

The MarketTech Group

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Minute

Virtual Care in the Patient's Journey

EDITORIAL

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed the way doctors and patients are able to interact. Lockdown restrictions, social distancing, and other essential safety protocols propelled the need for virtual care appointments. Increased demand has accelerated innovation in tele-medicine and has attracted the attention of private and public interests alike.

In this edition of the Minute, TMTG investigates the evolution of post-COVID Tele-Health and its potential lasting market effects. In an interview with Dr. Mike Conroy, the CMO of Sutter Medical Group in the Greater Sacramento area, we discuss the future of virtual care.



MARKET OVERVIEW

Post-COVID: How Has Tele-Health Evolved Since 2022?

Statement from Amwell* about the tele-health market:

"The pandemic catalyzed the understanding that a lot of really good healthcare can be done virtually – from primary to specialty to chronic care. Clinicians and patients learned how to use technology to fuel their existing relationships. This ushered in a new understanding that at least some care will happen through technology, shifting the conversation to how we can reinvent the balance of care using physical, virtual, and automated interactions. Now the industry understands that telehealth is much more than just videoconferencing and not simply a substitute for in-person care. It's a distribution arm. Through it, you can reach customers and manage their conditions differently; you can motivate them to become a more active party in their own health care.

Today, health plans and health systems are looking to digitally-enabled care to help solve the many pain points they are facing, including improving clinical and financial outcomes, addressing workforce shortages and meeting demands for better patient experiences. Amwell is focused on partnering with these institutions to help them achieve their digital care delivery ambitions and through an enterprise platform strategy, enable them to overcome many industry challenges – in turn creating a much better healthcare experience for all."

*Amwell is a leading tele-health technology provider



CASE STUDY:

How to Introduce Telemonitoring Solutions in Europe

The Challenge: To better understand current hospital patient discharge practices and out-of-hospital patient monitoring (in the context of pain management) for decision-making on Go-To-Market strategy for a telemonitoring solution in European countries.

Our Solution: Various focus groups were conducted with clinical specialists (including oncologists, surgeons, anesthesiologists, and internal doctors), GPs, and pharmacists in the UK, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy. These focus groups allowed TMTG to uncover the practices for patient hospital discharge, to describe pain medication management behaviors, and to understand the key element in recommending patient monitoring solutions. TMTG also presented the client's telemonitoring solution to evaluate the concept appeal.

The Impact: TMTG identified the most relevant groups of patients and stakeholders to target for an effective market entry of the telemonitoring system.

INTERVIEW OF THE SEMESTER

Sutter Medical Group

Dr. Mike Conroy

CMO, Sutter Medical Group in Greater Sacramento Area,
California, USA



INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Christian Renaudin, TMTG Partner

Q: How do you define virtual care in few words?

MC: Virtual care really summarizes everything outside of a direct face to face encounter. It includes everything from audio and video connectivity to any care that is provided digitally.

Q: How did virtual care change at Sutter from pre-COVID to today (post COVID)?

MC: Sutter piloted audio and video visits before COVID, but during COVID flipped to nearly 100% virtual. This allowed Sutter to gain some competency in terms of staffing and communication with patient. Digital care is the bigger story long term. That has been growing well before the pandemic. [...] Extending outside of the care team to things that people can do on their own: fitness reminders, blood pressure monitoring, tools that can help them with their wellbeing (doing spiritual reflection during the day), tips on their diet...

Q: What are the main challenges of virtual care in terms of implementation and profitability / reimbursement?

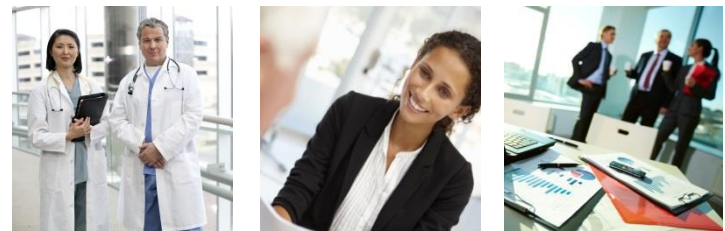
MC: Initially, Sutter needed technology for everyone to do video visits. It took time and resources to train physicians to use the technology. Clinicians would do visits in their own home and had personal information in the background, so the health system needed to set standards for an appropriate assessment of the home environment for clinicians to safely do video visits. Many private insurers did not reimburse for a period of time, and the jury is out if this will be reimbursed in the long term...

Q: How will the use of virtual care change in the next 2-3 years?

MC: What we see today is here to stay. CMS will be reimbursing for care and private insurance will follow, because that's what patients demand. [...] At the end of the day, there are very few things that are not appropriate for virtual care. [...] It was really surprising how much we felt like we could give virtually with a high level of care. [...] Digital start-ups are definitely challenging the business model of the longstanding institutions that have relied on brick and mortar for a long time [...] It is very meaningful competition that is driving improvement...

[Click here to access the full interview.](#)

ON THE HORIZON Virtual Care: Here to Stay?



Facts

At Stake!

So What?

- Post-COVID virtual care rates have stabilized at levels 38X higher than pre-COVID baseline levels
- Private capital investment in virtual care has increased 3X since 2017
- 40% of patients say they will continue to book virtual care appointments post-COVID while 57% of physicians and specialists say that they would like to continue using virtual care.
- These use of virtual care appointments can be seen across all medical specialties, but occur most prevalently in psychiatry and substance use disorder treatment.
- Venture capital investment in digital health exceeded \$14 billion in the first-half of 2021, as compared to \$7.7 billion in all of 2019. Revenues have also grown nearly 85% for the top virtual care companies, over the same period.
- Up to 60% of patients are interested in a "virtual-first" health plan if it came at a lower cost, however 54% of physicians would not offer a 15% discount for virtual-care as compared to in-office care.
- Despite a general return to normalcy in regards to the availability of in-office visits, telehealth appointments have become a routine part of patient care which offers expanded access to those with mobility limitations or who work irregular hours.
- The influx of new capital and the promise of new revenue streams will likely lead to better innovations and improvements in the ability for telehealth to provide adequate patient care.
- While the logistics and financial benefits of virtual care still have room to improve, there remains a strong mutual desire to continue virtual care practices from both physicians and patients.



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