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Five Ways to Prioritize Telehealth

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Relevant Topics
Survey reveals why 2018 will be the year for telemedicine

Most healthcare delivery organizations have dedicated resources for telehealth services and most consider telehealth a top technology investment, according to a new survey.

Elana Anderson, CMO, Vidyo

The survey, "2018 Trends in Telemedicine," from Vidyo, shows that the rates at which providers are adding video services will make 2018 the year that 'telemedicine' becomes standard medicine, and mobile or remote access becomes the new normal.

Vidyo conducted an online survey (with support from a third-party market research firm) of more than 300 clinical and IT professionals in the US and Canada who have decision-making authority over telemedicine and telehealth investments and practices, and focused on the use (and planned use) of telemedicine and telehealth technologies by healthcare delivery organizations. The survey was administered by Hanover Research in September 2017, and then Hanover analyzed the results from 337 healthcare professionals in total, from both Canada (37%) and the U.S. (63%). Professionals surveyed were representative of all types of medical practices and facilities, staff counts (1-5,000+) and bed counts (1-500+).

"Given that and the legislative momentum that we are seeing, we are declaring 2018 the year that telehealth becomes mainstream," says Elana Anderson, chief marketing officer at Vidyo.

Other key findings include:

- 75% of healthcare delivery organizations are investing in telehealth.

- Telehealth ranks in as one of the top four investment priorities for providers across all healthcare domains.

- More than 60% of those surveyed reported better-than-expected results from current telehealth solutions-noting improvements in efficiency, timeliness of care, ROI and patient health.

- Satisfaction scores for video-enabled solutions were excellent-hitting 83% for virtual visits, 84% for acute care management, and 90% for chronic health support.

Another one of the key findings from the research is that more healthcare delivery organizations anticipate issues than actually experience them (issues include things such as cost and complexity of implementations, disadvantages compared to face-to-face interactions and problems with their existing infrastructure).

"It's increasingly important to recognize the value and convenience of video in telehealth," Anderson says. "Video helps build personal connections and relationships between patients, families and care team members, and gives them access to virtual care from any place, at any time. It's face-to-video care that meets patients where they are, and can improve patients' willingness to seek help. The kinds of use cases that we are seeing healthcare delivery organizations implement range across the healthcare continuum from home-based care to specialist consults in emergency scenarios to post-acute care. Based on the survey findings, the video element creates significant value for the top telehealth uses and clinician satisfaction around the value delivered in these scenarios is extremely high."

Based on the survey, Anderson offers five tips to help healthcare executives prioritize telehealth:

- Allocate funds to your IT budget for telehealth (survey findings indicate at least 20% is a good planning assumption).

- Create dedicated telehealth resources (creating a strategic partnership between technical/IT and clinical teams).

- Create telehealth adoption roadmap (what will the next five years look like).

- Partner with a technology provider to deploy telehealth solutions, and prioritize video when launching or growing telehealth services.

- Use patients' outcomes and sentiment from clinicians to measure your telehealth impact and ROI.