

# The Future of Mobile Health: Wearables, Implantables and Electronic Health Records

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August 21, 2015

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Wearables, implantables and electronic health records are all top of mind for Grey Healthcare Group managing partner and chief engagement officer Erin Byrne, who sees mobile spurring profound changes in the way health and wellness are managed. Byrne spoke recently with eMarketer’s Tobi Elkin and explained why mobile is critical for managing consumer health and communications between healthcare providers and patients.

**eMarketer:** What is the opportunity that mobile presents for marketers in the healthcare sector?

**Erin Byrne:** We see mobile as a great amplifier that can make everything you’re doing work harder and become more relevant. Mobile is also immensely personal and private—we have mobile devices with us all the time.

With mobile, you have a persistent presence. You’re not only being able to see what patients are experiencing, you have the flexibility of information delivery—from texting and mobile websites, to tracking health data and progress via apps and overall health management. A mobile device almost becomes a remote control for your personal health.

**eMarketer:** For over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, is there a lot of potential around combining local with mobile?

**Byrne:** Yes, there’s a big opportunity for OTC with things like geofencing and beacons. You could be walking by a CVS in Miami, a block from the beach, and receive a message about buying sunscreen, for example. You can start to connect the dots to create local, highly relevant, uber-targeted experiences.

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Mobile also offers the local element, being able to connect where you are with what you’re doing and what you need. The technology can tailor recommendations to you. How can we begin to create educational experiences perhaps through augmented or virtual reality and

deliver them through the phone? That's a big area of exploration and interest as well.

**eMarketer:** What's the mobile opportunity for the direct-to-consumer (DTC) side of the market?

**Byrne:** You go to the pharmacy to pick up your prescription and can make connections between a medication and side effects and other products that can potentially support the patient. With DTC, adherence programs give power to the patient. For example, there are apps that help diabetes patients manage their health, and those apps connect to their wearables. There are also ways for patients to share data with their doctors so that they have more information during an office visit.

**eMarketer:** What role does mobile play with healthcare providers (HCPs)?

**Byrne:** For the HCPs, electronic medical records and the transparency of health records facilitated by mobile offers a way for them to regain influence with their patients. HCPs can have a more direct dialogue with patients.

A client was working on an app where a patient can record information and send it via their mobile device back to the HCP. When the patient comes into the office, the HCP has already seen the information and has a very good snapshot of the patient's adherence to a drug, any side effects and other things. HCPs are so pressed for time that the app offers them a head start and creates a better experience for the patient.

**eMarketer:** How is mobile making healthcare marketing more efficient?

**Byrne:** I have my phone with me all the time. If I have an issue in the middle of the night, the first thing I'm going to do is turn to my mobile. It's a facilitator of information because of its persistent presence. It also plays an aggregator role. You can combine information and data to deliver content that can lead to a better health outcome whether it's via apps, mobile websites or data generators. Mobile devices aggregate data from wearables, and one day, they will aggregate data from implantables.

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**eMarketer:** Tell us a bit more about implantables.

**Byrne:** Right now, wearables are all the rage. But the next version of wearables will involve something that you can implant. Right now, you can implant technology, but it's more from a medical perspective. This would be from an adherence, tracking or wellness perspective.

What if you could get a chip the size of a dime implanted in your arm that would enable your doctor to monitor your health on an ongoing basis? It would be similar to how a pacemaker transmits data. The chip would transmit information to your electronic health record so the doctor can see what's going on with you. What if you could have an implantable that told you that you're not hungry? It might help you lose weight.

**eMarketer:** How is mobile marketing helping pharma marketers move beyond the pill?

**Byrne:** The “pill plus a plan” was a pretty straightforward customer relationship management program, whereas today it means holistic support and connectivity. For Pfizer on Chantix [a smoking cessation pill], there’s a program called Quitter’s Circle, which is a website and Facebook page that’s a support network for people who are trying to quit smoking. Pfizer has created an app for the Apple Watch ecosystem, and it does more than track how many cigarettes you’ve smoked in a day—it connects you to a network and offers someone to talk with immediately for support and motivation.

We’re moving from an era of isolated content to connected experiences. Patients can determine how involved they want to be. Persistent, two-way, flexible communication is part of the cure.