



# 5G Technology Will Accelerate Healthcare Provider Innovation

## Top 6 Ways 5G Will Be Used in Healthcare Provider Organizations

In what ways do you think 5G cellular network technology will play a role in your organization?



Provider n = 176, Source: IDC 2020 Industry IT & Communications Survey, July 2020

## Healthcare Provider Organizations are Investing in 5G

The ability to introduce new capabilities for their organization, products, and clients is driving healthcare organizations to make the requisite investments in 5G technology. According to *IDC 2020 Industry IT & Communications Survey* (July 2020), 24% of healthcare provider respondents reported that they will be investing in 5G in 2021–2023 with continuing investment over the next five years. When asked about their organization's 5G activities, 43% and 33.5% stated that they were in the initial planning or development phase respectively.

Adopting new approaches to connectivity using 5G technology will enable healthcare organizations to increase their business resilience through a variety of telehealth initiatives. Over the last year, there was a significant uptick in adoption of virtual care services to continue

to provide care while mitigating the risk of exposure to the coronavirus and addressing consumer concerns. 5G with its greater speed and bandwidth will improve the experience for both clinicians and patients. Thus, the adoption of 5G will encourage the continued use of telehealth services to offer convenient and cost-effective care in a post pandemic world.

In addition to improving the connectivity performance for use cases, such as virtual care, telemedicine services, and Internet of Medical Things (IoMT), 5G will play a pivotal role in improving emergency care. For example, paramedics will be able to connect to emergency medical staff to communicate patient vitals and diagnostic information and receive instructions 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 to name a few. 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 advisor for connectivity and use case development.

A connectivity trusted advisor 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.

Many futuristic 5G use cases remain distant, but it is important for healthcare organizations to look at 5G today as a ground-floor investment. 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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