

## Top Trends to Look For in Healthcare in 2020

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### Rapid Emergence of Consumerism

Healthcare consumers continue to pay more and more toward their out-of-pocket healthcare costs, driving a shift away from volume-based compensation models toward outcomes-based payment arrangements. By all accounts, meaningful consumerism in the healthcare market is rapidly emerging.

Historically, healthcare transactions were business-to-business encounters with traditional healthcare business processes that tended to neglect consumer wants and needs. With the rise of consumerism, however, healthcare providers and supporting industry actors are quickly adopting consumer-centric processes so they can more effectively work with consumers. Healthcare providers and supporting industry actors will risk losing relevance if they do not embrace the new role of the consumer in healthcare.

In the coming year, the healthcare industry will continue to adopt tools and techniques to better understand consumer behavior, provide consumers with the information necessary to inform and drive consumer decision-making and offer greater consumer convenience. Examples include minute clinics in grocery and other retail stores, settings with extended hours seven days a week, urgent and walk-in care clinics, telemedicine visits and around-the-clock access to nurses and other healthcare providers by telephone.

The [data](#) suggest that these trends will accelerate and lead to even more profound market transformation in the years to come.

### Disruptive Innovation

Innovation in clinical care delivery and healthcare business processes have the potential to reshape the healthcare market. Healthcare providers and others who support the industry will rapidly lose market share if they do not evolve their business and clinical care models to leverage innovation.

Recognizing this dynamic, healthcare providers and others who support the industry are and will continue to collaborate with a vast variety of businesses and other organizations to leverage innovation. For example, many healthcare providers are using technology to enable patients to access clinical care through video visits, e-visits and other virtual visits. Still other healthcare

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providers are using improved techniques to enhance diagnostic medicine, precision medicine, remote monitoring, patient engagement and patient experience, to name just a few.

The need for the rapid adoption of transformation in the healthcare industry will continue to drive provider demand for access to capital, resources and administrative scale, causing ongoing consolidation (both vertical and horizontal) among healthcare providers. And these consolidated healthcare providers will need to develop organizational structures that capitalize on new core competencies, such as data analytics that inform and improve patient outcomes, experiences and cost. With these transformational changes, the healthcare industry will look to engage consultants and recruit an even more modern workforce that is adept at leveraging innovation.

## **Prescription Drug Pricing**

The rising cost of prescription drugs will remain a top healthcare priority throughout the nation in 2020. Some prescription drugs that have been on the market for years have now quadrupled in cost, leaving patients to determine with their physicians the best cost-effective drug regimes. While the availability of generic and biosimilar medicines is a tested solution to lowering the cost of prescription drugs, many medications do not offer those alternative options. Patients affected by the increase in prescription drug pricing claim that they are skipping doses, splitting pills and abandoning treatments altogether.

To help reduce the growth of prescription drug prices and out-of-pocket costs, several 2020 presidential candidates are now proposing policies in their campaigns. Some lawmakers have already introduced legislation requiring that television commercials for prescription drugs disclose prices, while other lawmakers have approved programs that would cap the monthly co-pays for life-saving drugs. In 2020, pharmaceutical companies will likely be required to disclose even more financial information to help both government officials and the public understand how they establish drug prices. Also on the horizon in 2020 is government regulation on the rate at which drug prices can increase.

## **Opioid Use Disorder**

Death by overdose has been at epidemic levels in the United States for the past 20 years, with opioid overdoses rising every year — killing 130 Americans every day. In 2018 alone, the United States allocated more than \$600 billion to tackling the opioid crisis, and in the past four years, it has spent over \$2 trillion. The costs associated with opioid use disorder include costs related with criminal justice, lost productivity, treatment of overdoses and treatment of babies born dependent on opioids.

At the state level, the opioid crisis has affected health care systems, public safety and corrections, child protective services and other agencies. Eleven states have partnered to examine proposed strategies for combating the opioid crisis through Medicaid programs and public health departments, with the hope of better informing the public of the consequences of opioid misuse. Some states, such as Florida, have implemented prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) to limit the amount of opioid prescriptions to no more than a three-day supply. While these strategies slightly lowered the number of opioid overdoses in 2019, it is expected that both state and federal governments will allocate further resources to continue to address the opioid use disorders crisis.

[Read more](#) national trends, legislation, regulation and litigation that we expect to have a significant impact on the workplace in 2020.

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