

The Case for Connected Health

by Liesl Cooper, ResMed Vice President, Market Access

A key element in maximizing healthcare access and affordability is enabling patients to care for themselves safely and effectively in the home. Connected health is a recognized method for achieving this more often and efficiently, and accelerating the use of digital tools for citizen empowerment and person-centered care is one of the three priorities set forth by the European Commission in its most recent [Digital Single Market strategy report](#).

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The supply of connected devices is rising to meet the global and growing demand. Nearly 7.1 million patients worldwide were remotely monitored by the end of 2016 on sleep, ventilator, diabetic, cardiovascular or other therapy devices, according to the latest mHealth and Home Monitoring report by independent analyst Berg Insight. The report forecasts that this number will more than double by 2022.

Success in sleep therapy

Sleep is the leading therapy segment in remote monitoring. More than 4 million of the world's remote monitoring devices in 2016 treat sleep apnea, according to the mHealth report. And by April 2018, sleep apnea device maker ResMed reached 5 million remote monitoring devices by itself.

Sleep apnea is a chronic disease strongly linked with other chronic, life-threatening conditions like heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes, and must be continually treated over the life of the patient. That said, studies have shown that positive airway pressure (PAP) can decrease utilization of healthcare resources, and reduce physician, outpatient and hospital costs. Technology for diagnosing, treating and managing patients with sleep apnea has rapidly advanced – adherence to therapy is now tracked more easily and improved through remote monitoring and patient engagement:

- In one [study of 128,000 patients](#), PAP users who were both remotely and self-monitored were 87 percent adherent.
- In [another study](#), equipment providers managing PAP users saved 59 percent of their labor time by using a remote monitoring platform that sends users automated coaching text messages.

Building cloud connectivity into PAP therapy has been a critical advancement; it offers providers up-to-date insight on patients' progress and gives patients an opportunity to receive quality care and clinician supervision in the comfort of their homes. Furthermore, clinicians can easily manage patients by exception (automatically grouping them by therapy issue) and focus support staff resources on those who need them most.

Recommendations

For sleep apnea patient management: A patient-centric payment model would incentivize adherence and leverage the readily collected treatment data to reduce costs associated with both treatment-related visits and long-term care of both sleep apnea and any associated conditions that may exacerbate if left untreated.

For all healthcare professionals: ResMed encourages agencies to continue examining cloud-based technology solutions that connect patients to their own healthcare data, allowing caregivers and providers to intervene in a timely fashion.

ResMed commends the European Commission for highlighting the importance of using digital tools to foster a healthier society; we are ready to work with patient, physician and industry advocacy groups to help the Commission achieve its vision.

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