NUTANIX™

HEALTHCARE AND END-USER COMPUTING

Remote care and work is here to stay

The successful deployment of cloud technologies by leading healthcare providers will become the new normal.

The coronavirus pandemic has given the healthcare sector a successful trial run at adopting the distributed enterprise methods widely used by many trailblazing sectors. Industry observers believe the pandemic will accelerate the adoption of technology-led remote care, which in turn will increase the use of enterprise cloud, end-user computing powered by the cloud and wearable technologies.

"A lot of staff began working from home, not just clinicians, there was a huge uptake in licensing for VPN, teleconferencing and work-sharing tools," the CIO of a major health service said, adding that cloud ensured "a very quick deployment".

As with e-commerce, Zoom calls and working at home; healthcare will not fully return to its previous working methods when the impact of the pandemic subsides. "People are willing to engage in different ways, and we have seen a significant shift in primary care to non-face-to-face services using the phone and video calls, as well as synchronous means such as online doctor services," says the CIO of a European health service with a large rural catchment area. "All of this is something we have been working on for some time, and it has now become the new normal."

Not only will the technology-enabled care continue, but health-care CIOs are reporting that new working methods are benefiting the organisation, its clinicians, administrators and of course the patients. "Meetings are shorter and more productive, and people don't have to drive to locations. That means better-informed decisions can be made, and it is a much better environment," one CIO says of how end-user computing modernisation has also improved the working culture of their service.

"I think there will be a move to teleconferencing facilities and more digital health solutions," a technology leader in a London health service provider says. London and the UK have the highest death toll from Covid-19 in Europe, following a series of major national government failures. As a result, healthcare technology leaders report patients and clinical teams have openly embraced new technology-led working methods to keep themselves and the NHS safe.

"There is definitely an increase in remote care technology. In an effort to support patients not needing to come into a hospital during Covid-19, clinicians have supplied patients with an at-home kit, for example, lung function and heart monitoring. I believe this uptake will continue. The kit cost tends to be marginal, and the benefit due to Covid-19 is obvious," agrees another CIO that led a UK health service. "The use of technology, where possible, can remove the physical interaction between patients and health services, which means less potential to pass on an infection. I hope that people adopt using technology in this way long-term. I recognise that there is some feeling of confidence in physically seeing a clinician, and speaking to them in person, but we need to get past this."

RISING CLOUD

"Everyone is much more comfortable now with technology. There is definitely increased interest and focus on new technology and use cases. People are thinking innovatively not just about cutting edge technology, but also about what they have today and what they can do with it," says the Canadian CIO. The adoption rate of technology, in particular cloud-driven services, has risen during 2020, but experts believe this was already a healthy trend.

The global healthcare cloud computing market is projected to reach a value of $64.7 billion by 2025, according to the Health-care Cloud Computing Market study by ResarchAndMarkets.com. "Growth in the healthcare cloud computing market can be attributed to factors such as technological advancements in the healthcare sector, increasing adoption of healthcare IT solutions, and advantages of cloud usage, including improved storage, flexibility, and scalability of data," ResearchAndMarkets said in a statement about its research. "However, data privacy and security concerns, as well as complex regulations governing cloud data centers may restrain market growth."
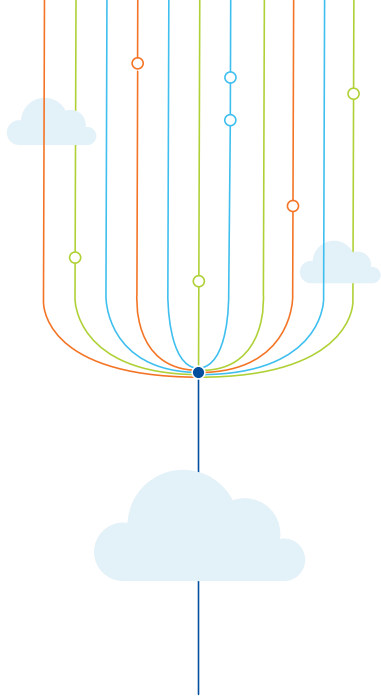
"We can redesign services and the approach to healthcare and that means we can deal with the challenges of continual demand," says one European health service CIO of how a flexible technology estate is enabling them to adapt not only the compute, but also the provision of care. The ResearchAndMarkets reporting highlights how new approaches such as video conference consultations will play a major role in the growth of cloud computing tools such as end-user computing.

Patient Symmetry

Increased use of collaboration, productivity and wearable technologies by healthcare providers will bring the sector in-line with the patients it serves. The cloud had already begun to underpin the working days and lives of the citizens in a healthcare provider's community.

"Everyone is much more comfortable now with technology. There is definitely increased interest and focus on new technology and use cases. People are thinking innovatively not just about cutting edge technology, but also about what they have today and what they can do with it," the CIO in Canada reports of the cultural change that has taken place. A peer in Europe agrees: "There is the ability to improve access to care through the ubiquity of online services." And the London based CIO adds: "For treatment follow-ups, there is a real benefit from remote care."

Technology analyst house Gartner believes 2021 will also see an increase in spending on wearable devices, forecasting an increase of 18.1% above 2020 sales, a global spend on wearables of $81.5 billion, driven it says by remote work and the pandemic. "The introduction of health measures to self-track Covid-19 symptoms, along with increasing interest from consumers in their personal health and wellness during global lockdowns, presented a significant opportunity for the wearables market," said Ranjit Atwal, senior research director at Gartner in a statement about the research. As device makers focus on improving sensor accuracy, the performance gap between medical and non-medical-grade wearables is closing, driving growth in multiple wearable devices categories, Gartner adds. For healthcare service providers these new resources of health information will increase the need for a technology estate that can collect and manage new data sources, and provide clinical and administrative professionals with that data on any device in any location to ensure they can deliver care remotely and accurately. Healthcare CIOs are excited by the opportunities that cloud, end-user computing and wearables will offer, discussing how patient alerts can improve the attendance and success of appointments, and the benefits of "continued confidence in using technology" by clinicians.