

Digital Health Predictions 2022-2027

A view from 7 senior-level experts



Help define the future of digital health

Digital health's deployment has been as fast as it has wide. Over the past 18 months it has become the central focus for hospitals, clinics, and health plans across the nation. The landscape is evolving faster than ever, hence the question that is forever on the lips of the healthcare industry – what's next for digital health?

This is why we have produced our new Reuters Events' exclusive report **'Digital health predictions 2022-2027'**. With the help of 7 of the most influential healthcare leaders that headline our Digital Health 2022 conference in April, we have cut through the noise to collate the best-informed set of forecasts available on the future of digital health. See what experts have to say and think on what your priorities are for 2022 and beyond – together we can see that digital health delivers on its promise as a driver of care that is cheap, convenient, and highly efficient!

Peter Banko, CEO, Centura Health



#1

Consumer needs and preferences will be increasingly important as their financial burden in health care increases.

Validation: Due to COVID-19, health expenditures in 2020 alone grew at the fastest rate of growth experienced in the past two decades. The share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) devoted to health also sharply increased from 17.6% in 2019 to 19.7% in 2020 (the largest increase in the history of National Health Expenditures (NHE) reporting). The pandemic forever changed consumer behaviors and these changes will fuel the transformational redesign of the health ecosystem.

#2

Care models will evolve to reduce costs, increase convenience, and improve health.

Validation: Consumers have grown more open to receiving more of their health care at home. Consumers are now also more willing to use digital and virtual programs for initial visits to assess new health issues, follow-up appointments, and even ongoing treatment for a chronic disease (more than 70% who had never tried it before the pandemic now express willingness to use it). Consumers between the ages of 18 and 24 are three-times as likely to use emerging virtual and digital mental health tools.

#3

Traditional health care competition will intensify as consolidation continues and new entrants bring disruptive value propositions.

Validation: We are already seeing problems in the equity markets as investors brace for rate hikes, above trend growth and inflation, mild stagflation, and/or recession. Private equity firms' \$700+ billion in dry powder is set to surge even higher in 2022 – especially in digital transformation. National health plans are deploying their major financial gains achieved in the pandemic to fuel consolidation and diversification. With pandemic winners and losers amongst health systems and hospitals, further consolidation is happening right now. And physicians are continuing to migrate to health systems or align with alternate partners.

Rebecca Kaul - Chief Innovation Officer, MD Anderson Cancer Center



#1

Moving care to the home

Validation: I predict that we will see more procedures shift off-site and diagnostics and wellness will take a virtual-first approach, as well as a shift in brick-and-mortar care toward higher-acuity events. Labor shortages, an aging population, and the need for healthcare agility will continue to drive lower-cost home-care models. As a result, providers will race to meet consumerism expectations of on-demand, accessible treatment.

#2

Data-driven care

Validation: With technology and data transforming health care, organizations are increasing digitization and investments in artificial intelligence that enable earlier identification of conditions and personalized interventions to mitigate occurrence. Digital biomarkers help tailor and monitor personalized treatment plans with provider oversight. The introduction of data scientists and engineers in the health care industry has elevated the patient experience and patient outcomes.

#3

Personalized, predictive, and empathetic engagement models

Validation: AI and CRM enable omni-modal communications that meet patients where they are, anticipate their needs, and exceed their expectations. For example, communications platforms seamlessly connect patients and caregivers to integrated end-to-end solutions, while predictive and sentiment analyses build emotional intelligence into digital communications to increase engagement and drive outcomes.

Laura Smith – Chief Information Officer,
UnityPoint Health



#1

Digital First

Validation: Organizations will begin to evaluate all new services from a digital first perspective.

#2

Curated Healthcare Experiences

Validation: Healthcare experiences will be digitally developed and delivered based on personal needs and preference.

#3

The Digital Divide

Validation: Access to high-speed internet will improve, especially in more rural areas, thus reducing one barrier to access healthcare.

Karthik Raja,
Chief Data Science Officer,
Ascension



#1

Data and digital tools will enable new care models

Validation: Real-time standardized data, both provider- and patient-generated, is going to become the norm. Digital tools for better access along with the insights drawn from the data is going to enable new care models. We will be able to reach the right consumer at the right time at the right place.

#2

Long-term patient outcomes will become critical and drive payment models

Validation: More holistic, long-term outcomes for patients will drive value. Patient-reported outcomes, and the need to improve them, will drive new payment models

#3

Personalization and predictive healthcare will help identify new consumer engagement models

Validation: Medicine is going to be personalized and understanding current needs along with future needs will drive how we engage with consumers.

Jason Szczuka, Chief
Digital Officer,
Bon Secours Mercy Health



BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH

#1

Point Solutions will coordinate on everything from front door to data sharing.

Validation: Consumers expect integrated solutions, and payers/benefit coordinators who provide a positive consumer experience will see increased engagement and market share.

#2

Systems will focus on hiring Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence (ML/AI) expertise to dominate patient communications.

Validation: Broadcast messages that are not individually curated for the patient will prove ineffective against proper ML/AI applications.

#3

IT Services firms will play a bigger role for hospitals and health systems.

Validation: There is great efficiencies to be gained from optimizing platforms, and this can have great impact across the industry.

Dr Albert Chan,
Chief of Digital
Health,
Sutter Health



#1

Digital (Health) is Here to Stay

Validation: We are witnessing the transition from digital as an enabler to digital as the care itself. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us, telehealth is a viable option for providing convenient, accessible and seamless care. We need long-term policies that allow for greater investment in telemedicine services, capacity and innovation to ensure sustainability.

#2

Evolving Consumer Expectations: Seamless Care Experiences

Validation: Consumers are now accustomed to the convenience of digital health – increasingly for specialty services like behavioral health, cardiovascular care and chronic disease management – which has shown great success and promise. As we look ahead to new care models, we're advancing our digital capabilities in a way where in-person and digitally-enabled care are seamlessly integrated to create better experiences for patients and clinicians.

#3

A Focus on Serving the Needs of the Entire Population

Validation: In this digitally enabled world, our industry has an obligation to leverage the power of technology to solve health disparities, ensuring both the equality of equal treatment and the equity of equal outcomes for our entire community.

Dr Vivek Garg, Chief Medical Officer & Senior VP,
Primary Care, **Humana**

Humana.



#1

Value-Based Care Shifts From Payment to Equitable Outcomes

Validation: After a decade of advances in paying for care differently, the focus will shift to the societal value we're gaining from it. Healthcare organizations that are building the culture & infrastructure to meaningfully and measurably improve outcomes and collapse disparities in care, with close ties to community-based partners, will be well-positioned.

#2

Purpose-Built Primary Care Expands Exponentially

Validation: Comprehensive primary care is the most important, yet underutilized tool, we have to improve population health. Purpose-built primary care models for specific populations, such as seniors, women, kids, and those with specific chronic conditions will proliferate, with continued investment by public and private sources.

#3

Clinician Experience Becomes a Key Driver of Success

Validation: The pandemic, burnout, and growing distrust highlight a healthcare workforce crisis that will continue. Clinicians will be drawn to practice environments with clear focus and action on clinician experience and sustainability of work. A high-trust culture, integration of digital tools, better compensation & benefits, sophisticated operations, and ancillary support will be key factors for clinician retention.

Thank you to our contributors



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