The new era of digital healthcare

Amid big changes in healthcare policy and pricing, consumers are also changing how they manage and pay for healthcare.

If current trends continue, consumers will pay more out of their pocket for healthcare and use the internet and self-service web tools to help them get the best care at the lowest possible price.

This report is designed to help healthcare executives understand the trends driving the growth of web-driven consumer healthcare and how and why hospitals, health systems and insurers are building out their online and mobile infrastructure and services.

The conclusions of this report can be summed up in the following points:

▶ Consumers and patients are online. A February survey of 314 consumers by Internet Health Management finds that 61% of respondents now use a digital health information portal provided by their hospital or doctor. Other surveys show that consumers and patients like going online and expect healthcare and healthcare payment organizations to provide them with the same type of features and convenience they enjoy when they shop online at Amazon.com, access and watch a movie on Netflix, or bank or book travel online.

▶ Payers and providers respond. There are multiple examples of organizations taking the lead on digital and mobile health initiatives. For example, Kaiser Permanente has poured more than $400 million into digital healthcare and electronic health records technology in the past decade. At UnitedHealth Group, the insurer’s Health4Me app has been downloaded more than 2 million times. The app allows users to locate nearby healthcare providers, and convenience care, urgent care and emergency care facilities.

▶ A growing market. 2016 was a particularly big year for investing in digital healthcare–there were about 600 deals worth about $8 billion, says research firm Start-Up Health.

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