

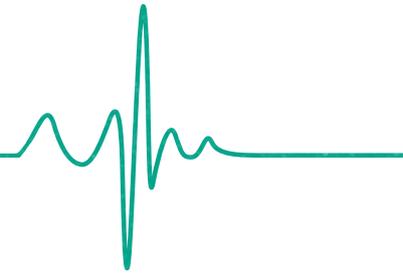


Grant Thornton

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Healthcare Insights

Issue 4



Technology is increasingly being seen as the key factor in providing a solution to the widening gap between available funding and expected care levels.

Health and social care systems are currently under extreme pressure: budgetary constraints, the National Living Wage, compliance & safeguarding procedures and ever increasing demand from an ageing population with higher care needs, create the perfect storm. Many hope technology will provide the answer.

The impending stress on the system could actually provide the impetus to accelerate the much needed adoption of technology to improve the efficiency in the current system and bridge the gap to a functioning integrated system of the future.

Examples of the benefits of technology include Connected Health, Big Data and personalised medicine.

Connected Health

This is a model for healthcare delivery that uses technology to provide healthcare remotely. It aims to maximize healthcare resources and provide increased, flexible opportunities for consumers. It covers a multitude of applications including mHealth, Telehealth, Telecare, digital health and enables better access to data and information, to improve the quality and outcomes in both health and social care.

Rising costs of advanced medical treatments and limited funding, mean treatments need to be cost effective. Through Connected Health, individuals can take greater responsibility for their own health and studies show there is increased compliance with courses of medication and greater awareness of health issues.

It also allows better tracking and monitoring of outcomes and greater operational efficiencies, with care workers

having access to technology that provides patient records remotely, through to intuitive auto-scheduling software that can improve visit routines.

Connected Health should lead to greater amounts of care being provided in the home and away from hospital, with virtual GP consultations becoming commonplace.

Big Data

Big Data is the capturing of large amounts of data from multiple sources and the analytic tools that then allow analysis to determine trends. This assists in the predicting of health requirements, predicting epidemics, curing disease, improving quality of life and avoiding preventable deaths.

An example includes helping to demonstrate outcomes more quickly, meaning new procedures or treatments can be tested and approved more rapidly. In addition, analysis of many previous outcomes and datasets can allow greater personalisation of treatment and focus treatments of specific at risk target groups.

Personalised medicine

An innovative approach to disease prevention and treatment, personal medicine takes into account differences in people's genes, environments and lifestyles.

Examples include being able to identify genetically based drivers of disease to develop more effective treatments, and cancer treatments that already routinely use molecular testing to select treatments, that will improve chances of survival.

Case study example

Overview

An example of a successful technology strategy working within healthcare is Virgin Care's implementation of TotalMobile.

Virgin Care is responsible for running NHS community services in Surrey and has recently provided TotalMobile-enabled tablets to its employees.

TotalMobile is designed: to give clinicians essential information remotely to save time updating administrative records; to improve the quality of these records; and to increase the contact time employees have with clients. The application can be used on all devices (mobiles, laptops or tablets), and is notably more reliable and easier to use which can produce data analysis to improve outcomes.

Benefits reported⁽¹⁾

- 30%** increase in face to face client time
- 60%** improvement in clinical records time
- 42%** improvement in referral handling and scheduling
- 100%** increase in time for staff handover
- 30%** travel time saved as fewer trips to the branch

⁽¹⁾ <http://www.virginicare.co.uk/case-studies/total-mobile-community-nursing-in-surrey/>

What is preventing technology uptake?

Healthcare has lagged behind other sectors in the uptake of technology, however, if certain barriers can be overcome the opportunity and benefits are as big, if not bigger, than any other sector. Those barriers include:

- high risk, high profile sector
- a commissioner and main provider that have been reluctant to engage and adopt
- data protection and security concerns
- lack of common hardware platform
- high upfront cost

What is happening now?

Given the budgetary constraints and the increasing care demand, innovation is critical if the healthcare sector hopes to provide an affordable high quality level of care going forward.

The NHS has created “test bed” sites to trial new technologies and innovations. Healthcare systems in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have made Connected Health central to service delivery and have heavily invested in eHealth strategies.

Innovations that have been made in other health economies across the world are being

re-engineered and brought back to the UK market.

This comes at a time where over 75% of the UK population has access to smartphones (common hardware with implementation costs going down), consumer influence and knowledge is up, and evidence for health technology benefits is increasing. The question really is, can operators and providers afford not to embrace technologic change and what is the cost of not doing so?

Conclusion

If we haven't reached it already, we are approaching a tipping point where the benefits of technology vastly outweigh the concerns and impeding factors. Lessons that have been learnt from other sectors show that although the introduction of technology can be slow to start with, once there is traction, rapid change can happen surprisingly quickly.

We advise that operators, commissioners and regulators are fully prepared for potential rapid changes. They should position themselves to use technology as a positive differentiator, rather than be slow on the uptake and be left behind in the race to improve care outcomes, whilst reducing cost.

A review of various technologies has highlighted key elements necessary for successful implementation.

- Ease of access and use, otherwise it will not be widely adopted
- Common interchangeable hardware platform to reduce upfront implementation costs and increase level of penetration
- The ability to eliminate or limit the use of paper for data recording
- One that doesn't differentiate patients based on location and/or software requirements
- Transparency of data, providing access to information for various stakeholders (family, carers, patients and physicians)
- A personalised service with both face-to-face interactions/ consultations, combined with use of technology

Grant Thornton's Healthcare specialists

Grant Thornton has considerable experience of working with the private care sector with a range of advisory services that include fundraising, mergers and acquisitions, exit planning, restructuring and recovery.

Over the last three years, our Corporate Finance healthcare specialists have been particularly active completing over 50 deals in the sector, whilst the Restructuring team has completed 25 private care assignments with complex operating issues.

Our restructuring services are designed to help providers save money, reduce risk and restructure their businesses by taking advantage of current market opportunities, whilst the Corporate Finance team has a strong track record of delivering value to shareholders and raising funds for growing businesses.

Please contact our experienced healthcare advisory team to find out how we can help your business:

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