



An Exciting Time for Connected Health  
Lynne Dunbrack  
Program Director, Connected Health IT Strategies  
IDC Health Insights

Mobile phones have reached a near ubiquitous state among certain demographics according to a recent report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project. According to the October 14 report, 85% of all adults own a mobile phone. (By comparison this is up from 75% reported in a December 2007 Pew survey.)

Not surprisingly, mobile phones are more popular among certain demographics

- 96% of 18 to 29 year olds
- 95% of Americans earning more than \$75,000
- 90% of college graduates
- 58% of 65 and older own a mobile phone

Another Pew study released this September discussed the "rise of the apps culture" reporting that 35% of adults have cell phones with apps, but only two-thirds of those who have apps actually use them. Put another way, 24% of U.S. adults are active apps users. Again, apps usage varies along demographic lines with app users tending to be younger, more educated and more affluent.

These findings will have far reaching implications for healthcare providers and consumers as the delivery of health care is shifted beyond inpatient and ambulatory care settings to wherever the consumer may be whether that's home, work or on the go.

Recent examples of mobile health in the news include:

- Hospitals, such as MetroWest Medical Center, Framingham Union and Leonard Morse Natick, are experimenting with using text messaging to convey emergency department wait times in an effort to encourage consumers with non-urgent health issues to use the ED when it's less busy.
- Walgreens announced this summer the launch of prescription text alerts to consumers when their prescriptions are ready at the pharmacy as well as the re-launch of iPhone application and mobile site that allows consumers to check their medication history among other things.
- Blue Shield of California is providing expectant and new mothers information about prenatal and postnatal care via text4baby, a free text messaging service.
- Nationwide Children's Hospital and the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio concluded a pilot study this summer among diabetic teens that showed that those who received text reminders were three times less likely to miss a dose of insulin. (Before the start of the pilot study, teens were missing 9 out of 11 insulin treatments a week.)

This is an exciting time for Connected Health. The combination of widespread mobile phone ownership and growing mobile application use, and the oft quoted demographic statistics of an aging population and increasing prevalence of chronic conditions will continue to drive investment in technologies that connect consumers with clinicians, care givers and other healthcare stakeholders. In response to this growing trend, IDC Health Insights has launched Connected Health IT Strategies. This new program will address a range of topics including, but not limited to:

- Telemedicine, videoconferencing, remote patient monitoring, eVisits, and online care
- Mobile health technology
- Clinical mobility (MPOC)

- Aging in place
- Health information exchange
- Personal health records
- The patient centered medical home and accountable care organizations
- Unified communications

For more information, [click here for the Connected Health Fact Sheet and Research Agenda](#). If you would like to learn more about the new Connected Health IT Strategies program please feel free to contact me at [ldunbrack@idc.com](mailto:ldunbrack@idc.com). Visit the IDC Health Insights Community at <http://idc-insights-community.com/health>.