

Episode 15: Top Healthcare Apps for 2023 - Better Manage Your Healthcare Needs



Note: This is a machine transcription. Please excuse any punctuation or other weirdness:)

Intro:

Matthew's friend, who is a nurse, used to bug him to use his doctor's portal app instead of calling to make an appointment every time he had a question about his diabetes. When COVID hit, he had to stop ignoring her suggestion.

Now, the retired technology guru can't imagine not being able to contact his primary care physician online.

Matthew also uses an app to track his A1C, the standard diabetes test that measures blood sugar levels over time:

"He says...Yes, I get to see my labs. 10 years ago ... I never knew what my labs were ... until the following month when I would go see a provider. Now, I know instantly."

Get Savvy...Demystifying Healthcare – 30 second commercial

Are you tired of the high cost of healthcare? Are you overwhelmed trying to navigate a complicated healthcare system?

Welcome to Get Savvy...Demystifying Healthcare weekly podcast where we take complicated healthcare topics and make them simple.

Imagine if you could stop feeling paralyzed with fear and frustration and instead be empowered to make smart healthcare decisions for you and your family.

Get Savvy with your host, Sandy Kibling, a healthcare professional changing how healthcare knowledge is shared.

Podcast

Hello and welcome to Episode 15 Healthcare Apps and Trends for 2023. Our lives are consumed with our phone and apps whether it is to shop, educate, entertainment and tracking to provide a level of convenience in our lives.

What we will discuss:

- 1) Mobile Apps Benefits
- 2) Landscape of Digital Health products
- 3) 15 Healthcare Apps 2023

Let's go!

Recent data suggests there are now more than 350,000 mobile health apps available in app stores worldwide, and 90,000 — a quarter of the total to date — were added in 2020 alone as locked-down consumers worldwide sought ways to monitor COVID symptoms, track fitness and stay connected to medical providers.

Patients, providers and pharmacists have come to rely on digital connection with one another, with 40% of patients nationwide using a portal in 2020, that is up 13% since 2014. The app landscape is dominated by fitness trackers and patient portals, while a growing proportion is centered on helping people manage a specific condition, such as diabetes or heart disease.

Digital tools benefit healthcare systems, providers, and consumers with the types of tools available but the challenges are convincing consumers to adopt regular use of these tools. Now this could be tied to reliability of tools, complexity to use and believing they enhance the communication between provider and patient.

Mobile Apps Benefits:

Health apps can reduce costs, increase visibility into managing a chronic illness and managing care and creating more engagement and, empowerment of healthcare consumers.

As one example, according to the [2022 Medication Access Report](#), which I will attach as a resource, 82% of patients experienced delays in accessing their medications.

In many cases, they cited communication barriers as the reason. With mobile access to patient records, pharmacists, healthcare providers and payers also known as health insurance companies (Anthem, Cigna, United) these barriers can be broken down so prescription medications may be received timely.

Physician Burnout

In my other role as a physician consultant, I work with providers every day and hear the frustration of burnout and have watched many of the groups I represent, retire early, or sell their practice to a larger medical group or private equity firm. Digital health tools can help providers with enhanced communication and access to patient data, reducing the administrative burdens resulting in better care for you.

Cost Effectiveness

Apps that allow consumers to price shop for services and prescription price shopping apps like a Good Rx or a SingleCare app that allow you to search for discounts for prescription drugs.

I also believe with the price transparency rules in place making health insurance companies provide their reimbursement for services now public will allow for app creators to provide more reliable tools where you may search for where you can get the best price for an MRI as one example.

Consumer Control and Self Advocacy

Allowing Consumers to better manage their chronic illnesses like diabetes, and high blood pressure, mental health asthma via apps may be beneficial. Being able to use a simple device to track and communicate with their providers in a more proactive approach versus reactive approach can be life saving and changing.

Landscape of Digital Health Products – What is out there?

Fitness and Weight Trackers

These apps have seen widespread adoption from fit bit to Apple watch. However, their effectiveness can wane as patients become lax in their devotion. Also having trust in the reliability of the data which might depend on whether users enter data themselves or whether devices such as phones has the reliability to capture it.

However, the trackers seem to get better every year with reminders to, stand, stretch, capture steps walked and reminders if your activity is lower than the previous day can inspire consumers to reach their health goals.

Patient Portals

Patient portals give patients enhanced access to medical records and communication with healthcare providers, pharmacists, and addressing claims issues. As mentioned in [Episode 12 Breaking Down The Mystery Of the Medical Bill](#) there is an average of 80% error rate whether it is your provider or insurance company when it comes to your bill. Should you find a mistake or want to confirm the validity of a claim, you can do this via the portal.

I personally did this recently and had a tracking number and a result in under 30 days. Now results will vary but I was happy to use this option versus the 1-800 overseas option.

Another example is let's say you have Anthem/Blue Cross you can use your portal to price shop procedures, identify your out of pocket max and if you have met your deductible.

Prescription Discount Apps

We mentioned this a bit earlier, these apps let you shop around for the best price on a drug. I would also add in [Cost Plus Drugs](#), Mark Cuban's business initiative to make sure consumers have access to prescription medication and at a discount.

I cover more of this in [Episode 3 Cost Plus Drugs – Getting Your Prescription Drugs at Manufacturers Cost](#) I will link to it in the show notes but also check out the 3 minute video... [The Why and Benefits To YOU](#)

I think you may find it very informative.

Disease-specific Apps

Many people with chronic conditions do not have a single, predominant condition, but rather they experience multimorbidity that is two or more chronic conditions at the same time. In the US, it is observed that 6 out of 10 adults have a chronic disease and 4 in 10 adults have two or more Chronic Diseases during a specific time.

Several therapeutic approaches are available to tackle these chronic diseases. To overcome the growing prevalence of chronic disease, several options in the form of mobile apps, digital assistance, equipment, and devices are available that can easily track the symptom, diagnose the disease, and provide preventative solutions.

Mobile apps have emerged as a leading option for chronic disease symptom tracking and screening, diagnosis, and prevention.

15 Apps for 2023

AMJ Workplace Wellness

Corporate app for employee well-being. This fitness and healthcare app aims to help employees stay active and agile during work shifts versus sitting at their desk pressing on deliverables and meetings. It reminds them of breaks, supplies nutrition plans for a better diet, and recommends physical and mental exercises. Users can choose to create their workout plans and fitness challenges or follow ones that their company admins have posted for specific periods.

It sends push notifications about wellness tips, tricks, stress relief techniques, and statistics. Physical fitness workouts are categorized in different branches to help everyone, whether they already are in a fitness campaign or not.

It is a free app, and once users download it, they have to answer some questions related to their water drinking schedules, sleeping habits, weight loss plans, and stress levels. The app then processes the answers and sends out personalized recommendations.

Stop Vaping Challenge

The use of e-cigarettes is a growing health concern, linking it to lung disease and mortality rates. Approximately 81 million adults in the US are daily electronic cigarettes users.

To minimize vaping, Stop Vaping was designed to be a digital solution for teens and young adults to cut down on nicotine intake and e-cigarettes, and reduce adverse health effects. The app is central to providing motivation and easy solutions to opt for a healthy and opportunistic lifestyle.

The previous year recorded more than 2700 cases (Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Injury) among young adults aged 18 – 34, the primary objective was hyper-focused on motivating young adults to quit vaping and marijuana addiction.

For this reason, a community-based application that could guide its audience about the adverse health effects of vaping, while enabling them to follow expert tips and practices to stay healthy is what the app was intended to be.

[My Fitness Pal](#)

My Fitness Pal is a nutrition and fitness app, a calorie counter at heart that helps users meet their weight loss and water goals. It works as a food tracker, meal planner, and food logbook, allowing users to monitor their daily, weekly, and monthly eating habits.

The app has an interesting working model—a built-in camera that helps with scanning food images and barcodes. Users add portions in grams, confirm ingredients, then extract detailed food reports.

These reports can help you when you are visiting with your provider to discuss what is working and what is not and next steps.

[Google Fit](#)

Google Fit is Google's official healthcare app that tracks physical movement and monitors heart activity. Google has designed, developed, and launched the app in collaboration with American Health Association and World Health Organization to help users keep track of their everyday conditions.

Users get 'heart points' upon completing the recommended levels of physical movement. Google Fit is a cross-platform app that works on smartwatches and integrates well with third-party apps like MyFitnessPal, Nike, Runkeeper, Strava, and Basis.

[Apple Health](#)

Apple Health is an iOS healthcare application and a flagship product available on all Apple devices. It monitors daily activity, including sleeping and eating habits, physical movements, heart rate, breathing, and other significant symptoms.

The app integrates with other third-party apps and generates comprehensive reports on well-being. It works on Apple's wearable devices like Apple Watch.

Users can set customized alarms and alerts for health areas like sleep, water, etc. They can also view the progress of their symptoms or conditions in graphical formats.

More importantly, Apple Health helps create a medical profile. Users can add their IDs, record medicines, immunization, vaccination records, lab tests, and insurance plans, and read informative healthcare articles.

Heal

Heal is a medical on-demand app with the facility to book virtual and in-person doctor visits. It works for remote health monitoring and scheduling doctor house calls. Users can pay for their sessions through Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Heal app has an interesting working mechanism.

Users need to sign up with the app and add their details like address and insurance plans. Then they can directly book appointments with vetted medical care providers and nurses. They also can book sessions with the same or match with new providers. After deducting different insurance figures and allowances, they can view the upfront fee they'd have to pay.

Currently, 80 million Americans are using the Heal app. The app is geo-limited and only available in the United States.

Talkspace Therapy and Counseling

Talkspace, is an online therapy app, that matches users with therapists, counselors, and other mental health practitioners. It is HIPAA compliant and has in-app messaging, audio, and video communication features.

The official Talkspace listing suggests that 81% of survey participants believe Talkspace to be as effective as face-to-face therapy. More importantly, users who regularly use Talkspace for two months felt a noticeable difference in their stress and anxiety symptoms.

Talkspace, however, differs from other healthcare apps on this list, as it is a premium app. And how much does Talkspace cost? At the time of this recording it comes with three different pricing plans and may be billed weekly. The messaging plan costs \$69 per week, while the live therapy package is \$99 per week.

The third plan, which includes messaging and live therapy, comes at \$129 per week. Also, Talkspace may charge differently in some regions depending on the availability of practitioners and therapists. Other plans allow users choose from text, audio, and video therapies. Also, users can choose to pay monthly or quarterly to further enjoy up to 20% savings on their therapy sessions.

Some users consider Talkspace a pricey option. And if you weigh in only the therapy costs, Talkspace is a much more affordable option than in-person therapy sessions that cost an average of \$200 per meeting.

Calm

Calm is a meditation and mental health app that improves sleep, mindfulness, and focus. It fits ideally with every self-improvement regime and helps reduce stress.

Whether or not you are into relaxation techniques and self-help, Calm has something for everyone. It has different plans, including Calm basic, Calm for Business, Calm for Students, and Family Plan.

Calm is a free app that offers in-app purchases. It is available for Android and iOS, has a robust web presence, and works with Apple TV, Apple Watch.

Other premium Calm plans include a yearly subscription that costs \$69.99 and a lifetime access plan that costs \$399 one time at the time of this recording.

WYSA – AI Chat bot

WYSA is a one-of-its-kind mental health app that works for mood tracking, mindfulness, and anxiety relief. It is a chatbot; basically, an AI companion for users going through severe stress symptoms and depression but are not comfortable sharing with real human beings. For them, WYSA is a happiness buddy, a mood-booster, and a friend who inherently doesn't share any information with third parties.

This chatbot's functionality and overall user experience make WYSA one of the best AI healthcare apps and a real innovation in the mental health app development landscape.

For healthcare app developers, WYSA comes up with significant development goals, with the revolutionary use of artificial intelligence, blended with a fluid user interface, easy navigation, and high-end performance for a specific audience.

It helps with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and uses conversational tools to help people sail through panic, conflict, and stress.

Wysa is free and comes with in-app purchases. Currently, it has 4.9 stars on the App store and 4.7 stars on Google Play. It has crossed 1 million downloads on both leading mobile app stores.

AYSA

AYSA is a digital skin advisor that guides users about mild skin diseases and symptoms. Users can take a snap of their affected skin, scan a rash, itch, or pimple, enter their symptoms and ask Aysa what to do.

After scanning the input images, the app asks several questions that help generate personalized recommendations. These questions include age, the part of the skin, skin color at the moment, fever and temperature conditions, etc.

It has a robust backend with artificial intelligence and machine algorithms. The size of the fed big data comes from the experience of 47,000 medical professionals and 137 million search queries. And that's how AYSA works.

When users scan a picture of their skin condition, AYSA searches in its extensive database and comes up with personalized guidance that does not diagnose a condition but provides information that forwards healthcare discussions in the right direction.

Because AYSA handles and processes sensitive personal information in the form of images, it has a firm privacy policy that says users' photos never leave their phones. It has 4.7 stars rating on both Google Play and iOS.

[Carb Manager](#)

Many people are following a keto diet. What is key is tracking your carbs, progress and water intake. Carb Manager will help you personalize your low-carb journey and meet all your important health goals.

Also it is more than just a Keto calorie counter. Carb Manager integrates seamlessly with FitBit, Garmin, and hundreds of other apps and devices via Apple Health and Google Fit, helping you to manage your health goals.

It has a free version and a paid version you can choose from.

[Medisafe](#)

Medisafe is one of the leading mobile health apps for medication management. Medisafe provides personalized real-time reminders for each of the medications and vital drug interaction warnings.

It is an easy-to-use app and comes with the feature to communicate with the Doctor. Overall, with its wide-ranging application, it truly empowers patients with chronic diseases or other diseases to seamlessly manage their treatment journey.

The app has a user base of over 6 million and contains 30,000+ severe drug interaction warnings.

[Blood Pressure](#)

The Blood Pressure app by MedClin is a useful app that tracks the blood pressure systolic, diastolic, and pulse with interactive charts and graphs. It provides blood pressure reports in PDF format that the user can easily share with the doctor.

It has an advantage over other apps that it can track the blood pressure zone as per different levels such as Stage 1 and 2 Hypertension, Prehypertension, Normal, and Hypotension). Additionally, it collects vital information that can help to measure and track your progress over a period of time.

Note that this app does not measure the blood pressure. Only blood pressure monitor device can. The app makes it easy to control your blood pressure after logging the results.

Curable

Curable is one of the leading apps in the pain management segment and uses a biopsychosocial approach. It provides evidence-based chronic pain lessons and uses a combination of pain science education and research-backed techniques.

The curable app comes with a virtual pain coach named Clara, who after analyzing the user's queries presents 5-20-minute exercises, like guided meditations and visualizations, and lessons, that help the user to better manage his/her health.

AsthmaMD

AsthmaMD allows users to keep a journal of their asthma activity, medicines, and triggers. The information is shown in a color graph that users may share with their clinicians.

Furthermore, by agreeing to securely submit encrypted and anonymized data – such as severity, time, date, and location – to a Google-managed database, patients may assist researchers in studying trends in asthma attacks.

MyCOPD

myCOPD is the most comprehensive, user-friendly, and intuitive COPD app available for any device. myCOPD, designed and developed by COPD experts and externally peer-reviewed by prominent physicians, gives patients and their clinical teams unprecedented autonomy.

The app provides complete online pulmonary rehabilitation programs from the convenience of your own home to receive the best COPD therapy available.

So these are just a few options and there are so many more so make sure and check out the resources. As a reminder personally, I have not used all the apps nor am I a doctor so I am not recommending any of these as I am not qualified to do so, rather I am bringing awareness so you know what is out there and can work with your provider to determine the best options for your health goals and healthcare needs.

In our next episode we are going to discuss Shared Decision Making – The Patient and Physician Relationship.

- Do you find yourself feeling anxious about an upcoming doctor's appointment?
- Will your appointment be rushed?
- Will you remember the questions you need to ask?

We are going to provide some valuable details of how you can best manage this.

Until then...Get Savvy!