MANAGED NETWORK SERVICES DRIVE
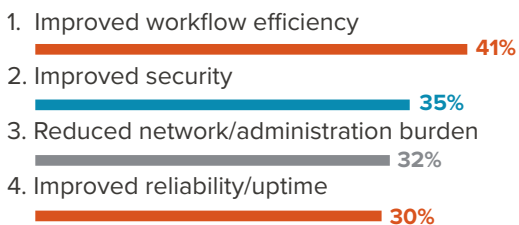# HEALTHCARE EFFICIENCIES

HIMSS research identifies 10 benefits hospitals and health systems can achieve by using managed network services

Hospitals and health systems understand that establishing the right connectivity infrastructure is critical to supporting digital health initiatives. But it's important to remember that connectivity infrastructure involves more than just hardware and software — how the infrastructure is managed plays a key role.

A recent three-phase HIMSS study, conducted on behalf of Spectrum Enterprise, identified 10 major benefits hospitals and health systems can achieve by leveraging managed services.[1] In the research, the term managed services was defined to mean leveraging a third-party partner to design, install, manage and optimize connectivity services, such as WiFi, router, security and WAN.

Managed services align with top technology priorities

Survey respondents identified the top benefits of managed services as:

1. Improved workflow efficiency
   41%
2. Improved security
   35%
3. Reduced network/administration burden
   32%
4. Improved reliability/uptime
   30%

Significantly, these four benefits align with the hospital and health system technology priorities identified in the first phase of the research.[2] In that part of the innovation study, respondents stated their top technology priorities were to identify/remediate security risks (60 percent); modernize their IT infrastructure (54 percent); advance process/task automation (45 percent) and complete a major enterprise project, such as EHR, (44 percent).

Managed services support patient experience priorities

Digital health innovation is increasingly driven by a desire to improve the experience of care for both the patient and the clinician. In fact, the first phase of research identified "enhancing the patient experience" (54 percent) and "improving the clinician experience" (53 percent) as significant IT business objectives.

The most recent research showed that many of the benefits of managed services directly support these objectives. For example, respondents identified the following additional benefits as among those they experience by using managed services:

5. Acceleration of digital health initiatives like telehealth
   29%
6. Improved ability to meet/respond to patient requirements
   29%
7. Higher end-user satisfaction
   28%

When respondents were asked about the specific ways their investments in data connectivity and managed services helped support patient experience priorities, they gave many examples, including:

- Enabling a *"better focus on the patient in-room experience"* via *"better access to internet TV services and better* wireless access" — CFO
- Providing *"faster access to data and test results"* — Administrative VP
- Facilitating *"remote hosting of patient care applications"* — VP Finance
- Supporting the ability *"to incorporate more telemedicine services"* — Materials Manager
- Boosting "*patient involvement*" — COO
- Enhancing end-user satisfaction. *"We have end-user satisfaction when connectivity is good."* — Applications Lead

Managed services enable healthcare to address innovation challenges

The first "Anatomy of Innovation" research phase showed budget restrictions and gaps in IT skillsets among the top challenges that hinder digital health innovation. This is yet another area in which managed services can help. The following items rounded out the list of top 10 managed services benefits identified in the latest HIMSS research.

8. Decreased IT costs **24%**

9. Reduced labor costs **24%**

10. Access to skilled labor **18%**
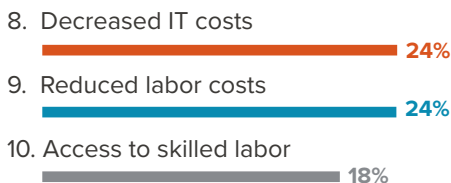
Managed services contracts typically offer predictable monthly costs, making technology infrastructure budgeting easier to manage. In addition, the right managed services partner offers access to deep healthcare IT expertise and act as an extension of the organization's IT staff. Because of these benefits, the use of managed services can directly enable digital innovation initiatives.

"Hospitals and health systems continue to struggle with the challenge of doing more with less," said Schroeder. "This research shows that organizations can achieve cost-efficiencies and respond to IT skills gaps by leveraging managed services."

Managed services have far reaching impacts

The many benefits of managed services — from increasing efficiency, to supporting patient-centric initiatives to addressing resource challenges — make managed services a natural strategic starting point for hospitals and health systems working toward achieving the Quadruple Aim.

In addition to these impacts, the research made clear that managed services can help organizations stay ahead of the digital innovation curve. As one CTO said, "[Managed services] has helped our organization leverage countless new and innovative solutions."

Read more on this topic in the white paper, "Digital infrastructure is critical for innovation."

This executive brief is the second of a three-part series by HIMSS Media, in collaboration with Spectrum Enterprise, to uncover what differentiates innovation-ready healthcare organizations from organizations that are struggling to innovate.

[1] *Anatomy of Innovation: Digital Infrastructure Readiness,* conducted by HIMSS Media and sponsored by Spectrum Enterprise, September 2019. An online survey was conducted of individuals employed at U.S. hospitals and health systems with 26 or more beds. Respondents were employed in a mix of IT, business/administrative and clinical functions in both management and staff-level roles.
[2] *Anatomy of Innovation, Overcoming the Challenges of HIT Innovation: The ITDM Perspective,* conducted by HIMSS Media and sponsored by Spectrum Enterprise, August 2019.

About Spectrum Enterprise:
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