Physicians are seeing the advantages of digital health tools more than ever before.

About nine in 10 physicians now believe digital health tools are an advantage for patient care, according to AMA digital health research (PDF) looking at physicians’ motivations and key requirements for adopting digital health tools.

The AMA surveyed 1,300 physicians this year and compared their answers with answers given to the questions in 2016 and 2019. This latest research marks the first time the questions were asked after the COVID-19 pandemic that created an explosion in the use of digital health, particularly telemedicine.

“The AMA survey illustrates the importance physicians place on validated digital health tools that improve health while streamlining the technological and administrative burdens faced each day in medicine. These technologies also must be designed and deployed in ways that advance health equity,” said AMA President Jack Resneck Jr., MD.

Take a deep dive into the 2022 AMA digital health research findings in a webinar featuring AMA subject-matter experts, Oct. 19, 10 a.m. CDT. Register now.

In the meantime, here are five key trends uncovered in the AMA survey.

More physicians believe there are advantages to using digital health tools

- 93% of physicians now believe digital health tools are an advantage for patient care, up from 85% who felt that way in 2016.
Physicians of all ages and specialties saw an increase in the share who believed there are advantages to using digital tools. Growth was largest among those older than 50. In 2016, 80% in this age group saw some or a definite advantage to digital health tools; 90% did in 2022.

Physicians are adopting digital tools more than ever before

- Today, a physician uses an average of 3.8 digital tools. That's up from 2.2 tools used in 2016.
- The increase was similar no matter a physician's gender, specialty, years in practice or age.
- Improved clinical outcomes and work efficiency were the key drivers for more physicians adopting digital tools.
- Using a digital tool to reduce stress and burnout gained importance as a key driver of digital tool adoption, with 76% of respondents saying it was important in 2022, up from 66% who said so in 2016.

Televisits and remote monitoring saw the largest growth among physicians

- 80% of physicians used televisits in 2022, up from just 14% in 2016 and nearly triple from what was reported in 2019.
- 30% of physicians reported using remote monitoring devices in 2022, up from 12% in 2016 and nearly double from where use was at in 2019.
- Physicians in 2022 reported that providing remote care to patients is a significant motivator of them adopting digital tools.

Televisits are where the enthusiasm is

- When asked what digital solutions they were enthusiastic about, 57% of physicians in 2022 said they were excited for televisits. That's up from 52% who felt that way in 2019.
- Enthusiasm remained stagnant for remote monitoring and management for improved care, clinical decision support, patient engagement and a few other tools over the past three years.
- Enthusiasm lessened for consumer access to clinical data, with 37% of physicians saying they were enthusiastic about that in 2022 compared to 41% who felt that way in 2019.
Supporting telehealth is an essential component of the AMA Recovery Plan for America’s Physicians.

Telehealth is critical to the future of health care, which is why the AMA continues to lead the charge to aggressively expand telehealth policy, research and resources to ensure physician practice sustainability and fair payment.

The AMA has a number of digital health initiatives and resources, including the:

- AMA Digital Health Playbook Series.
- AMA Physician Innovation Network.
- AMA Return on Health Virtual Care Value Framework.
- AMA Telehealth Immersion Program.
- In Full Health Learning & Action Community to Advance Equitable Health Innovation.