

WHITE PAPER

Technology to Improve In Home Care Efficiency

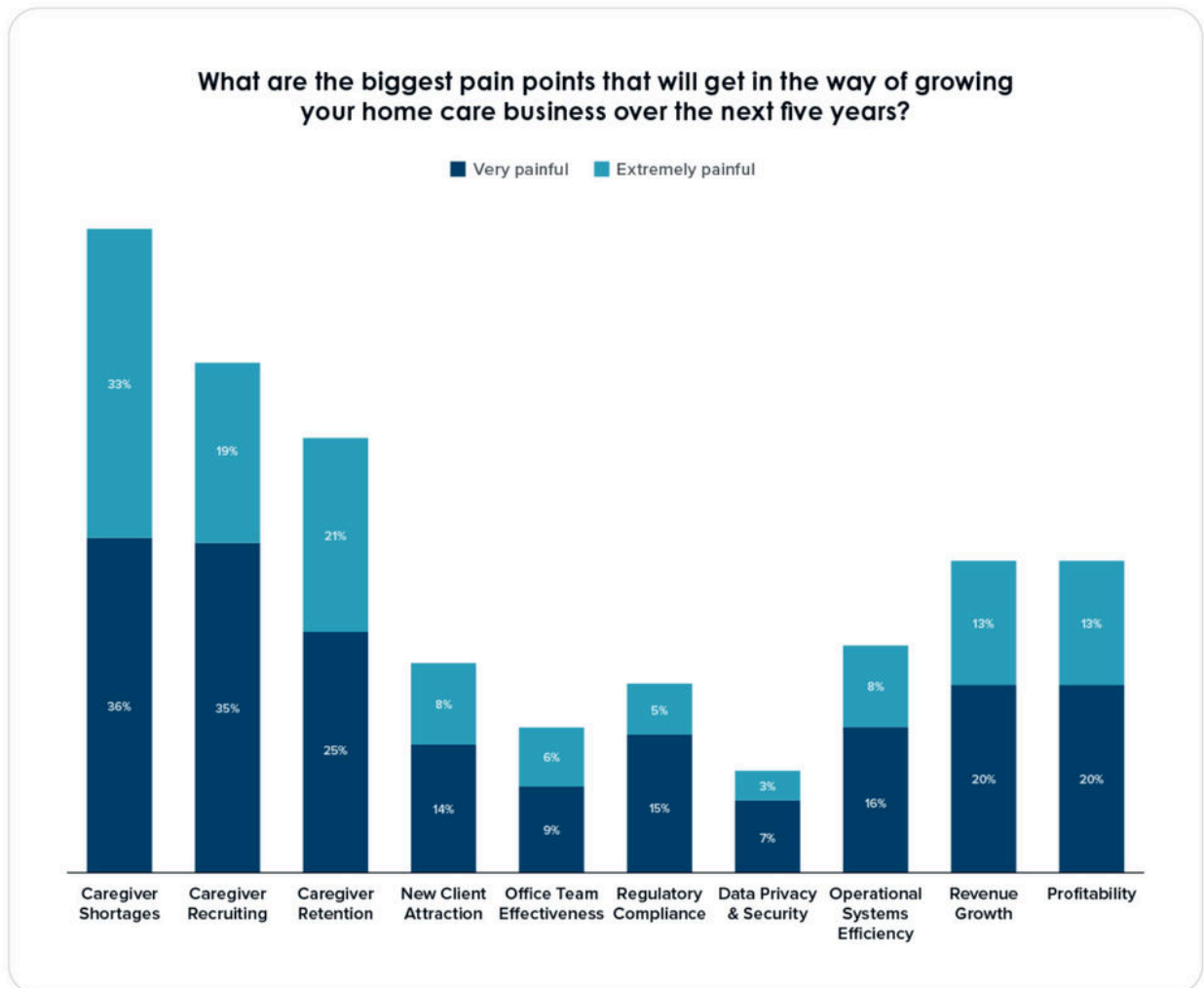


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Introduction

In the next five years, home care agencies are poised to face a specific and complex web of operational challenges. These hurdles will put pressure on their profitability, regulatory compliance, and most of all, their staffing: nearly 70% of agency leaders say that caregiver shortages are either “Very Painful” or “Extremely Painful,” and more than half feel the same about caregiver recruiting.

These sentiments were a common theme throughout [The Future of Home Care](#) industry report, which was commissioned by AxisCare and conducted by a third-party firm. Other major concerns include caregiver retention, revenue growth, and overall profitability. This white paper will spotlight how home health care software can be the antidote to these modern challenges.



Current Challenges in In-Home Care

Limited Access to Information

Fragmented healthcare information systems tend to create data silos across different platforms and institutions, making it difficult for caregivers to get a clear picture of a given patient's needs. Coupled with outdated technologies, these issues prevent stakeholders from accessing real-time patient information that would enable them to make well-informed decisions.

Low Quality of Care Impacted by Caregiver Shortages

An agency is only as good as its caregiver roster, and if there's not enough staff to go around, the quality of care will suffer. There will be fewer hands to accommodate significant workloads, less consistency among patient-caregiver relationships, and higher rates of burnout as overworked staff exceed their maximum capacity.

Inefficient Communication

Just like information systems, communication channels can be similarly fragmented in the healthcare space. Providers, caregivers, and patients need to keep each other in the loop, but without a centralized way to do so, essential information can get misunderstood, or worse: never communicated at all.

Inadequate Monitoring Tools

Monitoring patients in a hospital or clinic setting is second nature, but doing so remotely requires an entirely different set of technologies. Without these tools at their disposal, agencies won't necessarily be able to track patients' vital signs and other key markers in real-time, potentially leading to missed warning signs or early intervention opportunities.

Regulatory Changes: Federal, State, & Local

The home health care industry is governed by a long list of regulations that are constantly in flux. Most recently, the 80/20 rule stipulated that at least 80% of all Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) payments must be allocated for direct care worker compensation. If agencies can't stay on top of these changes, they risk slipping into noncompliance.

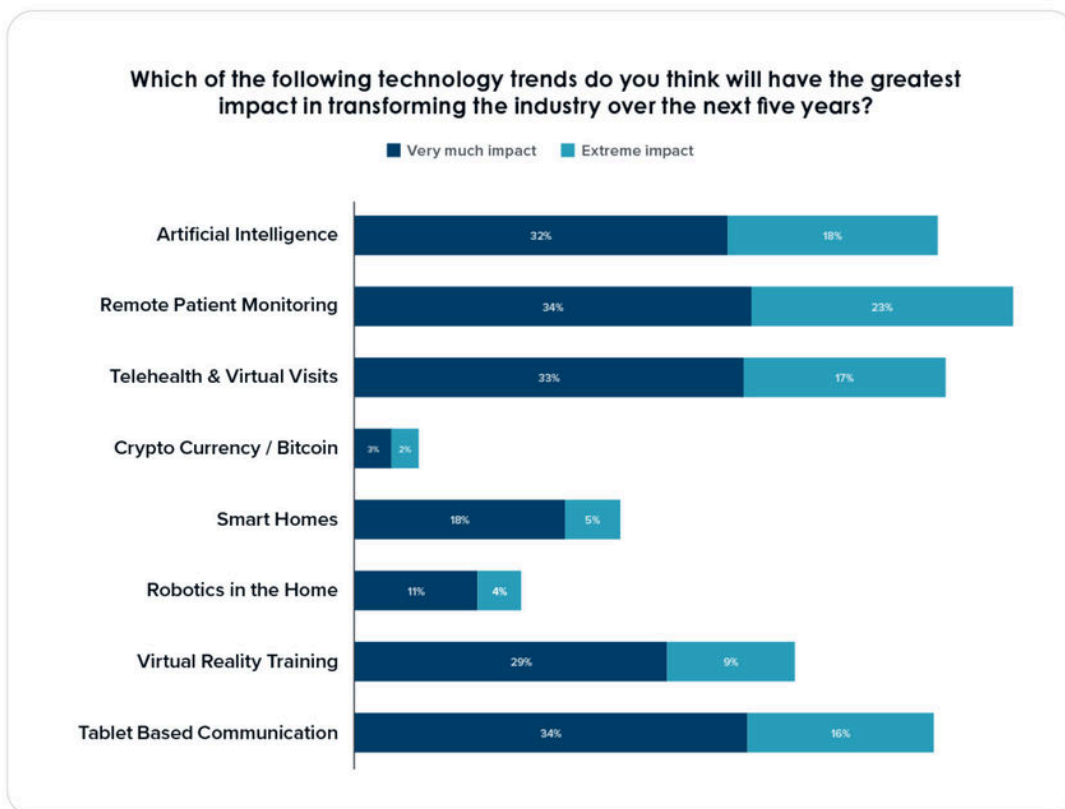
High Turnover Rates

High turnover is a knock-on effect of caregiver shortages. Like we mentioned above, burnt out staff tend to pull back from the home care workforce – whether temporarily or permanently – leaving gaps behind. With them goes all of their training and experience, forcing agencies to start from square one over and over again.

The Role of Technology in In-Home Care

These days, every corner of our lives is being simplified and streamlined with technology. Home care agencies should be no different. Using automation tools and tailor-made software is the key to overcoming some of the greatest obstacles to their success.

Technology Trends in In-Home Care



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Technology Trends in In-Home Care Cont.

Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)

According to the agencies who responded to our third-party study, remote patient monitoring is poised to have the greatest impact on the industry's transformation over the next five years. Wearable devices, sensors, and other monitoring tools can track vitals, medication adherence, and overall health status from afar, sending patient information straight to practitioners' information systems.

Telemedicine & Telehealth

In a long-term care situation, it's inconvenient for patients to constantly be traveling between their home and the hospital. Telehealth connects clients and practitioners in a virtual setting instead, enabling consultations, diagnoses, and treatment at a distance. One-third of home care agency leaders surveyed in our industry report believe these technologies will have a very large impact on the industry over the next five years, and another 17% say the impact will be "extreme."

Electronic Health Records (EHRs)

Centralizing patients' health records is critical for ensuring continuity of care. [EHRs](#) are digital copies that can be accessed from anywhere, compiling essential information like health history, prescriptions, and test results. This documentation system streamlines communication and coordination among healthcare providers, yielding better outcomes and more aligned care efforts.

Wearable Devices

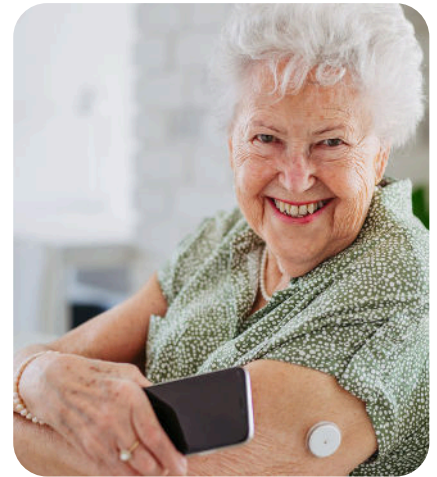
Wearables are quickly becoming more prominent as the future of remote healthcare. Equipped with sensors that allow for continuous monitoring, these devices allow healthcare providers to track patients' physical activity, vital signs, and other health metrics without ever stepping foot inside a hospital or clinic.

Advances in Technology for In-Home Care

Technological advances in home health care have significantly impacted the way individuals can receive treatment at home, providing innovative solutions that improve patient outcomes and enhance the efficiency of care delivery.

Smart Sensors

There are many wearable technologies on the market today that send real-time patient data directly to healthcare practitioners. ECG, blood pressure, and glucose monitors are becoming increasingly common, as well as fall detection devices that send emergency alerts for immediate assistance.



Virtual Consultations

Telehealth is an emerging communication channel that allows patients and healthcare professionals to conduct remote consultations. This greatly reduces the need for in-person visits, saving patients time and energy and allowing practitioners to serve individuals who may not otherwise have easy access to care.

In-Home Care Software

Point-of-care software gives agencies the tools to deliver a wide range of medical and personal care services in the comfort of patients' homes. From operational tools like scheduling management and payment processing to on-the-ground capabilities like medication reminders and data capture via mobile apps, these platforms help agencies simplify their internal and external workflows.

AI-Powered Personalized Care

AI can analyze vast amounts of patient data incredibly quickly, identifying patterns on both an individual and collective level. Then, these intelligent algorithms can use their findings to create more effective and personalized care plans that reflect patients' unique medical histories, properly pairing clients and caregivers via intelligent algorithm scheduling options.

Benefits of Technology Adoption in In-Home Care

Real-Time Health Tracking

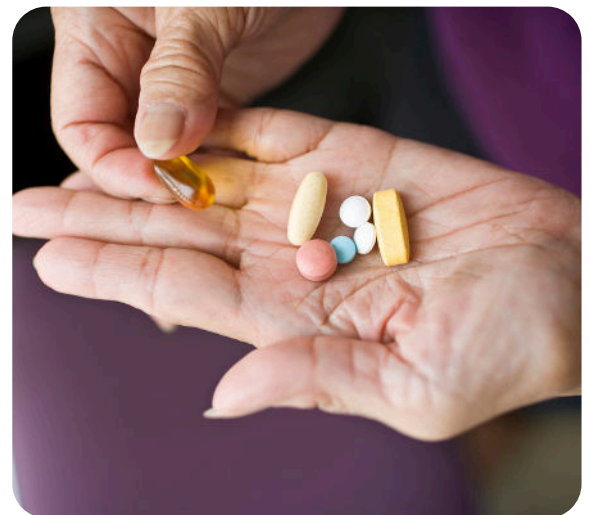
Wearable sensors and other technologies transmit real-time information to healthcare practitioners, including vital signs and other metrics like blood pressure and heart rate, facilitating early intervention and preventive care.

Medication Management

Automated [medication management](#) tools keep patients accountable and on track when caregivers aren't around. Both patients and caregivers receive medication reminders and alerts for missed doses, thereby improving adherence to prescribed regimens.

Improved Access to Care

For many patients receiving home health care, making frequent trips to the hospital or clinic is a challenge – whether it's too expensive, time-consuming, or simply not possible in their current physical condition. Telehealth platforms enable remote consultations, improving access to healthcare professionals without the need for patients to travel.



Streamlined Communication

Digital communication tools like two-way chat, mobile apps, and electronic health records make it easier for healthcare providers, caregivers, and patients to remain connected and aligned. And when everyone is on the same page, clients can receive continuous care that promotes better health outcomes.

Increased Patient Engagement

Traditional approaches to medical care can leave patients feeling like they're on the outside, and technology bridges that gap. Tools like [online portals](#) increase transparency and autonomy, inviting patients and their families to educate themselves using digital resources and empowering them to participate actively in the care process.

Benefits of Technology Adoption in In-Home Care Cont.

Data Accessibility

If patient records live inside doctors' offices and clinics, at-home caregivers must jump through hoops to retrieve basic information. Digitizing health records enhances the accessibility of patient information, and allowing caregivers to update these files during home visits makes them more accurate and comprehensive.

Reduced Hospital Readmissions

Remote monitoring and virtual care can help prevent complications and issues before they happen. Through education, frequent touch points, and proper escalation protocols, home care software can reduce the likelihood of hospital readmissions and the associated healthcare costs.

Flexible Scheduling

Virtual consultations make it easier for practitioners to schedule appointments around all parties' needs, and home care scheduling software enables greater flexibility. Automatic caregiver matching assigns staff that is guaranteed to be available and gives admins the ability to fill open shifts in real time. Mobile apps tie it all together, giving caregivers and managers the flexibility to adapt schedules at the click of a button.

Future Trends in In-Home Care Technology

While the technologies mentioned above have already improved patient care by leaps and bounds, we expect to see plenty more advancements in the coming years. These solutions are already well underway in terms of development and are poised to further increase the quality of care agencies can provide for their patients.

Predictive Analytics

AI algorithms can analyze patient data on an individual and aggregate level, working to predict potential health issues and allow home care agencies to intervene proactively. By identifying early warning signs, AI-powered insights can help home care agencies deliver timely and efficient medical support while creating more detailed and personalized care plans for each patient.

Future Trends in In-Home Care Technology Cont.

AI Capabilities

AI can also automatically send medication reminders and provide assistance with everyday tasks at home, improving care as patients age in place. Future iterations of this technology may also offer companionship, helping to alleviate loneliness and boost mental health. By handling both routine and social duties, AI takes work off caregivers' plates, enabling them to concentrate on more specialized care needs.

Biometric Identification

Agencies and caregivers handle plenty of sensitive patient information, all of which is subject to HIPAA. Biometric authentication methods provide secure access to these records and devices, making unauthorized access nearly impossible and enabling home care agencies to maintain the highest standards of data protection.

Mobile Health Applications

[Home care mobile apps](#) already exist today and are poised to integrate even more advanced capabilities in the future. Their ultimate goals are to increase patient engagement, streamline medication management, and build strong communication channels with healthcare providers to get clients more involved in their own care.



Conclusion

Caregiver shortages, fragmented information systems, inadequate monitoring tools, and frequent regulatory changes will be the main challenges affecting home care agencies in the near future. Together, they create somewhat of a feedback loop: data silos and outdated technologies hinder real-time decision-making, while poor communication leads to essential information getting lost or mismanaged. High turnover rates further exacerbate these issues as experienced staff leave the organization.


Advancements in technology are a bright spot on the horizon. Remote patient monitoring and telemedicine enable continuous tracking from afar, reducing the need for in-person visits. Electronic health records improve care coordination by centralizing patient information, and AI can analyze vast quantities of data to create more tailored care plans. All of these innovations and more can give home care agencies a much-needed boost to better navigate future complexities and improve patient outcomes.

[Schedule a demo](#) with one of our experts to learn more about leveraging technological advances to improve your agency's care delivery.

Learn More

Visit axiscare.com/contact to schedule a call with our team.

 sales@axiscare.com

 (800) 930-7201



AXISCARE.COM

References & Resources:

- [Aging in Place- National Library of Medicine](#)
- [The Future of Home Care: A 2024 Survey of the Home Care Industry & Future Trends](#)
- [Medication Management](#)
- [Electronic Health Records](#)
- [AxisCare Client & Family Portals](#)
- [AxisCare Caregiver Mobile App](#)

Appendix - Internal

Electronic Records: Elevating Accessibility and Information Sharing

The transition from traditional paper-based records to electronic records has revolutionized the home care industry, bringing forward many benefits and advancements. With electronic health records (or [EHRs](#)), caregivers, family members, and clients can effortlessly access and exchange vital information, fostering seamless collaboration and enhancing the quality of care provided. This technology also allows for real-time updates and monitoring, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information at all times. John Atkinson explains that caregivers are now *“providing care with the latest information accessible to them, whereas before, there might have been a greater lag in the care recipient having access to that information.”*

Comprehensive suites of home health care software tools including care planning, [shift documentation](#), and [secure HIPAA-compliant communication](#) are available for home care agencies to leverage in their day-to-day operations. Long gone are the days of text messaging between caregivers and clients. By moving away from text messaging and using a [secure home care software mobile app](#), agencies can ensure compliance with HIPAA regulations and provide a secure platform for seamless communication between caregivers and clients.

