

Industry Newsletter: Thought Leadership

The Future of Digital Health

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Healthcare is adopting digital, VR, and AI tools and solutions, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only spurred innovation and mass adoption of what is broadly referred to as digital health. More than ever, hospitals, surgical facilities, multidisciplinary clinics, and practitioners are turning to digital avenues to ensure continuity of care. This means health care providers and their insurers must keep pace with the challenges and liabilities arising from new technological solutions.

With the growing complexity in the healthcare landscape, practitioners and facility owners need experienced insurers now more than ever. As legislation continues to evolve with technological solutions, brokers are challenged to provide insurance coverage that can keep pace with this rapidly changing industry.

Challenge and Change As Healthcare Goes Digital

Health care institutions are increasingly providing patients and clients with various forms of virtual health care. For example, more practitioners use video and audio technology communications to provide non-urgent, non-emergency health care services remotely, in real-time. These services include medical consults, counselling, coaching, psycho-education, intervention services, and other direct services.

The opportunities and challenges provided by digital health come down to two factors:

- (1) Digital health has enabled patient data to flow past traditional boundaries
- (2) Digital health is breaking down the silos of care, connecting various elements of primary and community care - from GPs, to pharmacies, to out-of-hospital care - to facilitate shared proactive and preventative care.

Addressing the Emerging Risks for Healthcare Practitioners

Privacy Risks

The rapid roll-out of third-party virtual health care platforms and solutions has meant that institutions are having to catch up. Without protective and preventative legislation in place, practitioners and their patients need to be aware of the risks of sharing their data and

sensitive information via video platforms, wearable devices, email, and phone appointments.

Patients should be aware of the privacy and confidentiality risks associated with using third-party platforms and should have the opportunity to give their express consent to using virtual care tools with their healthcare provider.

Wearable Devices

Apps and wearables have made it easier for patients to monitor their health outside the doctor's office. These new tools are also powerful information-sharing tools, connecting various healthcare professionals associated with the care of the patient, while also empowering the patient to make informed choices about their own health.

However, the use of wearable devices has raised concerns over who is permitted to access and share users' personal health data. Furthermore, what happens if a patient's heart monitor malfunctions, or if the healthcare practitioner fails to respond to troubling data? Who is liable for poor patient outcomes when technology is introduced?

[Client About blurb]