

Utilization of Technology in Modern Rural Healthcare

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Trends in Rural Healthcare: #1

Hospital & Physician Consolidation

Key Causes:

- Technology pressures
- Cost containment
- Reimbursement penalties
- Government mandates
- Post pandemic stability



Trends in Rural Healthcare: #2

Hospital Closures

Almost 140 rural hospital closures since 2010

- 2020 = 20 closures, >2x previous 5 years
- ~50 % stopped providing healthcare services
 - Major health disparity gaps
- 44 hospitals in the South (TX, TN, GA)

Technology Utilization

Driving Results





Workforce Challenges

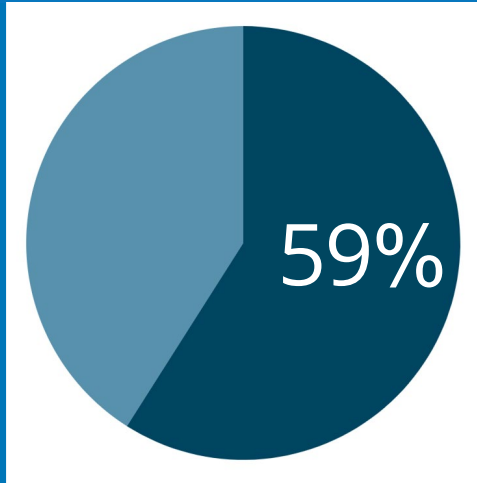
31%



Overcoming IT staff shortages²

Technology Challenges

Optimizing IT/EHR performance



Top Technologies: #1

Telehealth

- Connects
 - doctors ↔ patients
 - providers ↔ providers
 - patients ↔ community based organizations
- Used to combat health disparities
- Federally funded, reimbursed by Medicaid

Top Technologies: #1

Telehealth

Where to start?

1. Examine your current ecosystem
2. Determine the best type of technology
3. Decide the optimal uses

Top Technologies: #2

Mobile Apps (mHealth)

- Creates bridge between appointments
- Collects and reports actionable health data
- Supports patients' understanding of their condition/health
- Educates patients on conditions
- Mitigates inaccessibility issue

Top Technologies: #2

Mobile Apps (mHealth)

Where to start?

1. Conduct an assessment of your patient population
2. Engage providers, ask for app recommendations
3. Offer technology training to patients/ families

Top Technologies: #3

Open API

- Enables and supports the free exchange of health information between health systems, HIEs, EHRs and patients
- Reduces overall cost
- Allows for up-to-date patient information at POC

Top Technologies: #3

Open API Solutions

Options Include:

1. Vendor Integration
2. Local Network
3. Regional HIE
4. Statewide HIE

The Survival of Community Healthcare

Benefits, Challenges, & Considerations



Rural Technology: Benefits

Key Motivators for Adoption

- Complete, real-time patient chart anytime, anywhere
- Increased access to specialist care
- Increased patient interest in their health
- Drives additional revenue

Rural Technology: Challenges

What are the barriers to implementation?

- Connection, Programming, and Vendor Costs
- Internet Connectivity/ Broadband Coverage
- Technical expertise and costs

Top 5 Considerations

Imagine the possibilities...

1. Facility updates: Refresh physical look and feel
2. Research grants and available funding
3. Evaluate existing technology
 - Cloud vs Server, Telehealth, etc.
1. Join a larger health system
2. Form a Rural Health Clinic



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