CCM/KLAS Healthcare Technologies Survey: AI, Virtual Care, and Patient Access

The landscape of health care is rapidly evolving, driven by innovative technologies and the increasing demands of patients and providers. The annual Top of Mind for Top Health Systems survey, conducted by the Center for Connected Medicine at UPMC (CCM) in partnership with KLAS Research, provides a comprehensive view of what health system executives and leaders prioritise in this dynamic environment. The 2024 survey results emphasize the prominence of artificial intelligence (AI), the ongoing improvement of virtual care, and the critical challenges surrounding patient access and clinical care.

Artificial Intelligence: The Game-Changer in Health Care

For the fourth consecutive year, AI has been identified as the most exciting emerging technology in the healthcare sector. A staggering 85% of executives highlighted AI's potential to revolutionise various aspects of healthcare, from administration and operations to clinical care. The rapid advancements in natural language processing, large language models, and generative AI have captured the attention of healthcare leaders. These technologies promise to enhance decision-making, improve patient outcomes, and reduce operational inefficiencies.

Generative AI, in particular, has garnered significant interest for its ability to augment clinical care. Applications such as ambient speech technology are poised to transform physician workflows by automating clinical documentation and reducing burnout. By generating precise physician notes and handling routine tasks, AI is helping to streamline operations and allow clinicians to focus more on patient care. As AI becomes more accessible and reliable, health systems actively explore new use cases to unlock its full potential.

Virtual Care and Telehealth: Continued Evolution Post-Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic spurred rapid adoption of virtual care and telehealth technologies, and these innovations remain at the top of the mind of healthcare executives in 2024. While initially driven by necessity, virtual care has now become a mainstay in many health systems due to its numerous benefits. Patients appreciate the convenience and flexibility, while providers recognize the potential for reducing missed appointments and increasing access to specialists.

Telehealth has found particular success in behavioural health, where the ability to include family members, interpreters, and offer group therapy sessions has proven invaluable. However, the focus is now shifting to expanding virtual care into inpatient settings. Health systems are exploring use cases such as virtual specialist consultations, fall prevention through virtual monitoring, and virtual nursing to alleviate staff burdens. The continued refinement of telehealth technologies underscores their importance in delivering efficient and accessible care in a post-pandemic world.

Patient Access and Clinical Care: Persistent Challenges, Emerging Solutions

Despite technological advancements, patient access and clinical care remain significant challenges that health systems are determined to address. The 2024 survey reveals that healthcare executives prioritise technologies that simplify patient intake, scheduling, and communication. Improved patient engagement technology is helping align care delivery with patient expectations, ultimately enhancing satisfaction and outcomes.

Remote patient monitoring (RPM) and clinical decision support tools are gaining traction as essential components of patient care. These technologies enable continuous monitoring of patients' health, leading to more timely interventions and better continuity of care. Additionally, integrating AI-driven tools into electronic health records (EHR) provides clinicians with enhanced decision-making capabilities, further improving care delivery.

However, the challenge of data aggregation and analytics remains a critical hurdle. Health systems need to overcome data silos and ensure that information is readily available and digestible for clinical use. This is particularly important as AI solutions become more prevalent, as a strong data foundation is essential for their effective implementation.

Conclusion

The 2024 Top of Mind for Top Health Systems survey highlights the transformative impact of AI, the ongoing evolution of virtual care, and the persistent challenges in patient access and clinical care. As health systems continue to navigate these trends, technology will play a crucial role in shaping the future of health care. By embracing AI, refining virtual care strategies, and addressing patient access challenges, healthcare leaders are paving the way for a more efficient, accessible, and patient-centred system. The insights from this survey serve as a roadmap for health systems aiming to leverage technology to meet the evolving needs of patients and providers alike.

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Published on : Sun, 25 Aug 2024