

Survey Background

Mobile and wireless devices (also referred to as “connected health tools”) hold the promise of positively impacting the future delivery of patient care. These tools are projected to become increasingly important as healthcare organizations explore ways to provide quality care at a lower cost, while at the same time increasing satisfaction for both providers and patients. These projections are especially true in the U.S. as the healthcare system continues to realign itself towards optimized experiential and clinical outcomes delivered in a cost conscious format.

The potential impact of connected health tools for providers is largely in the area of “care coordination”. The goal of coordinated care is to ensure patients get the right care at the right time, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of services and preventing medical errors¹. As care providers increasingly attempt to extend their care coordination efforts beyond traditional care settings (e.g. hospitals) the use of connected health tools will arguably take on greater significance.

Recognizing the potential connected health tools have for care coordination efforts, this study set out to profile the use of a broad array of connected health technologies deemed to be relevant to expanding the hospital’s reach into non-traditional care settings. The findings of this study not only provide a barometer of the hospital market’s adoption of connected health tools, but provide guidance as to where providers, vendors and policy makers should focus their efforts in encouraging the use of connected health tool in facilitating post-hospital care coordination efforts.

Key Survey Findings

The tools and solutions available on the market to support remote or virtual patient care are diverse and varied. This study evaluates the use of seven technologies which represent a broad range of clinically-oriented solutions currently available in the marketplace. While there is a recognized trend in the marketplace where clinical technology and consumer-oriented technology are converging around widely accepted platforms, the impact and challenge within the current market is to identify and align solutions that satisfy both a clinicians’ need for data originating from patients and solutions which patients can easily implement and access, while transferring information between the two parties safely and efficiently. The technologies in this study include:

- Apps for patient education and/or engagement
- Mobile optimized patient portals
- Patient generated health data, collected from consumer devices used for remote monitoring
- Remote patient monitoring using clinical grade medical devices
- SMS texting
- Telehealth – audio visual fee for service
- Telehealth – concierge service (i.e. pay per e-visit, digital consults)

¹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: Accountable Care Organization <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/ACO/index.html?redirect=/aco>

Use of connected health solutions appears to be a widely accepted standard practice among hospitals in the U.S. Not only did a majority of respondents (81 percent) indicate their organization uses at least one of the technologies included in this research, but 67 percent also reported deploying multiple solutions across their organization. Given the somewhat anachronistic comparison to other recent technologies such as use of the EHR, this finding is profound. In addition, the adoption of mobile optimized patient portals is most widespread among survey respondents, with 58 percent indicating this type of technology is in use in their hospital or health system.

The survey also suggests that varying tools are used to support different aspects of respondent organization's connected health strategies. Respondents indicated that mobile optimized patient portals play a strong role in facilitating an organization's connected health strategy as it relates to electronic secure data exchange and patient engagement. In contrast, remote monitoring tools were found to play a key role in the areas of provider satisfaction, facilitating treatment/care plans and population management initiatives.

Furthermore, it appears that there is no "one size fits all" solution in terms of the technology used. There are several areas in which a high percentage of multiple technologies were thought to bring value to connected care strategy. This is particularly evident in the area of patient satisfaction, treatment and care plans, and patient engagement.

Finally use of these technologies is projected to grow, with 47 percent of respondents indicating that they expect to add additional connected health technologies to their platform. Growth is projected to be greatest in the area of telehealth – concierge services.

About HIMSS

The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) is a global, cause-based, not-for-profit organization focused on better health through information technology (IT). In North America, HIMSS focuses on health IT thought leadership, education, events, market research, and media services. Founded in 1961, HIMSS North America encompasses more than 64,000 individuals, of which more than two-thirds work in healthcare provider, governmental, and not-for-profit organizations, plus over 640 corporations and 450 not-for-profit partner organizations, that share this cause.

About Personal Connected Health Alliance (PCHA)

The Personal Connected Health Alliance (PCHA), a global, non-profit membership association, was formed by [Continua](#), [mHealth Summit](#) and [HIMSS](#) to transform healthcare through personalized, interoperable connected health solutions, and to engage consumers with their health. PCHA focuses on three areas of activity: technical leadership (publishing the Continua Design Guidelines, an open implementation framework for interoperability of personal connected health devices and solutions); education (convening the mHealth Summit, the largest event exploring mobile, telehealth and connected health technologies and their global impact); and advocacy (creating favorable markets and regulatory climates for connected health around the world and advocating for standardization to enable the free exchange of healthcare data across systems). Visit www.PCHAlliance.org.

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