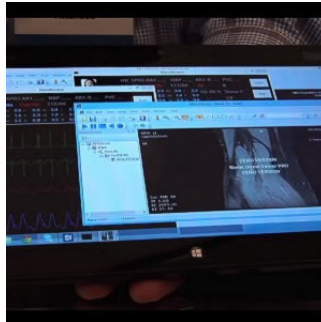

Health IT: Benefits to Both Patients and Providers



Information technology continues to expand its role in improving care delivery, especially with increasing use of mHealth tools. In addition to improving quality of care, healthcare leaders are increasingly relying on IT to improve their organisation's overall operational or business performance.

Embracing bimodal or hybrid IT strategy was an emerging theme in health IT in 2016, according to Karin Ratchinsky, director of healthcare vertical strategy at a global communications provider. Technology that was once largely leveraged on the patient care side of the equation now has great capability to impact the operational side.

The move to hybrid IT infrastructures comes with increased reliance on cloud computing. Ratchinsky identifies health IT trends that'll both benefit patients and providers in 2017 and beyond.

1. Technology will empower business strategies & improve patient experience

Technology is consistently seen as a vehicle for achieving efficiencies and improved outcomes. One study shows that nine out of 10 patients want to use technology if it improves their experiences. To leverage the value of health IT, C-suite executives are becoming more involved in deciding on IT road maps and investments. With more departments relying on IT-specific infrastructural requirements, building consensus is essential. Creating cross-functional teams and goals will help diverse, potentially disconnected groups prioritise their efforts by impact to patient care and experience, profitability, and competitive excellence.

2. New technology will result in greater cost reduction

Unified communication and collaboration solutions, as well as cloud-based services, allow providers to adopt enterprise-wide measures for maximising efficiencies, promoting workforce mobility and boosting productivity. Cloud and UCC solutions are also uniquely able to serve the increasing demand for mobile tools for at-home care and remote workers. However, providers must articulate cost-reduction objectives and clearly align those with the overarching goals of technology adoption: to ensure they work in concert and to clarify expectations from program launch. Also, leaders can engage with peers who have experienced similar technology transitions to learn from their best practices.

3. Organisations will emphasise a culture of security through education

Estimates show that healthcare providers spend 3-6 percent of their IT budgets on security, compared with other sectors outlaying more than 10 percent. Given increased threats facing health systems, spending is expected to increase over the next few years. However, investments in enabling security must be paired with a shift in organisational culture – especially because healthcare is so labour-intensive and protected health information can touch the hands of literally hundreds of healthcare workers within a system. Conducting internal phishing attacks – in which the IT department sends test URLs and viruses to see whether employees click on them – can flag problematic users and behaviours. This reduces the risk of internal threats cost-effectively and keeps security top of mind.

Source: [Healthcare Business & Technology](#)

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