

The APACMed logo features the company name in a white, sans-serif font. The letter 'M' is stylized with a white ECG line that forms its right vertical stroke and extends horizontally to the right.

APACMed

The voice of MedTech



Transforming Healthcare
Saving Lives

A close-up photograph of a person's face, primarily the right side, with a white, semi-transparent mesh overlay. Several pink plus signs are scattered across the mesh, particularly around the eye and mouth area. The background is a gradient of blue and purple with faint geometric shapes.

THE FUTURE OF REMOTE PATIENT CARE HAS ARRIVED

Highlights From The 2022 APACMED Digital Health Symposium



When APACMed established the Digital Health Committee in 2020, at the onset of the modern pandemic, it would have been hard to predict the tremendous public-private collaborations that have ensued over the past couple years. The second annual APACMed Digital Health Symposium was held in on June 9th, 2022, in hybrid format. Industry delegates from 17 countries joined to continue the dialogue around emerging themes such as regulation, reimbursement, and adoption.

In line with APACMed's broader focus on the patient this year and in connection to the 2021 Digital Health Symposium theme of Remote Care Management (RCM, [link here](#) to the whitepaper), the 2022 Digital Health Symposium was entitled "The Future of Patient Care: Remote Care Management". The program ran for 3.5 hours and encompassed multidisciplinary stakeholders from across the Asia Pacific and the globe, with a collective purpose of facilitating public-private collaboration, enabling interactive learning, and, perhaps most importantly, encouraging connectivity so as to maintain the positive momentum ahead.

Through 5 sessions focusing on the point of view of RCM users, the symposium addressed some of the most compelling questions in the space, including:

- + How can healthcare professionals and care providers work better, thanks to Remote Care Management?
- + What is still not working for patients, despite the promises?
- + What value does Remote Care Management deliver to the wider healthcare ecosystem and society?

This recap provides a high-level summary of the main points from the Symposium. Further details about the forum, downloadable presentations, discussion recordings, pictures, and more are available via the APACMed website [here](#).

TAKEAWAY #1

Clinicians are a key enabler of RCM activation

The first discussion of the Symposium emphasized the role of clinicians for RCM activation, featuring speakers from leading hospital networks in Singapore, China, and the US.

Participants were reminded that the concept of RCM is not necessarily new, as its definition (which explicitly calls for a role for clinicians in the adoption) was established around 2014. In fact, stakeholders agreed that versions of RCM have existed even since the 1920s.

So where is the progress being hindered, from a clinician point of view? One aspect raised is acceptance – by trying to go around or disrupt the clinician-patient relationship, some players in the RCM space are causing adoption to take longer than necessary. Instead, clinicians seek to be part of the change movement too, and to have their voices heard in shaping the vision. On a related note, clinicians also highlighted the need for RCM to continue to seek to refine its value proposition; in other words, as data is collected, being able to articulate from the benefits of RCM along themes such as improved clinical outcomes, positive patient experiences, and reduction of costs. Lastly, concerns about the technologies themselves do linger. Health systems have undertaken significant efforts to driver greater universalism and equity in terms of patient access; clinicians, while keen to leverage technology, advocate for adoption that can iterate to be more ubiquitous and user-centered in nature.

All that said, stakeholders do see the multidisciplinary RCM efforts starting to pay off. For example, in Singapore, which officially established its telehealth guidelines, and in China, which now certifies licensing for virtual hospitals. Stakeholders concluded the discussion by outlining the "triple E's" ahead for RCM – education, engagement, and empowerment.

TAKEAWAY #2

Patients (and caregivers) must have their RCM voices heard too

Being the theme of the year and Symposium, the discussion next zeroed in on the patients themselves, who can sometimes be overlooked in terms of having the platform to raise an active voice. The Symposium featured patient group representatives from Germany and Australia, as well as from the new Institute of Digital Medicine in Singapore.

One aspect discussed included the role of media in activating patient voices when it comes to topics like RCM, with speakers enlightening the audience about how patients use said media, what they expect in return, and how these platforms are evolving patient relationships with clinicians. Taking the example of multiple sclerosis (MS), recent efforts have been undertaken to implement more of a shared decision-making model between the patient and clinician, given the often-limited time availability of the institutional health system. RCM offers such an opportunity to enable better information, communication, and personalization of the MS journey, which in turn empowers the patients to take greater control of their lives.



Discussions moreover orientated around patient experience living with heart disease, which is one of the top challenges for health systems in the Asia Pacific. Heart disease patient groups have now been formalized in the region to drive an active voice, and they aim to be even more present at major policy, industry, and congress style forums (an open invitation!). Ultimately, the goal is to improve access to traditional as well as digital solutions for patients, as has been successfully demonstrated through the recent advocacy in establishing the revised Atrial Fibrillation Clinical Guidelines in Australia.

Across the geographies and disease dimensions, stakeholders concluded with a common suggestion: to see patients as the “bridge builders” when it comes to better management of health with respect to innovations like RCM. The sooner everyone can be on the bus together, the safer and faster the shared journey ahead can progress.

TAKEAWAY #3

RCM scalability is contingent on integration amongst wider society

Lastly, discussions zoomed out to stakeholders amongst the wider society too. Beyond the clinicians, patients, and caregivers, the ability to scale the RCM endeavors will be contingent on integrating efforts from across the healthcare ecosystem and even beyond. Speakers from the US and Malaysia, experts on digital health access programs, provided their views and coupled with remarks from the enabling technology industry.

As was raised during the discussion, one aspect of wider society scalability of RCM requires integration, online and offline, across patient-facing, clinician-facing, back-end, and direct-care infrastructure. Which is of course no small feat but is the right vision to keep in mind and can be progressed in incremental ways. Stakeholders suggested for RCM scalability (through integration) to be more aligned with the efforts underway of overall healthcare reform in terms of the shift into capitated funding schemes. One example given is at Mass General Brigham, which is now using integrated digital tools to manage more than 15,000 patients across complex, comorbid disease states such as hypertension, diabetes, and cancer.

Coming a bit closer to home, stakeholders discussed the “Horizon Scanning” efforts

underway in Southeast Asia which, among other tenets, is focused on improving the standing up of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) units in order to more effectively and efficiently adopt new medical technologies, like RCM, for the populations in need. These collaborations, coming into a stage of maturity, are seen as fruitful in the sense of having been a public and private sector joint effort. Now, the goal is to start driving the adoption of the technologies themselves.

To put things into perspective, it is estimated that one-third of patients don't feel they understand their healthcare needs being prescribed and are considered to be inactivated in the conversation. Activated patients, on the other hand, are shown to have a 50% or more reduction in unnecessary hospitalizations as well as reduction in lengths of stay, leading to an overall 21% cost savings in healthcare expenditures to the population. RCM, through its multiple modalities offering, accessibility, educational content, and personalization is in an excellent position, according to stakeholders, to drive the future of patient care. Continued alignment across the clinicians, patients, and wider society remains a critical strategy.



Feedback scores from Symposium participants demonstrated a positive return on the time investment. To keep supporting collaboration between the public and private sectors, APACMed plans to continue its engagement with policymakers to support their efforts to bring the value of RCM innovations to patients. With the newly launched global Digital Health Reimbursement Alliance, the association commits to share best practices and use cases on successful reimbursement to support enable better patient access. APACMed looks forward to opportunities to partner on these critical efforts to improve patient care. Next up will be the Digital Health Expert Summit at the APACMed MedTech Forum taking place on September 26-27, 2022. [Link here](#) to the registration page, please join the conversation!

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ABOUT APACMED

The Asia Pacific Medical Technology Association (APACMed) represents manufacturers and suppliers of medical equipment, devices and in vitro diagnostics, industry associations, and other key stakeholders associated with the medical technology industry in the Asia Pacific region. APACMed's mission is to improve the standards of care for patients through innovative collaborations among stakeholders to jointly shape the future of healthcare in Asia-Pacific. In 2020, APACMed established a Digital Health Committee to support its members in addressing regional challenges in digital health. For more information, visit www.apacmed.org.