
About the Connected Health Initiative

Driven by the growing necessity to modernize health systems and spurred most recently by the COVID-19 pandemic, state agencies and legislatures have been forced to clear the way for the use of digital health technologies, including telehealth and remote patient monitoring (RPM). ACT | The App Association's Connected Health Initiative (CHI), the leading consensus voice for healthcare stakeholders, including physician groups, patient groups, device manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, software companies, venture capital firms, and research universities, advocates for policy changes that enable the use of digital health tools that improve patient outcomes, augment population health, lower costs, and prevent caregiver burnout.

Digital health tools can, and must, play a more substantial role in healthcare as the current physician shortage of 30,000 will increase to an estimated 90,000 by 2025. And by 2030, an estimated 70 million Americans will be over the age of 65, about 80 percent of whom will have at least one chronic condition. In order to meet Americans' evolving healthcare needs and expectations, it is critical to extend each caregiver's reach to a larger population through the use of connected health technologies. Digital health products and services provide incredible opportunities for patients and consumers to seamlessly and securely track their health and fitness, as well as for medical professionals to utilize patient data – but this potential will only be realized if state policies embrace a connected continuum of care.

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered public health emergency (PHE) declarations which set aside numerous legacy barriers to the widespread use of digital health tools. However, these allowances are temporary (with some already expiring), and states now differ in their post-PHE approaches, with some reinstating these legacy barriers that no longer have a connection to the public interest. A reversion to the pre-pandemic status quo is unacceptable, and if laws and regulations are not permanently changed, state health departments will be failing patients by preventing them from getting the care they need using secure and interoperable technology reasonable and necessary to their care. Further, the use of digital health technologies is a primary means for mitigating inequities and supporting the most underserved communities across the country.



To support interoperable and capitalize To Support Interoperable, Secure, and Equitable Healthcare Systems, CHI Urges State Policymakers to:

- Update state policies to complement allowances at the federal level for coverage of audio and video visits between caregivers and patients. During the federal PHE, Congress temporarily lifted statutory barriers to Medicare’s coverage of reasonable and necessary healthcare services accessed remotely using voice and/or video connectivity, paving the way for beneficiaries to visit with caregivers from their homes or other locations.
 - While the federal government has purview over the Medicare system, states control Medicaid funding decisions and regulate private insurance markets.
 - State lawmakers should enact measures that permanently cover and pay for live audio and/or video visits for Medicaid beneficiaries and that support private insurance coverage of those services.
- Support the use of digital health technologies including those that collect vital patient-generated health data and transmit it to caregivers for timely care plan adjustments and interventions, such as remote monitoring platforms and services.
 - State lawmakers should ensure that Medicaid permanently covers and pays for, and reduces needless barriers to the use of, remote monitoring services, while better enabling and incenting private insurance coverage of these digital tools on a permanent basis.
- Work with CHI to responsibly develop and scale up adoption of cutting-edge technologies and innovations in the healthcare industry using machine learning and artificial intelligence.
- Speed the evolution of the healthcare system to value-based care models that leverage digital health tools by passing state measures that complement federal efforts to move payment policies from fee-for-service frameworks to compensation for value and efficacy.
 - Value-based models better empower patients and caregivers to make use of digital health capabilities to access key prevention and treatment services and remove requirements. State lawmakers should advance payment models that reward the flexible adoption of tech-driven tools that help caregivers better manage costs while better positioning their patients to prevent and treat acute and chronic conditions.
- Support equitable access to broadband, especially in rural areas, to enable connected health technologies to reach rural populations that suffer from high rates of chronic disease.
 - With the passage of the Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA), states have a more important role than ever in shaping government support for deployment of—and access to—reliable broadband services. Access to broadband is no longer simply a social determinant of health; it is a super determinant of health.