83% of Healthcare Orgs to Invest in Telehealth, mHealth Tools

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ATA data shows that healthcare executives and leaders are highly likely to invest in telehealth and related mHealth technologies.

Source: Thinkstock

By Thomas Beaton

April 10, 2017 - Eighty-three percent of healthcare organizations responding to a American Telemedicine Association (ATA) poll said they are highly likely to invest in telehealth with operational efficiency and convenience in mind.

Of the 171 healthcare executives participating in the annual ATA Executive Leadership Survey, 88 percent of those who are likely to purchase telehealth tools are planning to do so during 2017. Just one percent of respondents said an investment in telehealth technology was not in their future at all.

Telehealth offers healthcare organizations competitive advantages, according to ninety percent of respondents.

Dig Deeper

Roughly 84 percent of respondents believed that offering telehealth services allowed their organizations to increase their reach and coverage areas.

Table 2: Key Challenges with Telehealth in the Next Three Years

Key Challenges with Telehealth in the Next Three Years	Response Count*	Response Percent*
Inadequate Coverage and Payments	118	70.66%
Licensure / Privileges	88	52.69%
Resistance to Change	83	49.70%
Lack of ROI / Quality Evidence	60	35.93%
Telehealth Provider Recruitment	37	22.16%
Legal Liability	33	19.76%
Bandwidth Limitations	32	19.16%
Privacy/Cybersecurity	25	14.97%
Other	14	8.38%

* *These numbers and percentages indicates the number of executives that ranked trend as number one.*

Source: American Telehealth Association

However, many challenges await organizations looking to expand their telehealth and mobile health investments. Just over 70 percent of respondents said that inadequate coverage and payments, licensure, and resistance to change are the most likely to hinder the growth of telehealth as a whole.

Telehealth licensure and organizational resistance to change were also heavily cited as notable barriers to adoption. Respectively, 52.69 percent and 49.7 percent of respondents said these are significant hindrances to adoption.

Other telehealth adoption barriers cited in the report include minimal return on investment (35.93 percent of respondents), telehealth provider recruitment (22.16 percent), legal liability (19.76 percent), bandwidth limitations (19.16 percent), and privacy (14.97 percent).

But consumers are demanding more expansive and convenient services, the survey found. Close to 48 percent of respondents said that consumer interest would continue to be a driver of growth in the telehealth market.

Other key growth drivers include the value-based care transition (25.75 percent), reduced cost of care delivery (11.38 percent), evidence-based guidelines (6.59 percent), technology improvements (5.99 percent), and broadband improvements (2.4 percent).

Over 60 percent of the executives that telehealth would increase their ability to provide patient-centered care, and roughly 55 percent said that improved EHR interoperability would be a great benefit to the telehealth industry.

About 50 percent of respondents said they were excited for online consumer-driven services through telehealth, and another 35 percent expressed interest in mobile-app based telehealth use.

ATA concluded that healthcare leaders are business and consumer driven when adopting telehealth technologies and services.

“The responses from this survey highlight the significant advantages and opportunities telehealth has to offer both now and in the future,” ATA said. “Leaders value the well-being of the consumer and patient, and it is important to recognize this point of emphasis as the industry continues to grow.”