engaging industry expertise has been vital to our approach. Many of our programs are being built in partnership with institutions, providers, and academics who each represent the champions in their fields. These partnerships have been a huge contributor to establishing our operational approach and ensuring that what we're delivering is the absolute best experience available.

Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own business?

Like many others, I feel I was drawn to it at a young age. I followed the traditional path of education and working in large corporate environments to develop my professional skills, but I was always seeking to start and build something of my own. When I did branch out, I was not alone. I was joined by my sister who is a physician. As you may expect, we started in the healthcare space. We built our first company together and she is a co-founder of HIIG. When we expanded into real estate development, it was also with a desire to bring those two worlds together. That is the spark for what has become the VitaLuxe brand. ●