healthcare innovation
PEOPLE, PROCESS, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION.

Survey: CIOs Cite Consumerism as Major Driving Force Compelling Them Forward Toward Digital Health

A report that the Impact Advisors consulting firm has just released, based on a survey it conducted for CHIME, has found significant barriers to advancing digital health initiatives in hospitals, despite consumer interest

Increasingly, hospital and health system CIOs are saying, the push toward digitization to transform the patient experience is becoming a critical competitive differentiator in their markets, with the pressure coming directly from patients themselves, and driven by their experiences as consumers in other service industries, such as travel, banking, and the retail sector. Yet moving forward on digital health remains challenging internally, with issues around sponsorship and leadership dominating.

Those are key findings from a new report, released Aug. 6, that was prepared by the Naperville, Ill.-based consulting firm Impact Advisors, and based on an online survey that Impact Advisors conducted among members of the Ann Arbor, Mich.-based College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME). The survey was open from April 23 through May 10 online, and 52 hospital and health system CIOs participated.

The report, entitled “Approaches to Digital Health in a Rapidly Evolving Market: A Survey of CIOs,” is

available here. Among its key findings are the following:

- Among respondents, the biggest factor—by far—driving the need to transform the patient experience is "rising consumer demands and expectations."

- When CIOs were asked about "significant" barriers to achieve digital health, the top four responses pertained to issues with sponsorship and/or leadership.

- Just 23 percent of respondents have established a multidisciplinary team structure to define and execute their digital health program; an additional 31 percent have plans to do so.

- Some respondents view their enterprise electronic health record (EHR) vendor as an early platform upon which to build digital capabilities, while others are recognizing the limits of that approach, and are partnering outside the traditional healthcare IT market to accelerate their digital health efforts.

- More than 70 percent of CIOs are looking to implement new patient-facing tools and apps in the next 12 months, but far fewer have plans during that time to focus on critical activities needed to scale and grow digital health programs.

- Overall, close to two-thirds of CIOs said that implementing patient-facing digital health tools and apps is a higher priority right now than trying to better understand the patient journey or efforts to put more structure behind digital health, suggesting that many organizations are still in the early stages of the digital health transformation.

With regard to the question about significant barriers to achieving success around digital health, the top factors cited were "other priorities currently more important" (53.9 percent), "lack of resources" (46.2 percent), lack of funding (42.3 percent), "lack of governance/structure to support digital health" (40.4 percent), "lack of insight about patient experience from consumers' perspective" (26.9 percent), and "lack of digital health capabilities from our enterprise EHR vendor(s)" (21.2 percent). Only a mere 3.9 percent agreed with the statement that "None of the above are significant barriers."