

Digital Health Focus Groups Supplemental Information

IN BRIEF

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) conducted a series of consumer interviews in spring 2013 to explore how existing and emerging technologies can be used to meet the needs of high-need, high-cost Medicaid beneficiaries. Key themes and opportunities that emerged from these focus groups are synthesized in a CHCS brief, *Digital Health Innovations for Medicaid Super-Utilizers: Consumer Feedback to Steer New Technologies*. This supplement to the brief includes:

1. [Focus Group Discussion Questions](#);
2. [Focus Group Survey](#);
3. [Consumer Technology Survey Results](#); and
4. [Information about Digital Health Technologies Cited in Brief](#).

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. Medical Access

- 1) How do you decide if you need to see a doctor? Is it usually because you are not feeling well, or also because you have follow-up visits that the office scheduled for you? Do you have a place you usually go or do you kind of shop around?
 - a. Do you ever get reminders about scheduled visits? Do such reminders help?
 - b. What is the best way for you to get reminders (phone call, email, text)?
- 2) What types of things do you have to do to prepare for a visit? What is challenging or difficult about getting ready?
 - a. How often do you make appointments in advance? How often do you just decide to go that day?
 - b. Are there things that are difficult about getting to an appointment or to the doctor for an unscheduled appointment?
 - c. What (or who) helps you to get ready?
- 3) Once you get to the doctor's office and are *registering/waiting* to see the doctor, what challenges have you experienced that make it hard to have a "successful" visit?
 - a. On the other hand, what makes a visit go smoothly?
 - b. Have you found places that are easier to manage than others? What is it about those places that make them easier?
- 4) What are some of the difficulties you have experienced *during* a doctor's visit?
 - a. What makes for a really good visit with a doctor?
 - b. Does anyone have a good example of a really great experience with an office and/or provider?
- 5) *After* you meet with a doctor, what types of things have happened to you that make it hard to follow-up with the next steps, like getting and taking medicine, going for tests or lab work, going to a specialist?
 - a. Are there things you have found to be helpful in terms of following up with next steps?
 - b. Do you ever get written instructions, and if you do, how helpful are they? Do you ever take notes?
 - c. Do you ever take someone with you to listen and help you remember?

- 6) What types of things do you think would help keep you or people you know out of the emergency room?
- 7) What things motivate you to take care of your health?

II. Medication Management

- 1) What are things that make it especially hard for you to take your medication?
- 2) What are things that make it difficult to fill prescriptions?
- 3) What types of things help or would help you take your medication properly?

III. Housing and Health

- 1) People who are homeless or unstably housed, perhaps living with friends or relatives, may face special challenges when it comes to staying healthy.
 - a. In terms of your health, what things were hardest for you while you were homeless?
 - b. What helped you in this situation?
 - c. What could have helped you better manage your health while you were homeless?
 - d. Can you recommend ways people who are still homeless could be helped?
- 2) Even after people get housed, they may still face some challenges. Any thoughts on what is challenging for people who are newly housed and perhaps on their own for the first time in a while? How about specifically with respect to managing health and health care?

IV. Social Isolation

It can be very difficult to manage your health alone, without friends or family around to help. What types of social support help or would help you to manage your health?

V. Health Management and the Ways Technology Can Support It

- 1) How many of you currently use technology in one way or another? Can you give some examples of what you use?
- 2) What types of technology do you like best, and which are easiest for you to use?
- 3) Do you find it easy or not so easy to access the technology and/or sustain it (e.g., find a computer to use for free, keep service on a cell phone or pay for a prepaid phone, access the internet)?
 - a. Are you able to consistently use the technology you like?
 - b. What barriers do you run up against?
- 4) What kinds of technologies would you be most comfortable using?
- 5) If there was one thing that you could have a tool help you with, what would it be?
- 6) One thing that technology can do is give you many different kinds of information, which can help empower you to make decisions about your health. Are there certain types of information that you think would be helpful for you to have in order to manage your health?
- 7) Some technologies can transmit data about your health, your medication adherence, or where you are to your providers. Would you be comfortable using a tool that gave information like this to your case manager or doctor?

FOCUS GROUP SURVEY

CHCS Consumer Technology Survey

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is exploring ways in which technologies can be created to help you manage your health care and better navigate the health care system. Filling out this survey will help us better understand how to make this technology best work for you.

1) Do you have a cell-phone?

☐

YES

☐

NO (skip to question #6)

If yes,

2) Who pays for your phone?

☐

IT'S A TRACFONE, I GET IT THROUGH MEDICAID

☐

MY CASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

☐

I DO

☐

A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER

☐

I'M NOT SURE

☐

OTHER: _____

3) What type of phone is it?

☐

SMARTPHONE (this is a phone that can do many of the same things as a computer, such as access the internet, show videos, play games, etc. If you have an Android phone or an iPhone, check this box)

☐

FEATURE PHONE (this is a phone that can do basic things such as make phone calls, send and receive text messages, get voicemails. If you have a flip phone, check this box.)

☐

I'M NOT SURE

4) Do you ever use your phone to access the internet?

☐

YES

☐ **NO** (skip to question #6)

☐ **I'M NOT SURE** (skip to question #6)

If yes,

5) On a scale of 1-4, how comfortable are you using the internet?

<u>Not comfortable at all</u>	<u>Somewhat comfortable</u>	<u>Comfortable</u>	<u>Totally comfortable</u>
1	2	3	4

6) Do you ever use computers?

☐ **YES**

☐ **NO** (skip to question #9)

If yes,

7) On a scale of 1-4, how comfortable are you using computers?

<u>Not comfortable at all</u>	<u>Somewhat comfortable</u>	<u>Comfortable</u>	<u>Totally comfortable</u>
1	2	3	4

8) Where do you access computers?

☐ **PUBLIC LIBRARY**

☐ **MY HOUSE**

☐ **FRIEND OR FAMILY'S HOUSE**

☐ **OTHER** _____

9) How comfortable are you using the below technologies?

	I don't know what this is	Not at all comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Comfortable	Totally comfortable
Text Messages					
Voicemail					
Skype, Facetime, or some other type video conferencing technology					
Apps					
Video games					
iPad					
Computer					

You're done, thank you for your time and help!

CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY SURVEY RESULTS

The following results were drawn from a series of focus group surveys conducted by CHCS in partnership with New York University in the spring of 2013. Focus group participants were receiving services from managed care organizations, and each had one or more chronic conditions, with several participants also having behavioral health and/or substance abuse disorder diagnoses. Each group was racially diverse and consisted of between eight and 12 participants.

Question	#	%
Do you have a cell phone?		
Yes	36	95%
No	2	5%
If yes, who pays for your phone?		
Tracfone through Medicaid	12	31%
My Case Management Program	2	5%
I do	21	54%
A friend/family member	3	8%
I'm not sure	0	0%
Other	1	2%
What type of phone is it?		
Smartphone	12	31.5%
Feature phone	22	58%
Not sure	4	10.5%
Do you ever use your phone to access the internet?		
Yes	18	47%
No	19	50%
Not sure	1	3%
If yes, how comfortable are you using the internet?		
Not comfortable at all	5	19%
Somewhat comfortable	7	27%
Comfortable	3	12%
Totally comfortable	11	42%
Do you ever use computers?		
Yes	25	69%
No	11	31%
If yes, how comfortable are you using computers??		
Not comfortable	7	22%
Somewhat Comfortable	8	25%
Comfortable	9	27%
Totally Comfortable	9	27%
Where do you access computers?		
Public library	12	35%
My house	12	35%
Friend or family's house	6	18%
Other	4	12%

FOCUS GROUP TECHNOLOGICAL COMFORT LEVELS

Type of Technology	Unfamiliar		Not at all comfortable		Somewhat Comfortable		Comfortable		Totally comfortable		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Text messages	2	6%	9	28%	5	15%	5	15%	12	36%	33
Voicemail	1	3%	4	12%	7	21%	9	26%	13	38%	34
Skype, Facetime, other video conferencing	10	31%	10	31%	2	6%	3	9%	7	23%	32
Apps	6	19%	7	23%	7	23%	5	16%	6	19%	31
Video Games	3	9%	9	28%	8	24%	7	21%	6	18%	33
iPad	3	10%	14	47%	4	13%	3	10%	6	20%	30
Computer	2	7%	5	16%	6	19%	7	23%	11	35%	31

*n=38

INFORMATION ABOUT DIGITAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES CITED IN BRIEF

Product Name/Website	Description
AdhereTech www.adheretech.com	Smart pill bottles that aim to improve medication adherence by tracking the amount of medication inside the bottles in real-time, wirelessly transmitting this data into the cloud, and reminding patients to take their medicine via automated phone calls or text messages.
BlueButton www.healthit.gov/bluebutton	A digital tool that allows consumers to view, download, and share their health records. Originally developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, it is now being increasingly utilized by health care providers and payers.
HealthVault www.healthvault.com	An on-line service that stores patient health records and allows consumers to access them via the internet or apps to manage health conditions, create fitness plans, prepare for doctors visits, etc.
iBGStar www.bgstar.com/web/ibgstar	A blood glucose meter that connects to the iPhone and iPod touch, and allows consumers to view data in real-time and share this data with providers.
iTriage www.itriagehealth.com	A mobile app that allows consumers to check symptoms for possible diagnosis, learn about possible causes, research medications, and determine how to treat presenting issues. The tool also locates and compares nearby care options, and allows consumers to check into emergency departments or urgent care settings or make appointments via the app.
Loselt www.loseit.com	A mobile app that allows consumers to set a daily calorie budget, then monitor food intake and exercise. Features include being able to scan the bar code on food to add to daily log, and connect with other users for support and encouragement.
MangoHealth www.mangohealth.com	A mobile app that seeks to improve medication adherence by providing reminders and supplying information about possible drug interactions. Consumers are eligible to win prizes such as gift cards or may make donations to selected charities as a reward for high levels of adherence.
MyHealthDIRECT www.myhealthdirect.com	A "health care scheduling exchange" platform aimed at health plans, this tool allows plans, hospitals, and clinics to view appointment availabilities and schedule appointments for consumers across the member network.
OneHealth www.onehealth.com	A social networking app that allows consumers to join peer support communities to help them achieve and monitor their health goals.
Orca Health www.orcahealth.com	A company that designs mobile apps that interactively educate consumers on medical conditions through sight, sound and touch.
PatientPartner www.mypatientpartner.com	A "choose your own adventure" interactive simulation game that lets consumers choose a character, and gain insight into their own health decisions by playing out various health scenarios.

Product Name/Website	Description
PocketYoga www.pocket-sports.com	A mobile app that allows consumers to choose their level of difficulty, duration, and type of yoga practice, and provides a voiced-over, step-by-step guide through the workout.
Propeller Health www.propellerhealth.com	A wireless digital sensor that attaches to an inhaler, this tool tracks when individuals with asthma or COPD use their inhaler. This data can be viewed via the mobile app, and allows consumers and their providers to trends inhaler utilization over time.
Shake www.shakelaw.com	A mobile app that allows individuals to create legally binding contracts for various circumstances, electronically sign them, and send them to any relevant parties for signature or record-keeping.
Sparx www.sparx.org.nz	A computer program that is currently undergoing clinical trials in New Zealand, this program is aimed at young adults with mild to moderate depression. It allows users to choose an avatar and begin a quest to conquer "pesky negative thoughts." Cognitive Behavioral Therapy techniques are taught to users as they make their way through various levels of the game to help users more skillfully cope with depression.
Stat www.signup.stat.com	An app designed for companies that utilize medical transportation for their consumers, it allows individuals to request immediate medical transport for a patient. The app provides real-time GPS tracking of the ambulance; allows for consumers to be in touch with members of the transport crew; tracks route, transport time, and distance; and receipts for transport are emailed immediately upon the trip's completion. Users may provide feedback and ratings on transportation companies and drivers.
Uber www.uber.com	A mobile app that allows consumers to electronically request a taxi or car service by using their phone's Global Positioning System (GPS) to locate the ride nearest to them. Consumers can track the car's location on a map, and are texted when the car arrives.
Weight Tracker QuickLog.me www.quicklog.me/weight-tracker	A mobile app that measures weight and body fat percentage on a daily basis, and turns this data into graphs and charts to help consumers understand and monitor their weight trends.
Withings Blood Pressure Monitor www.withings.com/bloodpressuremonitor	A digital blood pressure cuff that connects to iPhones, iPads or iPod touches, this tool measures, archives and displays consumers' blood pressure readings, which consumers can email to providers to help monitor their health remotely.

About the Center for Health Care Strategies

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is a nonprofit health policy resource center dedicated to improving health care access and quality for low-income Americans. CHCS works with state and federal agencies, health plans, providers, and consumer groups to develop innovative programs that better serve people with complex and high-cost health care needs. For more information, visit www.chcs.org.