



Poised for Flight:

Remote Patient Monitoring Has Arrived

The Connectivity Report:

2022

Remote patient monitoring has been gaining traction since the pandemic began. But how many medical practices are actually using it, how is it impacting patient care, and how will adoption rates change over the next few months? This report, based on a survey of 100 practice leaders, has answers.

Executive Summary

Remote patient monitoring (RPM)—the next big wave in healthcare—has arrived. This virtual care management approach, in which physicians remotely monitor patients' vital signs such as heart rate, blood pressure, and weight, has accelerated during the pandemic. Its rise also coincides with patients' increasing agility with technology and mobile devices, especially older adults.

A January 2022 survey of 100 physicians, administrators, and CEOs from medical practices across the country, found that RPM is not only gaining traction, it will ramp up significantly over the next few months. The survey found that while about half of practices (57%) currently use RPM, about half of those not yet using it plan to implement it in the next one to two years. This means that by January 2024, more than three-quarters of all practices (76%) will be using the care management approach.

While the survey indicates significant RPM growth is coming, it also reveals red flags related to the current RPM landscape. The vast majority of survey respondents from practices that already use RPM say that it leads to better patient outcomes and higher patient satisfaction, but most also cite significant challenges associated with RPM, including burdensome staff workflows, lack of patient engagement, and reimbursement challenges.

As more practices start RPM programs over the next two years, how can they overcome these challenges? And, how can those practices that are already using the care management approach implement more effective programs? This report has answers.

Investment Uptick

More than half of survey respondents (51%) say that over the next year, their budgets for investing in a remote patient monitoring program will increase.



Key Findings



57% of survey respondents say their practices are already using RPM.



76% of survey respondents say they will be using RPM within the next two years.



73% say RPM improves patient satisfaction.



64% say it improves staff satisfaction.



92% say RPM is important or very important to ensuring high quality care.



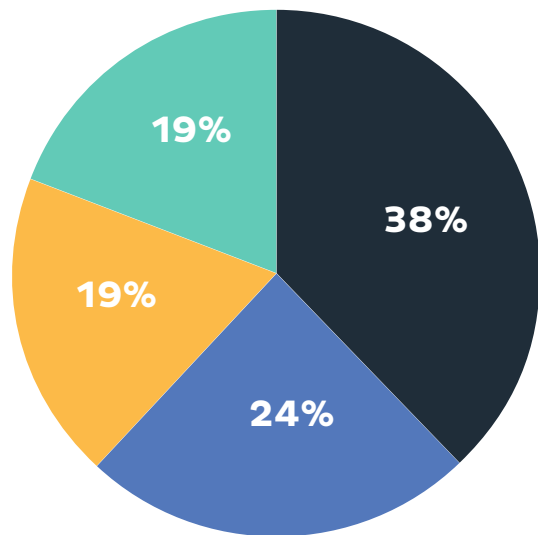
60% report RPM has a high return on investment.

RPM Adoption: The Current State

While nearly all survey respondents (92%) agree that RPM is important or very important to ensuring high quality care, only about 57% of respondents currently use it. About 67% of those who use RPM manage the program in-house with their own staff members and clinicians, and about 33% work with a third-party partner to manage the program, monitor patients, and relay information back to the practice.

The increase in RPM use over the next two years will be most dramatic among independent practices. While only 37% of these practices currently use RPM, 27% of those who don't plan to within the next one to two years—moving the rate of adoption from about one-third to more than two-thirds (64%) among independent practices.

Does your practice offer remote patient monitoring?



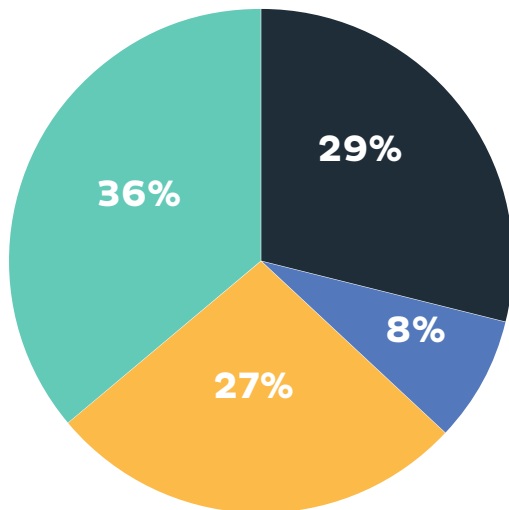
- Yes and manage this in house**
- No, but have plans to in the next 1-2 years**
- Yes and outsource to a third-party**
- No and we don't have plans to**

RPM Adoption Rates by Practice Type

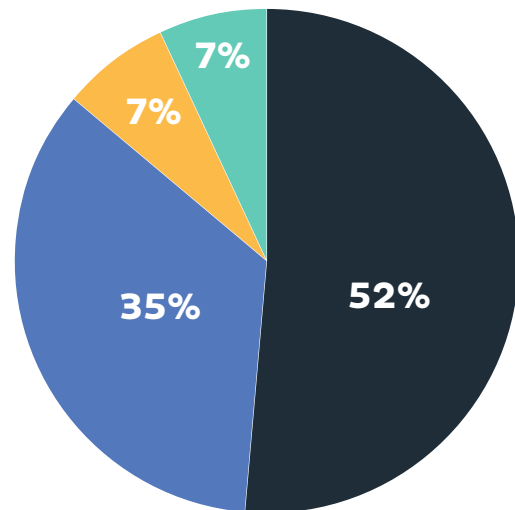
The majority of practices owned by a hospital or healthcare system, and the majority of practices that are highly specialized, have implemented RPM. Larger practices, especially between 3-14 physicians, are also more likely to be using RPM.

Does your practice offer remote patient monitoring?

Independent Practices:

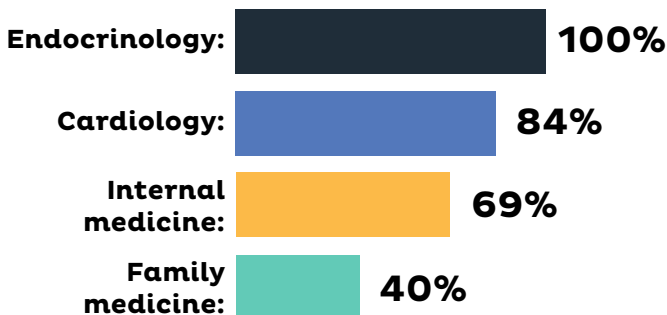


Owned/Affiliated Practices:

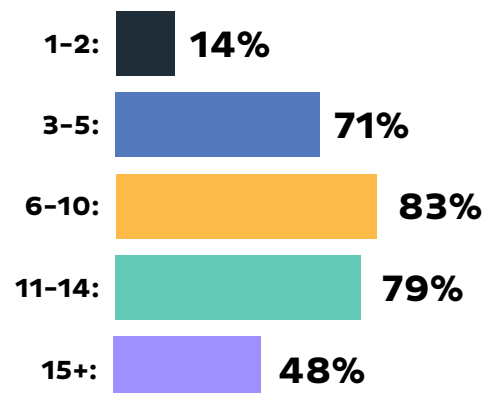


Yes and manage this in house
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RPM adoption rates by specialty:



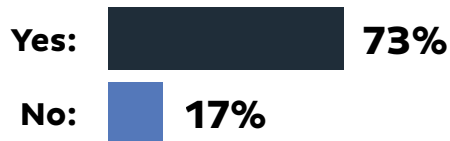
RPM adoption trends by practice size: (Number of physicians)



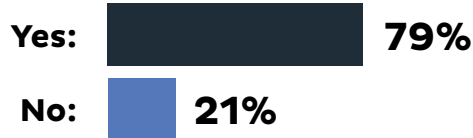
RPM Benefits: Patient Satisfaction, Patient Outcomes, and Trickle-Down Effects

Survey respondents from practices that use RPM indicate it leads to several benefits, including enhanced patient care and higher patient satisfaction. In addition, about half of survey respondents who use RPM say it leads to fewer ED visits (43%) and fewer hospital admissions (49%).

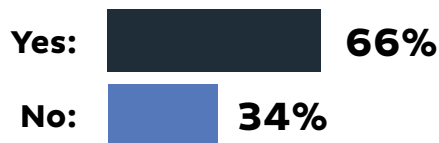
Does RPM improve patient satisfaction?



Does RPM have a positive impact on patient care?



Does RPM improve patient outcomes?



Does RPM have a positive impact on staff satisfaction?



RPM users also cite trickle-down benefits beyond patient satisfaction and clinical outcomes. Nearly two-thirds say it leads to higher staff satisfaction, and about the same percentage say it has a high ROI.

Skyrocketing Growth

70.6 million patients in the United States, or 26.2% of the population, will use RPM services by 2025, according to Insider Intelligence.

Increased Participation

Practices that have adopted RPM are more likely to participate in value-based care (VBC) programs than non-RPM adopters, likely due to the positive impact these programs have on patient outcomes.

Does RPM have a high ROI?



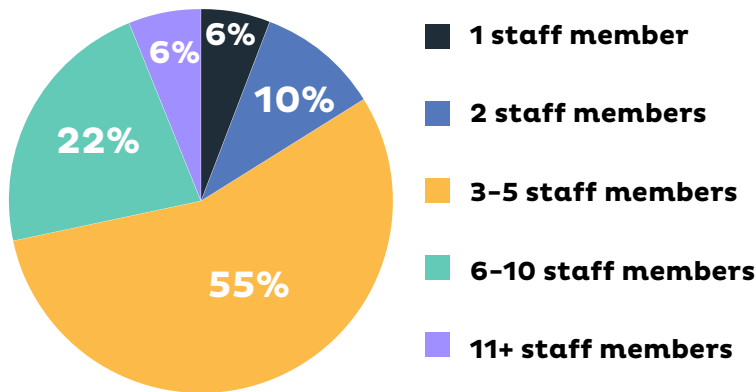
Where RPM is Coming Up Short

While practices that currently use RPM report significant benefits related to patient outcomes and satisfaction, they also report three key challenges:

#1. Staff bandwidth and resource constraints

When asked to identify their top management challenge associated with RPM, the most popular response among survey respondents was: “Too much staff time is needed to support the program.” In fact, managing the program does require a significant amount of staffing resources, according to survey respondents. More than half (55%) say it takes three to five staff, and 28% say it takes six or more.

How many staff members does it take to manage your RPM program?



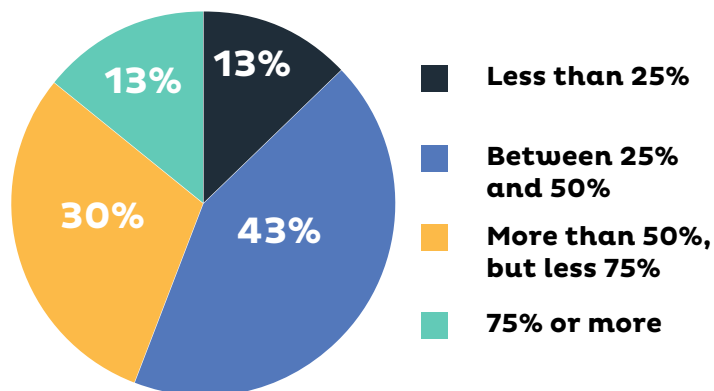
CRM Spotlight

Cardiac Rhythm Management (CRM) is often confused with remote patient monitoring. However, CRM refers to the remote monitoring of patients' implantable cardiac devices. This survey indicates that a growing number of practices are implementing both CRM and RPM programs, and referring to them under the broader umbrella: Remote Patient Monitoring. Fifty-two percent of survey respondents said their practices currently offer CRM. Of those not using it, about 10% plan to implement it by January 2024.

#2. Difficulty capturing RPM reimbursement

Another key pain point for RPM users is reimbursement, with nearly 60% saying they are receiving less than half of the total reimbursement they are eligible for as a result of RPM services.

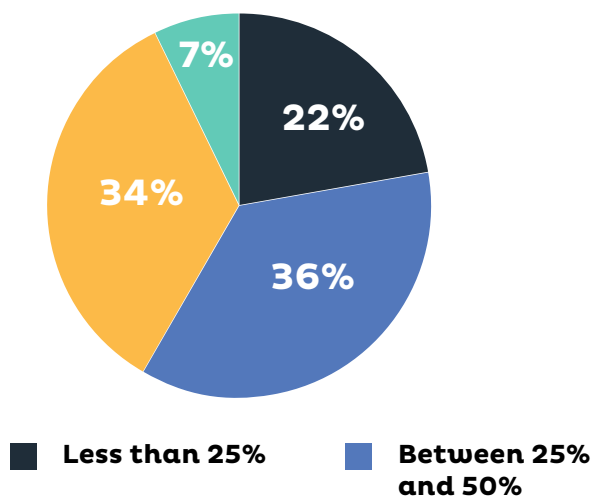
What percentage of RPM reimbursement are you receiving?



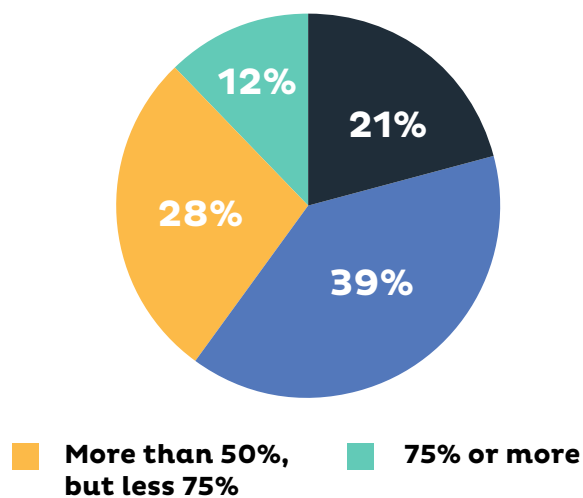
#3. Poor patient engagement

When asked to identify their top physician-related challenge with RPM, the most popular response was: “Physicians get frustrated because patients don’t stay engaged with the program.” Overall, most RPM users say less than half of all eligible RPM patients are engaged in their program. Most also say that of patients enrolled, less than half are continuously connected and transmit regular readings.

What percentage of your patients, enrolled in RPM, are continuously connected and transmit regular readings?



What percentage of your patients who could benefit from RPM are participating in your program?



How Practices Can Implement More Effective Programs

Why are so many practices struggling to create effective RPM programs? The answer is likely attributed to how these programs are managed and administered. While some practices choose to manage the program independently, others choose to partner with a third-party for patient onboarding, engagement, and monitoring, as well as data analysis and reimbursement.

Among survey respondents who use RPM, only about one-third use a third-party. But the survey findings indicate that this less often used approach provides significant advantages, including helping practices overcome many of the common RPM challenges cited previously in this report.

The most effective RPM partners provide practices with a mix of service and technology. The service arm (which includes patient identification, onboarding, engagement, and monitoring) eliminates the burden of remote monitoring from practice staff and ensures higher patient engagement and connectivity, while the technology arm (such as through a secure remote management platform) streamlines the physician review process and enhances data analytics and clinical decision making.



Effective RPM partners also help practices optimize reimbursement, by engaging more patients in programs and ensuring compliance. They also help practices determine which reimbursement to pursue based on that practice's payer portfolio, location, and patient mix. This reimbursement advisory is especially helpful to practices as CPT codes related to RPM evolve and expand.

As more practices recognize the benefits of working with a third-party, more will partner up. According to the survey, many already are. About one-third of practices who plan to implement RPM in the next 24 months will do so with a third-party, while only 17% will do so independently. The rest are still unsure.

If your practice is still on the fence about remote patient monitoring, now is the time

to act. An effective RPM program will be a win-win for your patients and your practice. If bandwidth, patient engagement, or ROI-related concerns are creating hesitancy within your organization, find a third-party partner with proven results—and then make the leap.

Methodology

Rhythm Management Group commissioned Sage Growth Partners, a healthcare consultancy, to conduct a survey of 100 practice physicians, administrators, and executives between November 29, 2021 and January 10, 2022. About two-thirds of respondents hailed from independent practices and about one-third worked for hospital-owned or affiliated practices.

Key capabilities to seek out in a third-party partner:

- » Management of patient identification and onboarding
- » Demonstrated ability to double engagement and keep them connected
- » Ongoing monitoring and alert triage
- » Commitment to immediate resolution of device problems
- » Proven ability to optimize reimbursement
- » A technology platform that prioritizes efficient clinician reviews and clinical and operational reporting.



Founded by experienced clinicians who care deeply about delivering exceptional remote monitoring services, Rhythm connects your organization to more patients, more optimal monitoring, more actionable data, and more reimbursement. For over a decade, we've helped practices and health systems create, improve, and scale their remote monitoring programs, providing compassionate services to more than 60,000 patients across the country. Whether you need a full-service solution or technology alone, we can engage more patients in your program, streamline your workflows, and deliver timely, critical insights to your physicians, so you can care for more people with fewer resources. For more information visit www.myrhythmnow.com.



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