

AWS, UC Davis Health tackle digital health equity

Article

The news: UC Davis Health launched a first-of-its-kind Health Cloud Innovation Center powered fully by Amazon Web Services (AWS).

- The center will allow providers, patients, developers, and students to create and validate solutions that promote digital health equity.

More on this: AWS' Cloud Innovation Center Program (CIC) enables public sector entities to develop and test innovations using AWS' tech.

- AWS has 13 CICs globally, but its new partnership with UC Davis is the first instance AWS' CIC program is being implemented at an academic medical center.

Why it matters: The pandemic laid bare the deeply entrenched health inequities that exist in the US—and while digital health tools aim to solve health inequities, the tech isn't necessarily accessible for everyone.

- Digital health can make healthcare more equitable by boosting access through convenience.
- For example, telehealth options crush geographic barriers and eliminate wait times between scheduling and attending appointments by letting patients access care on-demand in many cases.

During the pandemic alone, increased access to telehealth allowed more people than ever to access mental healthcare:

- From March to May 2020, **97% of people who accessed mental health services** never had a mental health claim before, [per](#) Cigna's analysis.

But factors like health insurance coverage for virtual care or broadband access make the promise of digital health out of reach for many:

- A 2020 [study](#) found that **at least 1 in 4 US adults** may not have digital literacy skills, access to the internet, or devices required to participate in virtual care.

The bigger picture: The healthcare cloud market is growing quickly—and AWS seems to be leading the charge.

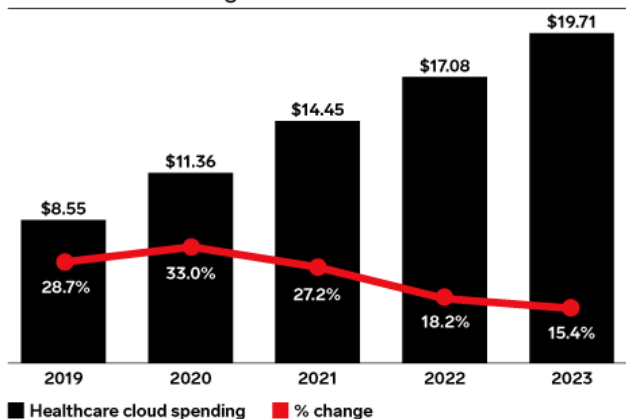
- Healthcare cloud spending is projected to reach **\$19.71 billion by 2023**, per Insider Intelligence.
- AWS has the top spot in the global cloud market, while players like Microsoft and Google trail behind it, [per](#) Gartner's research.
- Moreover, AWS has linked up with prominent partners like **Olive, GE Healthcare, and Salesforce**, which provide tools like remote monitoring tech that are valuable for health systems.

Health systems will increasingly invest in cloud after realizing the long-term benefits amid digital health transformation—like cheaply and efficiently storing and sharing large amounts of health data.

- Cloud providers like **Microsoft**, **Google**, and **Amazon** have recognized this value to plunge even deeper into healthcare.
- For example, **Kaiser Permanente** tapped **Microsoft** to bolster its cloud infrastructure for its 12.4 million+ patients, and **Mayo Clinic** and **Ascension** health systems have signed multiyear contracts with **Google Cloud**.

US Healthcare Cloud Spending, 2019-2023

billions and % change



Note: US healthcare provider and facility spending on cloud-based systems and services
Source: Insider Intelligence, March 2021

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InsiderIntelligence.com