U.S. Healthcare Payer CIO Top Actions for 2022

By Connie Salgy, Bryan Cole, Mandi Bishop, Kate McCarthy
U.S. healthcare payers are entering 2022 facing business risks of COVID-19 medical costs, vigorous competition and new regulations. CIOs can use this research to clarify and prioritize the technology initiatives they must complete in the next 12 months.

Quick Answer

What top priority actions should U.S. healthcare payer CIOs take early in 2022?

- Improve consumer engagement and make member-centric administration a reality through total experience and highly relevant consumer engagement tools.
- Fast track API and FHIR data exchanges to personalize care and equip providers with the right data they need to improve health outcomes.
- Take the next step in value-based payments by accelerating interoperability initiatives and making contractual commitments to participating providers to reduce administrative burden.
- Prepare for potential membership losses and tighter margins by bolstering your administrative services only (ASO) offerings and underwriting insight.

More Detail

This research is part of a series describing top actions for healthcare and life science CIOs to take in 2022.

Focus 2022 IT Efforts on Engagement, Intelligence and Alignment

Each year we highlight the critical items that rise to the very top of CIOs’ lengthy to-do lists. We distill our research on technology and industry trends for payers to develop these top actions, which we have organized by business capabilities in our health value management model (see Industry Vision: Health Value Management, U.S. Healthcare Payers’ Next-Generation Transformation Strategy).
**Consumer Engagement**

- **Drive total experience** — Payers are increasing investment in total experience to resolve friction in their customer and employee relationships. Whether addressing member, provider or employee experience, total experience transformation gives payers a way to holistically transform their products, services and engagement strategies to improve overall stakeholder satisfaction, outcomes and revenue performance. Build seamless experiences by cultivating empathy to build an understanding of the feelings, wants, needs, beliefs and preferences of customers and employees and leveraging multiexperience to build and deploy improved digital and non-digital products and services (see Top Strategic Technology Trends for 2022: Total Experience and Quick Answer: Payer Technologies That Build Member Engagement Through Relevance).

- **Make consumer price transparency a competitive differentiator** — Consumer price transparency is more than meeting regulatory compliance minimums. It enhances member experience and empowers choice by providing a clear understanding of care delivery and financial options — allowing your members to make informed healthcare decisions. Leverage price transparency regulations and deploy digital shopping tools to create a market-leading member shopping experience (see U.S. Healthcare Payer CIOs: Make Price Transparency in Coverage Rule Compliance Central to Improving Member Experience).

**Population Health Management and Intelligence**

- **Accelerate and scale clinical data exchange** — Interoperability mandates in 2020 drove significant investment increases in clinical data integration (CDI) technologies, paving the way for API-driven data exchange across the ecosystem. Fast healthcare interoperability resources (FHIR) have become the industry wide standard for clinical data exchange, and regulators have stated that future rule-making that expands FHIR use cases is expected. These advances enhance your ability to manage care across diverse ecosystem partners and member care episodes. CDI and interoperability also allow you to personalize care to meet members’ unique health needs and equip providers with the right data and incentives they need to improve health outcomes under value-based payment arrangements. Capitalize on these regulatory requirements to scale CDI across provider networks (see Clinical Data Integration Capabilities and Sourcing Recommendations for U.S. Healthcare Payers).
Strengthen payer-provider relationships — Advanced payment model contracts rarely include requirements for cross-organizational collaboration. You can enrich your payer-provider relationships through shared data and technology connections. Common healthcare practices break down workflow and care management into disconnected activities that result in rework, errors and redundant record keeping — for both payers and providers. Improve payer-provider relationships and achieve more effective and efficient business relationships by implementing quick data exchanges and collaborative workflows between your organization and your provider community, thereby reducing administrative cost due to manual workflows (see Provider/Partner Alignment: U.S. Healthcare Payer CIOs' Transformative Relationship Model).

**Purchaser Alignment**

Enrich self-funded (ASO) market position — Self-funded (that is, administrative services only or “ASO”) employers can disintermediate payers by contracting directly with other service providers within the healthcare ecosystem to deliver healthcare and related services to employees. Take business back from third-party administrators (TPAs), advance your ASO market position and create stickiness by creating market leading differentiators and tailoring your benefits, products and services to meet your individual and employer needs (see U.S. Healthcare Payers CIOs Use Adaptable Digital Technology to Advance Self-Funded ASO Market Position). In addition, help your underwriters prepare for flexible product, benefit configurations and pricing requests by moving beyond conventional underwriting systems. Give them tools that are equipped to enable quick underwriting decisions and feedback to your ASO purchaser (see Quick Answer: How Should U.S. Healthcare Payer CIOs Revamp Their Underwriting IT Systems?).

**Recommended by the Authors**

Predicts 2022: Connections Drive Healthcare and Life Science Business Model Change

2022 CIO and Technology Executive Agenda: A U.S. Healthcare Payer Perspective

Hype Cycle for Consumer Engagement With Healthcare and Wellness, 2021 Innovation Insight for Digital Healthcare Payer Platform

Strategic Planning Presentation on the CARING Healthcare Payer

Consumer Financial Services Technology Tips for U.S. Healthcare Payer CIOs to Grow Membership

How Digital Giants and Big-Box Retailers Are Advancing Consumer-Centricity and Virtual Healthcare

Price Transparency Forever Alters U.S. Healthcare Payers’ Core Administrative System Requirements

**Evidence**

Gartner interacts regularly with U.S. healthcare payers. Their observations, challenges and successes form the primary source data for this research. Additional evidence was obtained from vendors in this space, industry inquiries, previous Gartner research, public sources and direct experience.
Position your IT organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for healthcare CIOs:

**Resource Center**
Healthcare Digital Transformation
Lead digital transformation initiatives for maximum impact.

**Ebook**
3 Must-Haves in Your Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan
Improve your ability to be prepared for a cybersecurity incident.

**Resource Center**
Digitalization Strategy for Business Transformation
Take your digital transformation initiative up a notch.

**Webinar**
Emerging Healthcare Trends and Their Implications
Identify and overcome barriers to achieving innovation at scale.

Already a client?
Get access to even more resources in your client portal. Log In
Connect With Us

Get actionable, objective insight to deliver on your mission-critical priorities. Our expert guidance and tools enable faster, smarter decisions and stronger performance. Contact us to become a client:

**U.S.:** 1 855 811 7593

**International:** +44 (0) 03330 607 044

Become a Client

Learn more about Gartner for IT Leaders
gartner.com/en/IT

Stay connected to the latest insights