

THIS WEEK



Whoever controls the remote may win with telehealth

Telemedicine may get a new platform from what to many is an old friend — the television — to connect with elderly patients and those with chronic diseases. [CNBC](#) recently reported that Cisco is early in the development of a device that sits atop TVs and integrates with telemedicine provider American Well's technology.

Users would be able to connect with one of American Well's doctors and its network of hospitals via a live video feed. Aside from the obvious convenience factor, the companies believe that using TV to connect patients with caregivers could reduce unnecessary trips to the emergency department and help elderly patients remain independent for longer in their homes.

This is the latest in a line of moves by technology companies to find new ways to monitor patients remotely, something government and commercial payers are supporting. For example, Quil Health, the joint venture between Comcast and Independence Blue Cross of Philadelphia, is exploring ways to provide care support and health-related content using their combined resources.

[MedCity News](#) reports that Quil is developing a hybrid smartphone and TV-based platform that can support patients as they prepare for and recover from procedures like joint or hip surgery. The technology also will allow patients to upload images from home to apprise doctors of their conditions and inform care plans.

Comcast is also working on an in-home device to track people's health. An anonymous source told [CNBC](#) in May that the device will monitor basic health metrics using ambient sensors, with a focus on whether someone is making frequent trips to the bathroom or spending more time than usual in bed. Comcast will begin pilot-testing the device this year, with plans to release it commercially in 2020. The company is also developing tools to detect falls, a common problem for many seniors.

Advances like these appear to be driven largely by regulatory moves to expand the options for seniors to access care. CMS, for instance, earlier this year expanded Medicare Advantage coverage of telehealth services. And, as in most areas of health care innovation these days, there will be plenty of competition in this space from companies like Google, Amazon and Apple, which also are focusing on creating solutions for America's growing older adult population. But Comcast may have an inherent business advantage in its large force of technicians who install cable and broadband services and make in-home upgrades to clients' systems.

TESTING A 'FIRE ALARM' APP FOR IMMINENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISES



It sounds almost too good to be true: a smartphone app that alerts behavioral health patients when an emotional crisis seems imminent — a fire alarm of sorts. But that's how California-based [Mindstrong Health](#) has billed its digital tool. The company, along with its partner 7 Cups, a digital behavioral health network, now are piloting it.

[The New York Times](#) reports that Mindstrong has been working for the past year with public health officials from 13 counties and two cities in California as well as patient representatives to test smartphone apps.

Early users — only a few dozen in all and most of whom have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder — received treatment through the Los Angeles County mental health network. The report notes that the patients allowed Mindstrong to digitally install an alternate keyboard on their smartphones, embedded in the app, and to monitor their moment-to-moment screen activity.

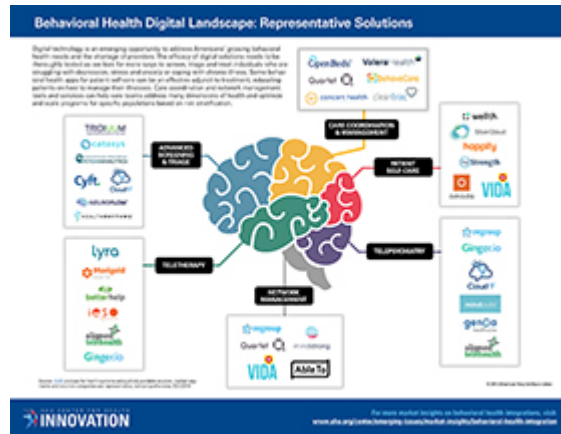
A report last fall in MIT Technology Review noted that Mindstrong's research shows that seemingly small details like how people interact with their phones offer important clues about their behavioral health. With details taken from the app, a patient's doctor or other care manager can be alerted. The caregiver can then check in with the patient by sending a message through the app.

Will the app deliver on its promise? It may take a couple of years to find out, Thomas R. Insel, M.D., one of Mindstrong's co-founders and a former director of the National Institute of Mental Health, told the Times. He notes that the program had a somewhat rough beginning. One

challenge centered around only notifying the app's user when there is a real potential for crisis and not a false alarm. Also, about half the early users stopped using the keyboard function either because they had trouble adapting or lost interest.

But as innovative as this approach may appear, it will face complicated issues associated with patient privacy. Patients may fear the thought of these data being collected and who might see them, particularly if there were a security breach. Likewise, an app developer would likely need extensive data on thousands of users to begin to adapt its product to the many forms of disorders and their respective manifestations.

For more on the behavioral health digital landscape and some of the many solutions to screen, triage and treat individuals who are struggling with depression, stress and anxiety or coping with chronic illness, download this [AHA Market Insights infographic](#).



LACK OF DATA SHARING WITH DIGITAL HEALTH IMPEDES INNOVATION



Health care organizations are making greater use of digital systems like electronic health records, telehealth and artificial intelligence, but most don't regularly share data outside their organizations, creating barriers to high-quality care and impeding innovation. That's one key takeaway from Royal Philips' recently released [Future Health Index 2019 report](#) exploring both the progress and shortcomings of digital health.

The report, based on a survey of more than 15,000 individuals from 15 countries, including nearly 3,200 health care professionals, found that 80% of respondents share records with other professionals in their facility while only 32% share with others outside their systems.

This comes in spite of the respondents' general appreciation of digital health records: 69% said that the records improved quality of care; 64% said they had a positive impact on health care professionals' satisfaction; and 59% said they improve patient outcomes.

The study also found that reciprocal data sharing is not the norm when patients capture key indicators of health via digital health devices or mobile health apps. While more than 40% of health care professionals often or always advise patients to track their blood pressure, physical activity and weight with digital devices, only about 10% of health care professionals say that most or all of their patients share these data with them.

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