



## AHA TRANSFORMATION TALKS

### STRATEGIES FOR REIMAGINING HEALTH CARE

## Deploying digital solutions to enhance care delivery and outcomes

### Health care's digital transformation has been an uneven process.

And while it received a turbo boost during the pandemic as providers rapidly scaled virtual care services, digital technology adoption overall has not been without its challenges. Studies show that the proliferation of digital technology can alter clinician workflows and contribute to burnout while taking valuable time away from the provider-patient interaction. Nevertheless, providers see value in digital solutions and how they can contribute to improving operations and outcomes.

In a 2020 survey report from the Deloitte Center for Health Solutions, responding primary care physicians and specialists said they would find the following advanced technologies "extremely valuable":

- 48%** see advantages in deploying smart devices in exam rooms that automatically record blood pressure, ultrasound and other readings into the electronic health record (EHR).
- 48%** believe that using digital technology is beneficial in ambient voice-to-text translation for recording visit notes.
- 25%** think that digital technology can assist in clinical decision support to analyze patient symptoms, vitals and problems to suggest diagnosis possibilities.

Powerful digital technologies and tools like robotic process automation, voice recognition and virtual care platforms, many of which are powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, can be applied to increase efficiency, support clinical decision-making and improve outcomes. The proliferation of smart-phones, wellness tracking and remote-monitoring devices are giving clinicians a more consistent and complete picture of a patient's health status.

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### Some common digital technology use cases that clinicians value include:

- Smart devices in exam rooms and for remote use that automatically link vitals to the EHR.
- Technology-enabled intake and triage.
- Automated prior authorization processes.
- Ambient voice systems that translate and record documentation notes.

And while clinicians generally see value in applying technology for these purposes, only a small minority have implemented solutions. Finding the resources to fund these endeavors can be difficult, especially with the heavy financial toll COVID-19 has taken on hospital and health system balance sheets. But the larger issue for provider organizations is to see technology projects through the lens of process improvement that support specific strategic goals as opposed to piecemeal investments in the latest system or platform. This can help leaders resist opportunities that create disjointed and misaligned technology plug-ins.

### To align initiatives and investments, executives should consider a broad organizational approach that includes:

- Defining a strategy and vision for digital technology and ensuring that it ties to the larger organizational strategy.
- Evaluating solutions to verify alignment with performance goals, including clear criteria for priorities and pilots.
- Engaging key stakeholders, including senior-level executives and front-line caregivers who understand user perspectives and workflow impact.

Health care leaders also need to develop a deeper understanding of their clinician user base as part of the stakeholder engagement process. These efforts can uncover impediments to clinician-patient interactions and identify the most promising technologies for improving efficiency and outcomes, and reducing costs while giving clinicians more focused time with patients.

To learn how leaders are reimagining health care, visit the  
AHA Transformation Talks [resources page](#).

### Discussion Questions:

1. **While digital transformation in health care continues, widespread adoption of some of the most advanced technologies has yet to occur. Where are we on our journey to digital transformation? Why has widespread adoption been so elusive? What can we learn from our experiences thus far?**
2. **Where do the greatest opportunities lie to deploy and link digital tools to optimize workflows, improve care delivery, strengthen clinician-patient interactions and reduce administrative burden?**
3. **What are we doing and what still needs to be done to make the digital experience feel seamless for patients and clinicians?**
4. **How can digital transformation leaders improve efforts to fully engage their clinical colleagues in developing and implementing their organization's digital health strategy?**