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## Telehealth Population Health Management Improvements



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Two recent studies carried out by HealthMine highlight the importance of wellness programmes and telemedicine in properly diagnosing and controlling illness.

In a survey of 750 consumers enrolled in wellness programmes about being diagnosed and dealing with chronic illness, 28 percent reported they had a chronic illness — of which, 42 percent were diagnosed with that illness via a wellness programme.

The survey also showed that many customers would like their wellness programmes to be able to diagnose illnesses for them. For instance, most respondents expressed willingness to participate in screenings if these were provided by their wellness programme. Vision screenings are preferred by 74 percent of respondents, followed by blood pressure screenings (73 percent) and cholesterol screenings (69 percent).

Health screenings can identify risk factors which contribute to chronic disease. The use of health screenings in wellness programmes becomes more significant amidst reports showing that many of these chronic illnesses go undiagnosed. A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), for example, indicates that nearly 30 percent of adults with diabetes do not know they have it.

Staggering statistics like that could also be prevented through the use of telehealth, which provides convenient and cost-effective healthcare. However, another recent study by HealthMine revealed that 41 percent of those surveyed had never even heard of telemedicine.

Survey results suggest that age plays a large factor in a patient's familiarity with telehealth. While 58 percent of consumers age 25-34 said they would use telemedicine, only 37 percent of 55-64 year-olds said they would do so. Furthermore, 52 percent of 25-34 year-olds said they are able to recognise when and how to use telemedicine, compared to just 34 percent of 45-54 year-olds.

The findings also suggest that telehealth is being underutilised in diagnosing anything from a minor cold to a more significant ailment which could indicate a chronic illness like diabetes.

Bryce Williams, CEO and President of HealthMine, cites the importance of using wellness programmes to help patients access telemedicine.

"Wellness programmes can be the place where consumers are educated on the best way possible to access healthcare services, whether it be through a doctor's office, emergency room, urgent care centre, or telemedicine visit," he explains. "Plus, telehealth is evolving to more than telephone visits. Soon, your smartphone will be a stethoscope and more."

By fully integrating telemedicine with wellness programmes, according to Williams, it is possible to see an improvement in chronic illness management, as well as population health management.

Source: [HealthMine](#)

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Published on : Sun, 2 Aug 2015