

HealthIT Analytics

Big Data Analytics, Population Health Top Executive Priority List

Big data analytics and population health management are key areas of focus for healthcare providers looking to control costs and improve outcomes.



By [Jennifer Bresnick](#)

October 10, 2017 - Big data analytics and population health management are among the top priorities for healthcare executives in 2018 as organizations attempt to navigate an uncertain regulatory landscape while improving the quality of care, according to the 2018 Healthcare Executive Group's (HCEG) [Top 10 list](#).

Released at the organization's annual forum earlier in October, the list reflects [growing interest](#) in leveraging data assets to trim inefficiencies, deliver more proactive preventive care, and succeed with the third item on the agenda: value-based reimbursements.

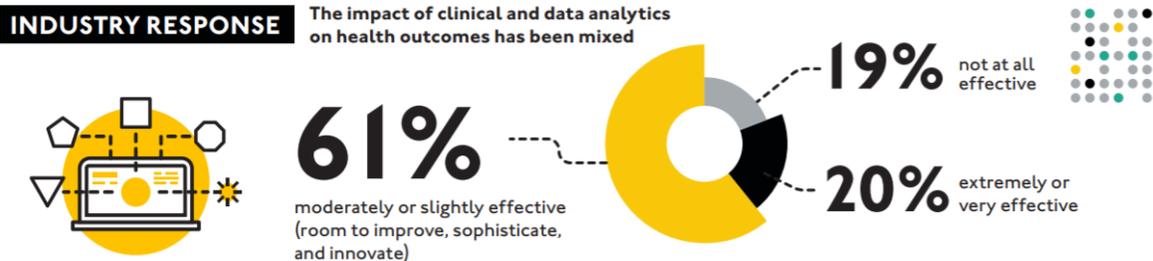
"Technology and innovation are impacting almost every aspect of healthcare," said Ferris W. Taylor, HCEG Office of the Chair and past COO of Arches Health Plan.

“As an industry, we need these discussions among the best and the brightest thought leaders to not just survive, but to thrive.”

Using big data to manage risk, increase transparency, benchmark performance, and innovate effectively is an important goal for executives, but organizational leaders report mixed success.

In a late 2016 [survey](#) by HCEG member Change Healthcare accompanying the list, 61 percent of respondents said that clinical analytics and [business intelligence tools](#) had only a “moderate or slight” effect on outcomes.

Nineteen percent said that their analytics programs have not been effective at all, but the remaining 20 percent strongly disagreed, asserting that their analytics programs were extremely or very effective at improving patient health.



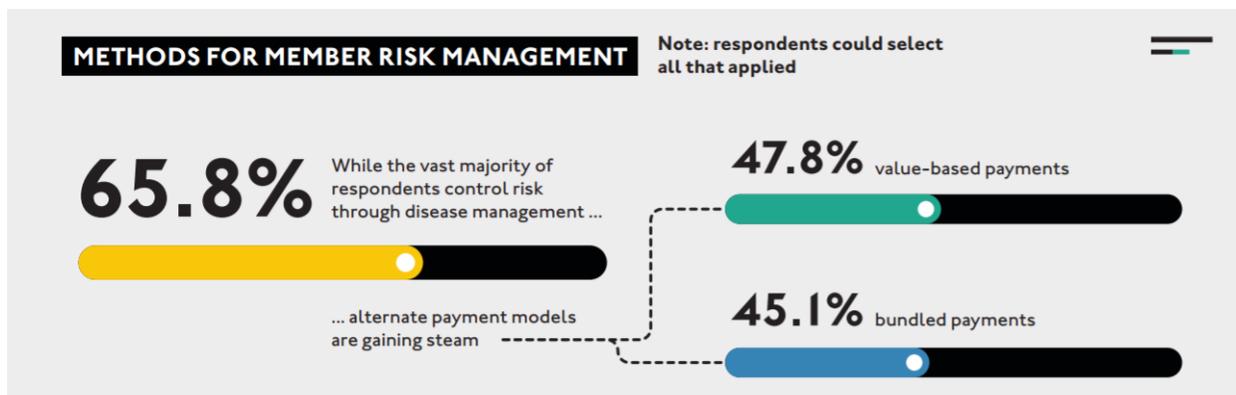
Source: Change Healthcare

Familiarity and comfort with big data analytics is a key competency for organizations looking to control risk, since visibility into clinical and financial datasets enables more robust population health management.

Without the ability to use big data to identify patient cohorts, stratify individuals by risk, and target outreach to their specific needs and issues, organizations will struggle to get upstream of expensive crises and reduce unnecessary utilization among high-spending patients.

Close to two-thirds of respondents to the poll said they are undertaking patient-centered risk reduction through chronic disease management, while 47.8 percent are also employing value-based reimbursements as a way to motivate improvements in quality and outcomes. Just over 45 percent are also engaged in bundled payments.

Cost and quality transparency play an important part in success with these financial strategies.



Source: Change Healthcare

Sixty-eight percent of payers believe cost transparency is a critical goal, although just 56 percent of providers agree, despite the fact that openness around the financial impact of care came fourth on the HCEG priority list.

Providers and health IT vendors are more likely to prioritize quality transparency, indicating a slight mismatch in outlook among key stakeholders.

Most respondents agree, however, that patient-facing digital health tools are likely to play a significant role in collecting patient-generated health data and improving the consumer experience if they aren't already doing so.

Thirty percent are currently seeing positive results from home health monitoring devices, while 21 percent said wellness apps and fitness trackers are helping patients stay healthier.

Twenty-eight percent said appointment scheduling apps are smoothing out pain points in the patient experience.

Just under two-thirds of respondents also predict that in the near future, apps for secure messaging, appointment setting, and telehealth will grow in importance to consumers and providers.

These strategies will help providers achieve both the fifth, eighth, and tenth entries on the HCEG list: improving total consumer health, harnessing mobile technologies to activate patients, and creating informed, engaged digital consumers who can make educated choices about spending and care.

“Our members believe these 10 issues and trends will have lasting impacts in the way we all become engaged, digital consumers and responsible, successful, solution-oriented healthcare stakeholders,” said Taylor.