



Build a more consumer-centric future:

Opportunities for CEOs in an upended market



CEO
FORWARD EDGE



Steer your organization through a rapidly changing market

The COVID-19 crisis has not so much upended the health care system as revealed the deep need to scale innovation that already existed. While traditional strategies have been maintained, costs are going up, consumers are unsatisfied, and outcomes are not where they need to be. All of these factors align to make consumerism not just an industry trend, but a mandatory business tenet to align market forces.

There is more movement than ever among health care consumers — whether they are shifting in and out of coverage or experiencing changes to their financial dynamics — and the market is moving too. New entrants are coming in without the burden of legacy, behaviors or processes to freely align with what the consumer wants. However, this presents an opportunity for health care organizations to step up, challenge assumed requirements and drive change.

To keep up with this rapidly evolving dynamic, health care CEOs can look at their strategic plan and assess how they can better engage consumers, offer valuable products and services when and where they're needed, deliver quality at the lowest cost, and develop strategies that address inequities in the health care system. It will help to begin with the business problems your organization has committed to solve, and how technology can enable you to solve them. And while the current health care environment is new for everyone, the keys to success in building long-lasting relationships with your consumers are not. The health organizations that double down on what we know to be true, but have not yet fully realized, will reap the rewards. Building on the extraordinary strides that have already been made will lead to positive sentiment, increased engagement and strengthened bonds today and beyond.

In this article, we will discuss how CEOs can navigate forward toward a more consumer-centric future by:



1 Allowing consumers to get care and health information on their own terms



3 Accelerating adoption of telehealth, virtual health and in-home care



2 Designing products and services around consumer segmentation



4 Utilizing both traditional and nontraditional measures of success

Do not wait for consumers to come to you

Since COVID-19 disrupted in-person care, consumers are more open than ever to trying new solutions. About 16.5 million Americans have started using telehealth in the past couple of months, and 88% say they would use it again.¹ From behavioral health to ongoing care management, the barriers to consumers being able to receive care when and where they want it are lower than ever before. And they are waiting for health care organizations to reach out and engage.

Providers can no longer wait for these consumers to come to them. Instead, health leaders can focus on the use of technology to guide consumers and make products and services easily available. Gone are the days where patients visited their clinicians out of a sense of loyalty. Fifty-one percent of consumers believe convenience and access to care are the most important factors in their decision-making — above insurance, reputation and even quality.² Additionally, health plans have an opportunity to expand product options, price points and benefit configurations. CEOs can look to the tremendous success, consumer satisfaction and expanded benefits with lower premiums associated with Medicare Advantage plans for guidance with other lines of business. Health plans and providers are obligated to create solutions that make it easy for consumers to get care and health information on their own terms. That's why the onus is on CEOs to consider consumer choice and the diverse needs of their populations to find the many ways it is possible to connect. Strengthening data flows and building a picture of the market through consumer segmentation will support these efforts.



51%
of consumers

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Ensure you understand the nuances of consumer behavior

Before your organization can address the wants and needs of the consumer, you must first understand who they are on clinical, financial and social levels. That entails leveraging the power of big data to capture a holistic, lifetime view of the patient and any health inequities they face. And much of this data is already accessible to health leaders through EMRs, claims, and the products and services that consumers use, not to mention market and industry analysis from strategic partners. However, this data must be managed, stored and standardized in a way that it's easily accessible and at the fingertips of care teams.

This information can help you identify the populations who most need support, coverage and care and connect with consumers in a meaningful way. Designing products and services around your consumer segmentation will help ensure that your investments are meeting real demand and that digital and in-person strategies can be brought together to close gaps.

Some segmentation factors to consider include:



Chronic disease

More than 40% of the U.S. population currently has at least one chronic health condition, and that number is rising.³ However, disease is a continuum, and people's health will ebb and flow over time. That means the services you offer will need to be dynamic. Where are the members of your population

in the lifetime of their disease? Are they more acute? Can you predict their next need? Collecting data from touch points such as nurse coordinators and pharmacists can help you find the answer.



Social determinants of health

There is an important difference between health and health care. While health organizations traditionally only obtain a snapshot of the patient after they walk through the door, it's increasingly vital to consider the social determinants of health that may be affecting them outside of the hospital walls. It has been estimated that 80% of health outcomes are dictated by social determinants of health,⁴ which include employment status, education, transportation, dietary habits and more. COVID-19 has only exacerbated many of these issues.⁵

When considering these factors, health care leaders can leverage technology to provide consumers with true health portability. Can telehealth and other virtual solutions act as a bridge in continuous care delivery? Could it help to connect populations with social services, transportation and support to better access and manage care?



Consumer sentiment

Creating broad consumer archetypes can help you get a firmer grasp on who they are. This can be accomplished by conducting focus groups or providing questionnaires to both consumers and clinicians to understand behavior and preferences. It's equally critical for health organizations to understand the biases and behaviors of clinicians to maximize consumer satisfaction.

Of course, increasing engagement with virtual tools will also provide your organization with a rich pool of consumer data that can be leveraged to further bolster segmentation.

View digital health and telehealth beyond novelties or standalone strategies

COVID-19 has rapidly accelerated the adoption of telehealth, virtual health and in-home care solutions. And while traditional health care providers have not reliably offered these services, consumers have embraced the change — and billions of dollars of private equity have poured into the market to meet demand.

Additionally, the shift toward virtual health during COVID-19 has created a trove of new data and opportunities for health plans and providers to get a better understanding of the clinical condition of their patient populations. This data can help create predictive models, allowing for more effective, preventive, personalized care. It should be actionable and translatable so that consumers themselves can use it to self-manage their own health with wearable technology, remote monitoring, virtual visits and more. This data also provides an opportunity for health care organizations to look at consumer behaviors.

Digital health and telehealth are not novelties, or a standalone strategy. They shouldn't compete and dilute dollars from the rest of your operations. Instead, these



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redesigned delivery models and services can be thought of as an enabler to a broader health system strategy. Following the immediate outbreak of the pandemic, pivoting to basic video and telehealth capabilities was the most obvious option for health care organizations. The next step is to blend it further into operations to create a holistic in-person and virtual experience. This will require an enterprise-wide approach relying on technology, clinical and business operations involvement — with all parties focused on quality and service — to identify problems and prioritize strategies to close the gaps.

Verify success and tell the story

After these consumer-centric approaches have been implemented, health organizations can track their efficacy and verify their success. This can be achieved in both traditional and nontraditional ways:

- 1 Health plans and providers can measure both the effectiveness and quality of care through the adoption rate of their services. Are you moving health outcomes at a population level?
- 2 Organizations also need a set of experience metrics for consumers like Net Promoter Score® and customer effort score. Are you able to see improvements in consumer feedback and behavior over time?
- 3 Measure the total cost of care and the factors underneath it such as utilization and payments. Are you offering the highest value at the lowest cost? Do consumers experience that cost reduction too?
- 4 Provider satisfaction rates can also tell the story of consumer satisfaction. If you set up a system where the patient and the clinicians caring for those patients are satisfied with the system, you are more likely to see a high-performing system.



Stepping back and looking at the end-to-end consumer journey is critical to identifying gaps where a need is not being met.

In addition to these traditional “harder” metrics, there are “softer” measures that can indicate success. For instance, does your organization demonstrate resilience to shifts in consumer demand and status? Health organizations can also look to how consumerism can impact their own growth potential and competitive strength. Stepping back and looking at the end-to-end consumer journey is critical to identifying gaps where a need is not being met.

Build a more consumer-centric future

There's a window of opportunity to respond now, and we have a responsibility to do so. Forward-thinking CEOs can position their organizations as market leaders by leveraging technology to engage with their populations, understand their behavior and preferences, and tailor products and services to maintain a relevant role in the health ecosystem.

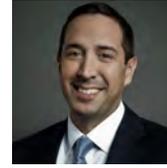
Contributing experts



Robert Crossey, DO

President, Premier Medical Associates

[Click here](#) for bio



Keith Shah, PhD

Senior Vice President,
Strategy and Growth

[Click here](#) for bio



Dr. Omar Baker, MD, FAAP

Executive Vice President, Strategic Initiatives and
Innovation for OptumHealth and Chief Medical Officer,
Health Services



Craig Savage

Senior Vice President,
Payer Practice

[Click here](#) for bio



Kristi Henderson, DNP, NP-C, FAAN, FAEN

Senior Vice President Telehealth & Innovation,
Optum Health

Leader of the Center for Digital Health

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