

# What support should physicians expect from health IT vendors?

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Implementing digital health technology can be complicated and time-consuming, taking clinics and hospitals almost two years to go from identifying a need to adopting and scaling a solution. Throughout this process, physicians should get proper support from their information technology vendors.

Key stakeholders and physicians joined together to discuss getting digital health solutions from pilot to adoption and scale during a recent virtual panel discussion on the AMA Physician Innovation Network

The AMA Physician Innovation Network helps doctors:

- Connect with health tech companies that match their interest and expertise.
- Explore paid and volunteer opportunities with health tech companies.
- Learn about health tech entrepreneurship from like-minded peers.
- Extend their thought leadership by sharing their experience and knowledge with others.

Learn more about how the AMA's digital health leadership is ensuring the physician perspective is represented in the design, implementation and evaluation of new technologies.

For example, the AMA recently created the Digital Health Implementation Playbook, which packages the key steps, best practices and resources necessary to accelerate the adoption of digital health innovations and helps physicians extend care beyond the exam room. Designed for care teams and administrators in medical practices of all sizes and specialty areas, the Playbook is a living document that will be updated to include new content over time.

The AMA Physician Innovation Network panel of experts shared best practices around the selection, implementation and scale of digital health solutions in practice. The discussion also identified ways vendors can be good partners. Here are the types of support physicians should receive from health IT

vendors throughout the digital health implementation process—from selection to adoption and scale.

**Responsiveness.** It is important to remain balanced in how much value health IT vendors can help in supporting a health system deployment, said Erika Smith, PharmD, director of Enterprise Care Coordination & Redesign at Froedtert Health in Milwaukee. However, because health care teams have different needs they often reach out to vendors for basic support, such as educational materials, demos and data.

This makes responsiveness important. Additional partnerships around deployment could add value, but it is important that this is done closely and carefully so care teams can have a better understanding of who owns what piece, said Smith. This can also help health care teams better understand how the vendor can help solve a patient facing issue.

**Willingness to accept feedback.** Vendors should also survey physicians before and after implementation, said Aurel Luga, MD, chief medical officer at Geneia, a Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, firm that offers an analytics and care-management platform for health care organizations pursuing value-based arrangements.

With the feedback in hand, IT vendors should be using that information to improve the digital health solution. This can provide value for the physician and the vendor. Dr. Luga recently committed to using a survey with his physician clients, while also making it more available to other vendors.

Smith also agreed that “the other piece is taking feedback” from physicians and their health care teams “to heart and using that feedback in a timely way to help improve their product.” Feedback improves the implementation process and the support vendors provide.

Find out more about what the experts have to say on other dimensions of digital health adoption and implementation in practice. Other discussions in this AMA Physician Innovation Network digital community series are:

- Does it work? The need for clinical validation and real-world evidence in digital health.
- Will I receive payment? Demystifying cost and coverage for digital health solutions.
- Will I be liable? Understanding the risks of using and adopting digital health solutions in practice.