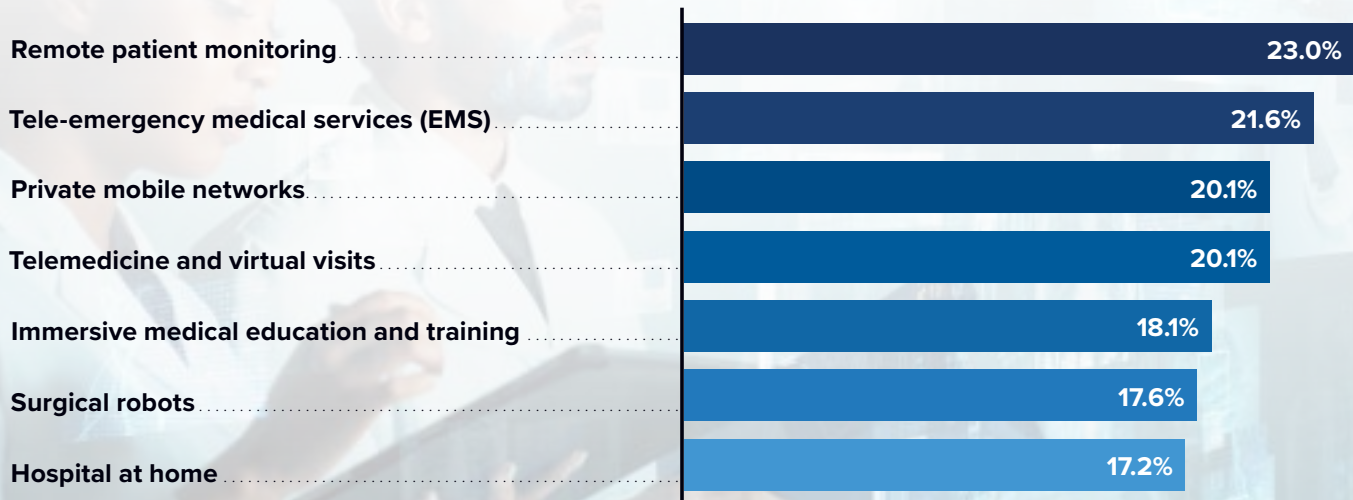




5G Technology Will Accelerate Healthcare Provider Innovation

Top 5G Use Cases for Healthcare Providers

(% of Respondents)



n = 204; Source: IDC's U.S. Healthcare Provider Technology and Connected Health Survey, January 2022

Healthcare Provider Organizations are Investing in 5G

The prospect of improved patient outcomes and operational efficiencies offered by innovative new use cases is driving healthcare organizations to make the requisite investments in 5G technology. According to IDC's *US Healthcare Provider and Connected Health Survey* (January 2022), two out of three providers have or are making investments in 5G-enabled devices to deploy a wide range of 5G use cases in the next one to three years. And 30% of healthcare organizations plan to boost spending on 4G and 5G connectivity services in 2022, according to respondents of IDC's *Future Enterprise Resiliency and Spending Survey* (October 2021).

Adopting new approaches to connectivity using 5G technology will enable healthcare organizations to increase their business resilience through a variety of telehealth initiatives. During the pandemic, there was a significant uptick in adoption of virtual care services to continue providing care while mitigating the risk of exposure to the virus. As the virus begins to taper, telehealth appears to remain a standard with many providers who find this option to be both time and cost effective. The benefits of 5G support this new trend with its greater speed and bandwidth improving the experience for both clinicians and patients. Approximately three out of four providers reported plans to pilot or deploy 5G through 2023; 7.8% of respondents stated that they were in production in 2021 and 12.3% will be in production in 2022 according to the IDC's *US Healthcare Provider and Connected Health Survey* (January 2022).

5G will also play a pivotal role in improving emergency care. For example, ambulances will be able to connect to emergency medical staff to digitally transmit patient vitals and diagnostic information in real-time. With on-board HD video, emergency department staff can view the patient and provide live instructions to paramedics on how to treat the patient while on location and en route to the hospital. Improved information flow will save critical diagnostic time for emergency staff members as they prepare for the patient's arrival. Patients can also be triaged to the appropriate care setting based on their acuity levels.

Put more simply, 5G will deliver cost efficiencies and improve patient outcomes in healthcare. Initially through more expansive and higher quality telehealth services, 5G will enable a new form of "healthcare from anywhere," allowing providers to see more patients, more frequently, no matter how close or far the patient resides from the provider's facility. And as the 5G use cases in healthcare mature, new use cases that integrate 5G with augmented reality/virtual reality (AR/VR), artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and other emerging technologies will improve healthcare quality and delivery through enhanced training, expanded remote health monitoring, and improved in-procedure information access. These in turn will contribute to a variety of factors that drive the 5G return on investment (ROI), such as more frequent consultations, shorter hospital stays, reduced errors and insurance rates, and improved patient quality of life.

What Are the Key Steps to Prepare for 5G?

Know what you have and where the gaps are.

It is important for healthcare organizations to inventory what connectivity they already have in place and how it is being used. A thorough understanding of the technical requirements for current and future use cases will ensure alignment between performance and connectivity.

Define or target clear goals/KPIs for 5G/mobility to improve upon.

Healthcare organizations need measurable KPIs that will drive planning and justifying the 5G investment.

Find a trusted connectivity advisor.

This can not only help assess which advanced 5G use cases make the most sense for the organization, but also optimize and align existing investments in wired, Long-Term Evolution (LTE), and Wi-Fi.

Adopt today but build for tomorrow.

Some futuristic 5G use cases are on the horizon, but it is important for healthcare organizations to look at 5G today as a ground-floor investment. Building a familiarity with 5G today will ease adoption and integration of future use cases, as well as spread the capex for 5G adoption over a longer period of time. Ultimately organizations need to think of 5G as a strategic resource and design deployments with built-in flexibility to integrate future use cases as they emerge.

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