Leveraging Digital Health Tools to Advance Health Equity

TENNESSEE

To address gaps in technology adoption that impact underserved communities, the National Center for Primary Care (NCPC) at Morehouse School of Medicine is examining the adoption and use of digital health tools by primary care clinicians in four southeastern states:
Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

Digital health tools (DHT) include:

- telemedicine
- home/remote monitoring
- patient portal
- health information exchange
- electronic health records
- prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP)
- wearable devices
- mobile applications, and other technologies used in healthcare settings

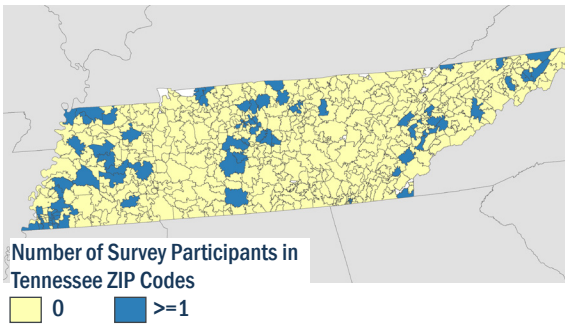
Tennessee Demographics

Total Population: 7 million+

2% Asian | 17% Black | 3% Other | 78% White

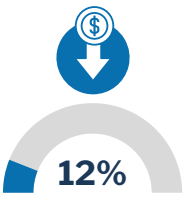
Hispanic Ethnicity

Live in Rural Area



More than 160 clinicians in Tennessee have completed the survey, highlighting the challenges and opportunities they have experienced using digital health tools.

Social Determinants of Health in Tennessee

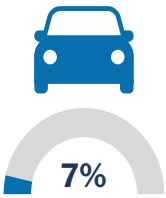


12% Living in Poverty

100 Medically Underserved Areas

10% Living without Health Insurance

113,000 Living within the Medicaid Coverage Gap



7% Households without a car

88 Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas

www.msm.edu/ncpc | @NCPC_Policy

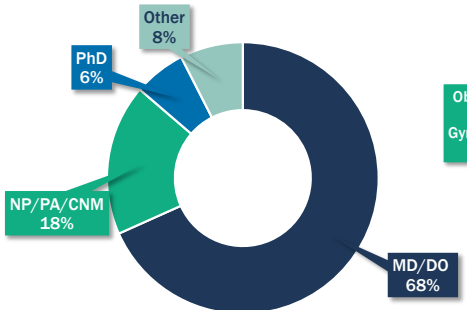
This project was funded in partnership with the United Health Foundation, grant number 6479.

NCPC
National Center for Primary Care

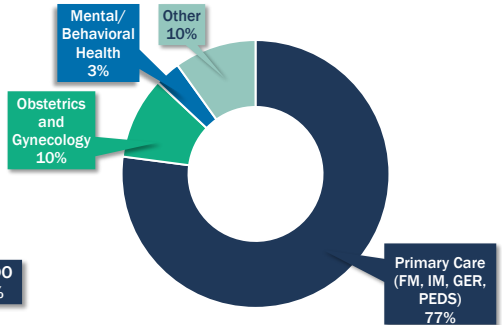
Survey Participants Demographics

The majority of the 161 clinicians from Tennessee who participated in the survey held MD or DO credentials, specialized in primary care, and practiced in urban areas. They reported being satisfied with existing DHT.

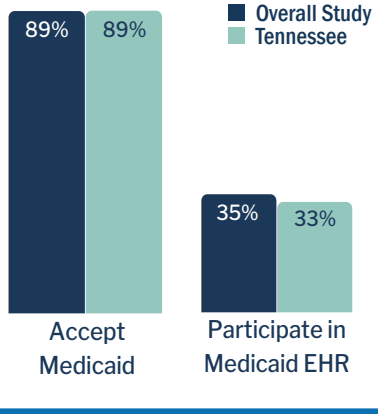
Credentials



Specialties

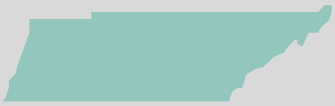


Medicaid Participation



89.6%
of all survey participants practice in urban areas

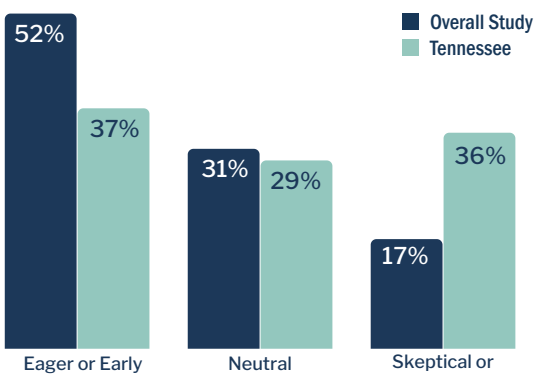
9%
practice in rural areas



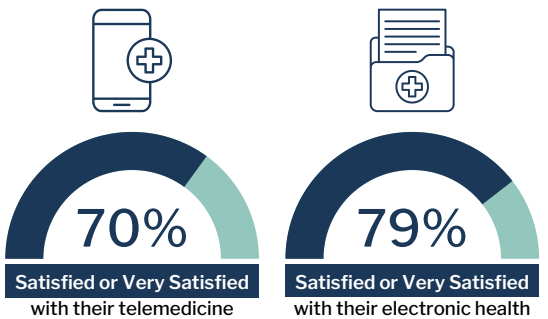
88.2%
of survey participants in Tennessee practice in urban areas

10.6%
practice in rural areas

Technology Enthusiasm



Reported Levels of Satisfaction



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Current Digital Health Tool Use

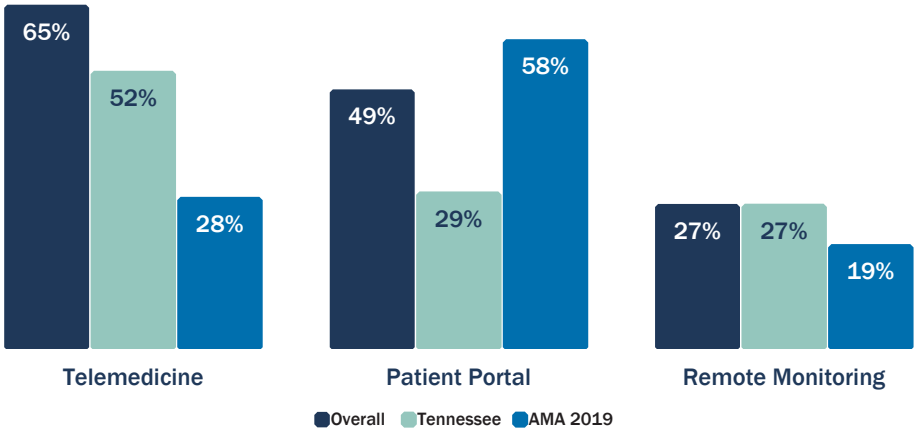
90.7% of respondents were connected to the State HIE

47% of respondents were using the State HIE

More than 9 in 10 providers reported being connected to the Health Information Exchange (HIE), but less than half reported using it.

Reported Digital Health Tool Use

Nearly 99% of all providers who participated in the survey use digital health tools. Tennessee providers reported similar usage rates.



Digital Health Tool Use and COVID-19

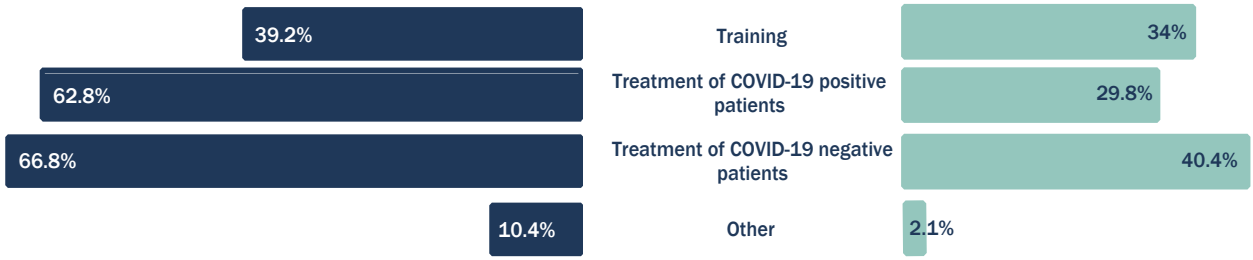
90% of all survey participants reported using DHT because of COVID-19

54% of respondents who used telehealth because of COVID-19 reported it was their first time

89.8% of survey participants in Tennessee reported using DHT because of COVID-19

43% of respondents who used telehealth because of COVID-19 reported it was their first time

Reasons for Using Digital Health Tools during COVID-19



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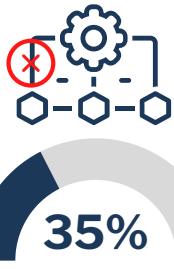
NCPC
National Center for Primary Care

Factors that Support and Impede Digital Health Tool Adoption

Top Barriers to Adopting Digital Health Tools

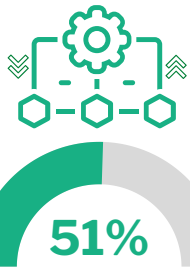
53%
Time

57%
Cost



35%
Limited Workflow Integration

Top Factors Supporting Digital Health Tool Adoption

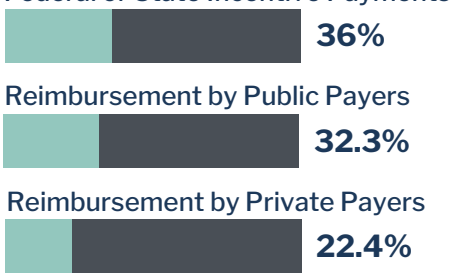


51%
Ease of Workflow Integration

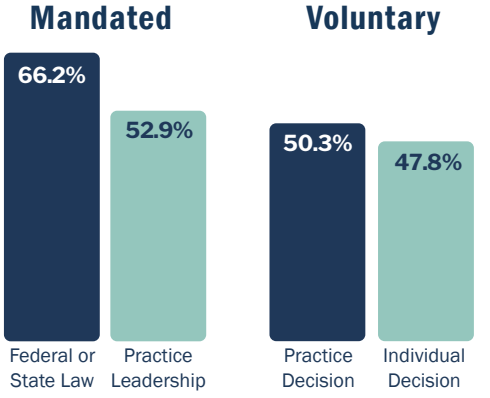
53%
Meets Patient Need

50%
Improves Patient Health

Reimbursement as a Support for Digital Health Tool Adoption



Reasons for Adopting Digital Health Tools



Reasons for Digital Health Tool Use after COVID-19

Continuity of Care
with specialists and other health care professionals

Expand Access
for patients to behavioral health services

Management
of opioid prescribing and pain management visits

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