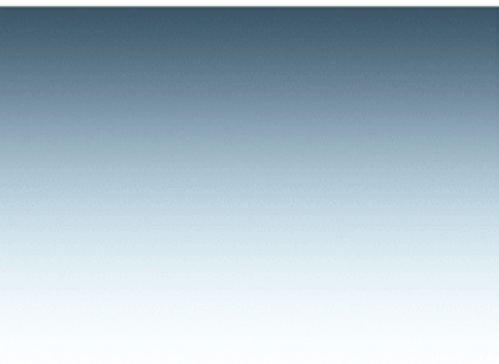
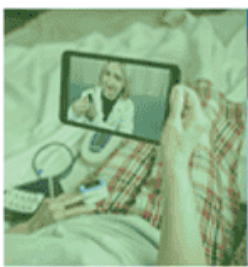




Home Health Agencies Are at a Crossroads with Their Technology

New research from Stratix on mobile technology
in home healthcare and how to save



**It's Time to
Shift the Thinking**

Executives in home healthcare face significant challenges, including financial strain, worker safety concerns, and a persistent shortage of staffing resources. Technology can help, but there are challenges there too, such as costs, a lack of expertise, data silos, and management difficulties.

In new research, Stratix polled 175 home healthcare leaders to see what keeps them up at night and how they address their major concerns. We focused on four key areas:

Financials



Shifting reimbursements are squeezing companies, but there are ways to cut costs. We look at Telecom Expense Management, pooled data, and more.

Technology



New tools like AI and improved EHR platforms are improving productivity, but they also require better hardware to run them effectively.

Staffing



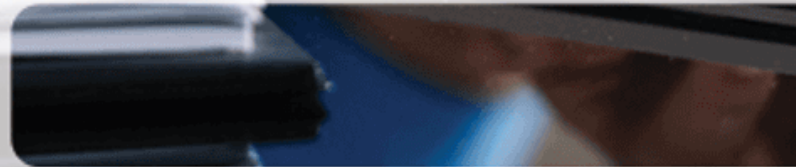
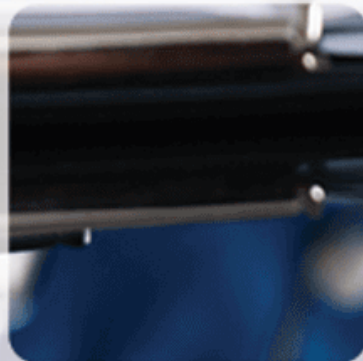
Healthcare companies are seeing an average of nearly 50 percent of their people leaving annually. Organizations with lower turnover do better at providing support, resources, and managing workplace violence.

Worker safety



The challenge of caregivers working alone impacts nearly all facets of the home healthcare business. Companies are turning to technology to try to mitigate it.

Overall, what we found is a need to flip the perception of technology from *"just a cost of doing business"* to a business and profit enabler.



Financials

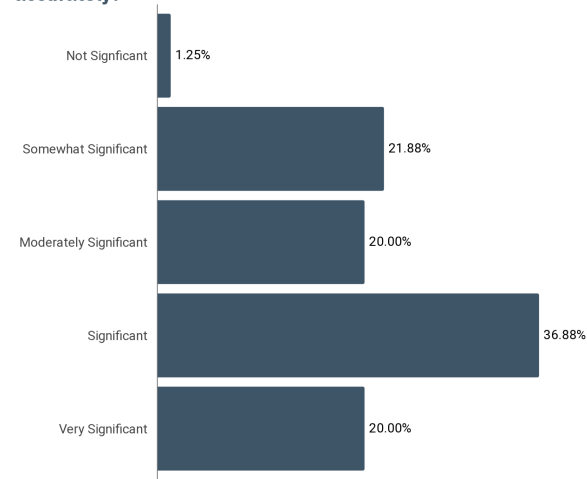


Agencies are Being Squeezed

Shifts in reimbursement make managing financials very difficult for home health organizations because they must stay on top of changes. Any kind of lapse in data—or lag in submitting for reimbursement—is expensive. We wanted to understand mobile technology's impact on healthcare organizations' financial health and management.

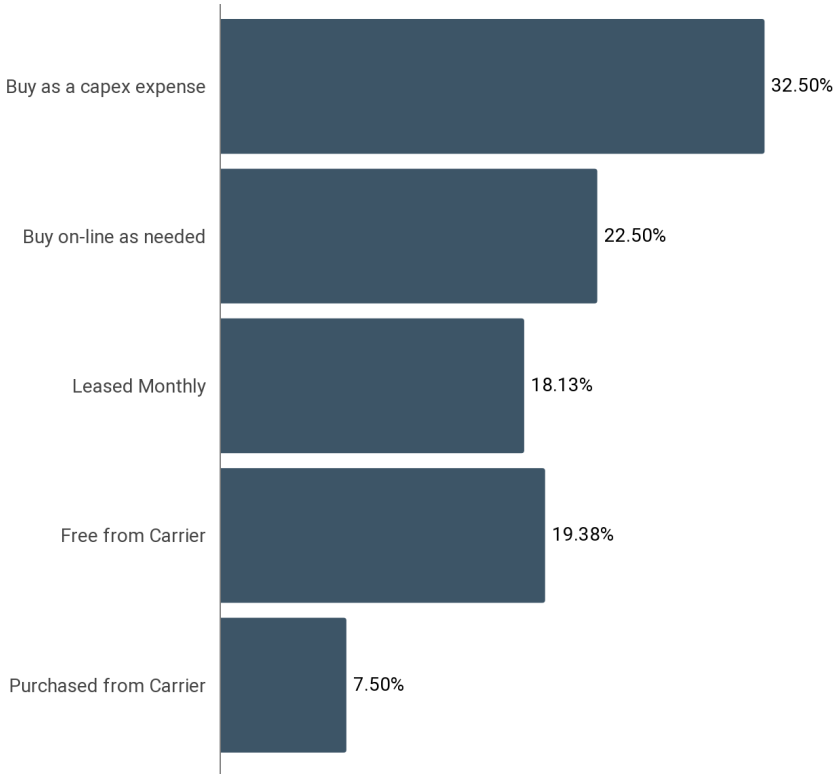
We looked at how mobile technology impacts agencies' ability to process claims quickly for faster reimbursements. Fifty-seven percent of our survey respondents ranked mobile technology's impact on the ability to submit for reimbursement quickly and accurately as significant or very significant.

How much does your mobile technology functionality impact your ability to submit for reimbursement quickly and accurately?



Caregiver mobile technology is a significant cost to be considered. We asked respondents about the average cost of supporting caregivers' mobile technology, including hardware, software licenses, telecom expenses, and support. Home health agencies spend an average of \$288 per employee per month.

How does your organization primarily acquire mobile technology hardware like phones and tablets?



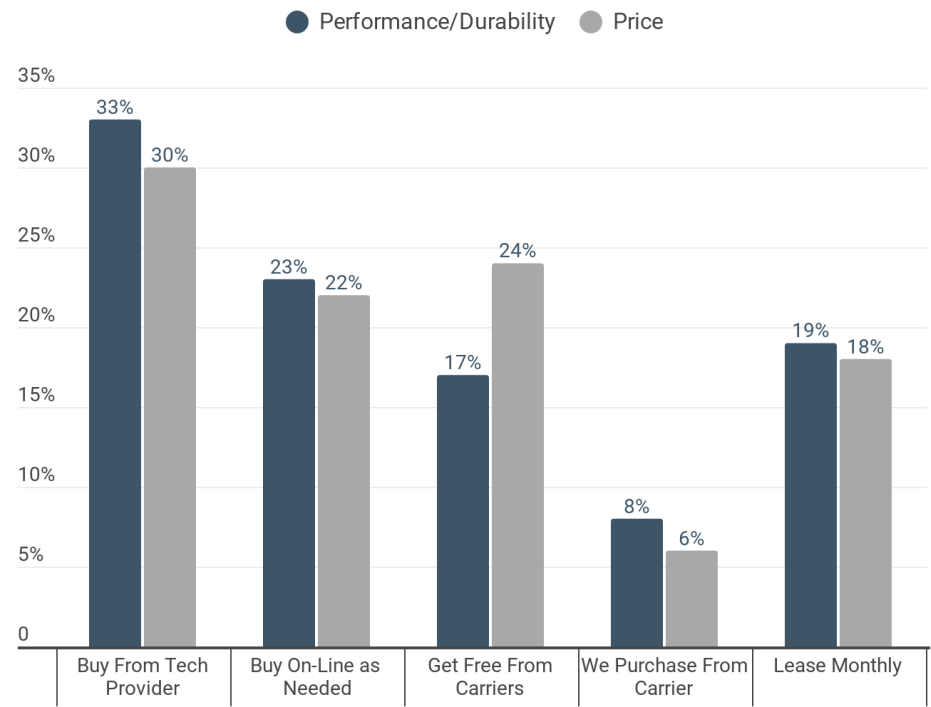
There are many different ways to acquire technology, and the attractiveness of each method will vary for different organizations. An important part of the strategy is to be aware of hidden costs and choose the technology acquisition that is right for the organization's goals. Fifty-five percent of organizations purchase their devices outright—either online or via a technology provider—where there may be room to purchase more cost-effectively. Another 28 percent purchase through carriers—either subsidized or not.

Home healthcare agencies spend an average of \$288 per caregiver per month on mobile tech

We asked respondents which is more important when choosing mobile devices for the organization, and 68 percent of respondents chose performance and durability over price.

Interestingly, those who get their devices free from carriers are most likely to choose their devices based on price, and all other buying categories choose their devices based on features.

Purchase Method Comparison



Financial Conclusions

Because mobile technology reliability is significant to the speed of reimbursements, there's a strong argument for choosing powerful and robust devices. Subsidized technology comes with hidden costs, and a bargain phone or tablet isn't a bargain when it cuts into productivity, or you're locked into high-rate data plans.

Companies looking to keep a lid on costs should look to telecom expense management (TEM) solutions that simplify the financial tangle of carrier contracts, inventory management, device replacement, and more. SmartSIM solutions can also help because they connect home health workers to the best network wherever they are. Data is pooled, avoiding individual line overages month after month. Instead of manually managing all your mobile-related information—and possibly spending money where you could be saving it—many TEM and SmartSIM solutions improve mobility management.

Stratix recently published a "5 Ways to Save" guide that explains TEM and SmartSIM, along with how to cut expenses in other areas like printing, freight, and IT Asset Disposition.

[Download Savings Guide](#)





Worker Safety

Potential Violence and Abuse is a Major Concern

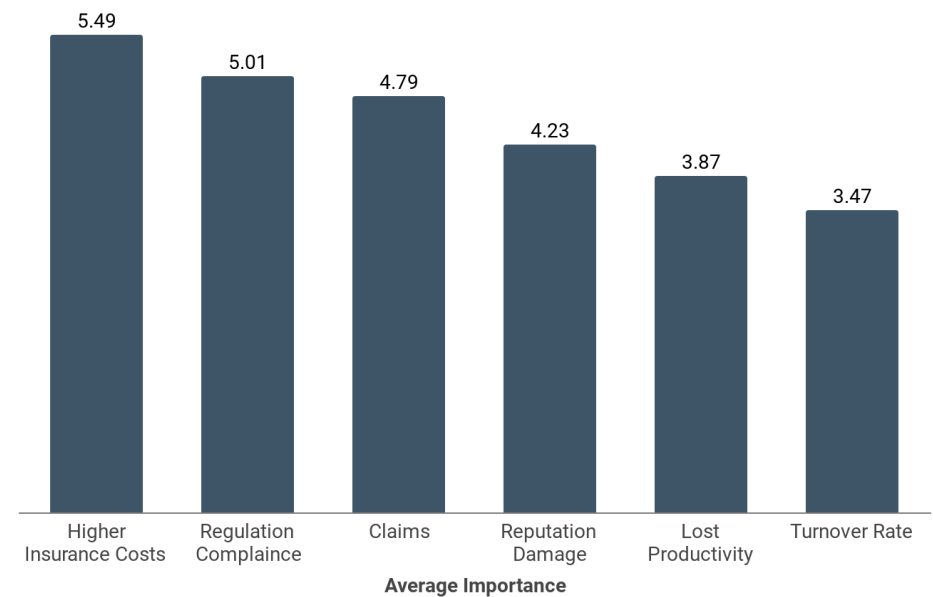
Home healthcare workers are vulnerable to physical violence or aggression from patients or others in the home—particularly if patients have cognitive impairments, behavioral issues, or substance abuse problems. [The CDC reports¹](#) that over 75 percent of workplace violence victims work in health care and social assistance. [As much as 65 percent](#) of home health workers are verbally abused by patients. Because they often work alone, keeping workers safe is a challenge. In our survey, the majority of respondents ranked the problem at nearly the critical level.

When asked to rank the costs associated with worker safety, insurance topped the list. But, other costs, such as regulation compliance, claims, reputational damage, lost productivity, and turnover rates, are also important.

¹ [as on-the-job violence rises, mitigation is up to home-based care organizations, HHCN August 2024](#)

Four out of five say worker safety is a critical concern

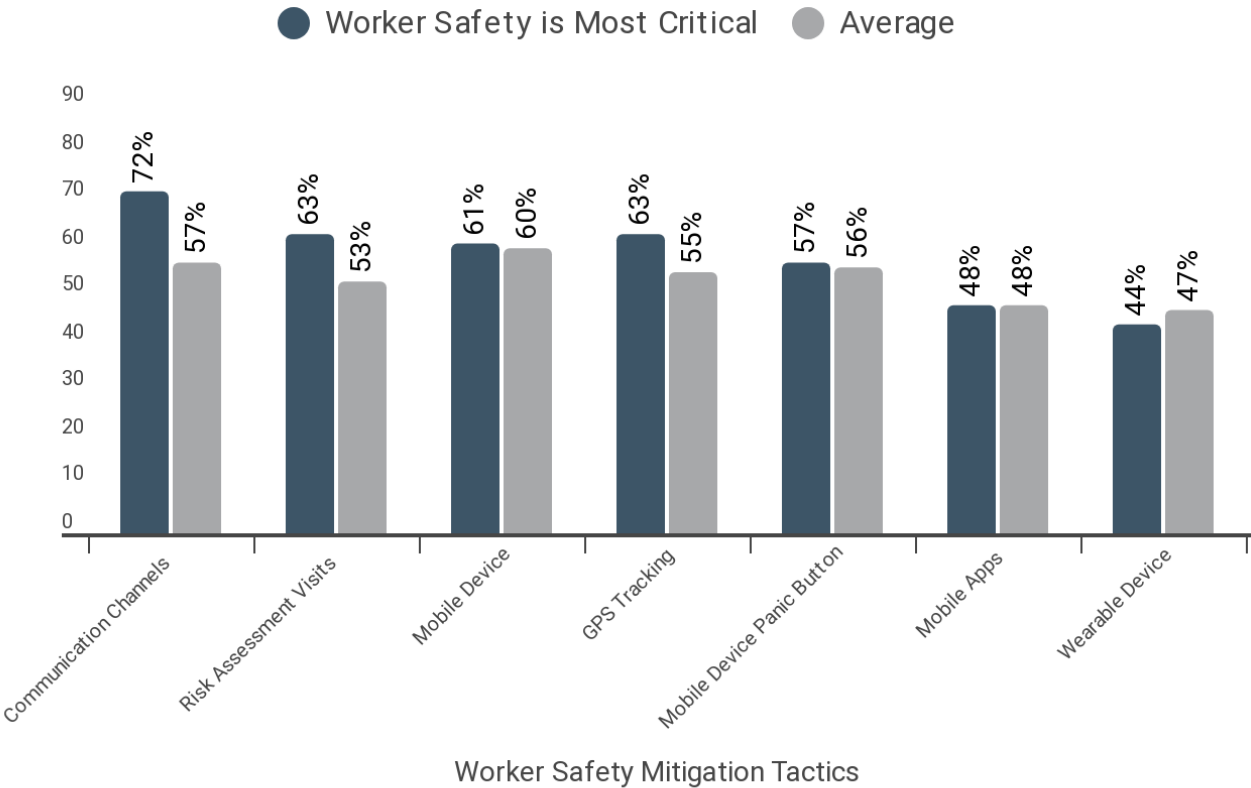
Rank the costs of lone worker safety from the most critical impact to the least for your business.



We asked home health companies what they do to mitigate the risks of lone workers. They spend an average of around \$1,865 per clinician on safety mitigation measures, but where they spend that money is the more interesting part. Organizations are not relying on a single tactic to mitigate risk. The average is 3.7 different tactics among respondents. The most used tactic was equipping home health workers with a mobile device, followed by reliable communications, and then a mobile device with a panic button—so clearly technology is leading the way in terms of risk management.

Those who ranked worker safety to be five of five most critical used more tactics on average—at 4.1—and were significantly above the group average for using reliable communications, risk assessment visits, and GPS tracking.

What strategies are you using to mitigate safety risks for lone workers?



Worker Safety Conclusions

Workplace violence is a top concern for home health agencies—with very real costs for organizational protection and prevention that are expected to increase in the coming years. Technology is increasingly being leveraged to reduce risk, and organizations that think and lead strategically with new mobile tech investments that offset their risk will be better able to manage costs as they climb for the industry in general.

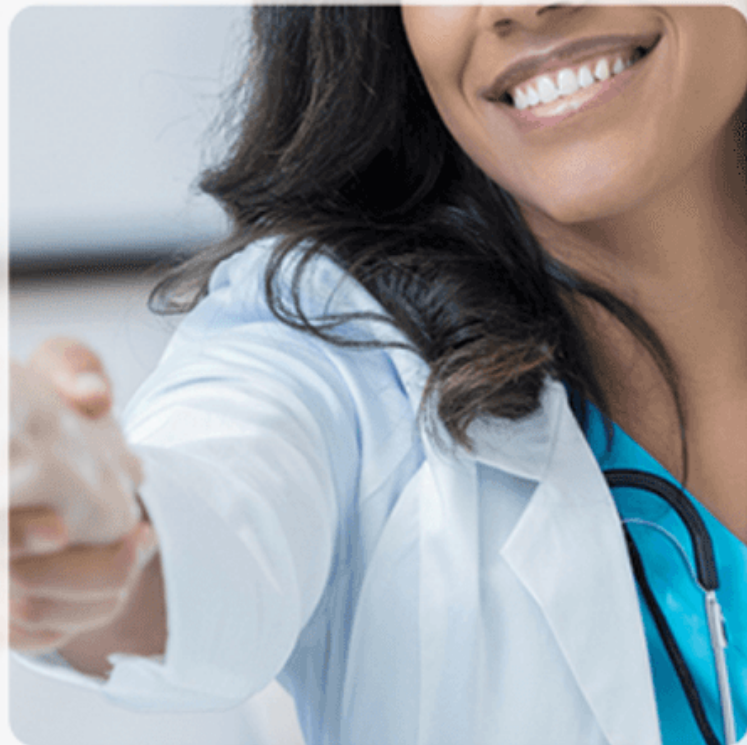
Partnering with providers that offer cutting-edge field worker safety technologies, including applications, multi-use devices, embedded and easy-to-use panic buttons, and wearables is the starting point. Organizations should also look for partners that can advise on the technology for today and have industry relationships that will

provide future insights—including managing integrations and delivering reliable connectivity where and when needed.



Using Mobile Tech to Keep Home Health Workers Safe

[Check Out More On Our Podcast](#)



Staffing

Good People are Hard to Find and Keep

Demand for home health services is growing rapidly because of the aging population, the prevalence of chronic conditions, and the preference for care at home—for both providers and patients—whenever possible. However, companies struggle to meet that demand because of persistent staffing challenges.

Respondents to our survey reported a whopping average annual staff turnover rate of 46 percent.

Home healthcare agencies report a 46% average annual turnover rate



Why Turnover is High

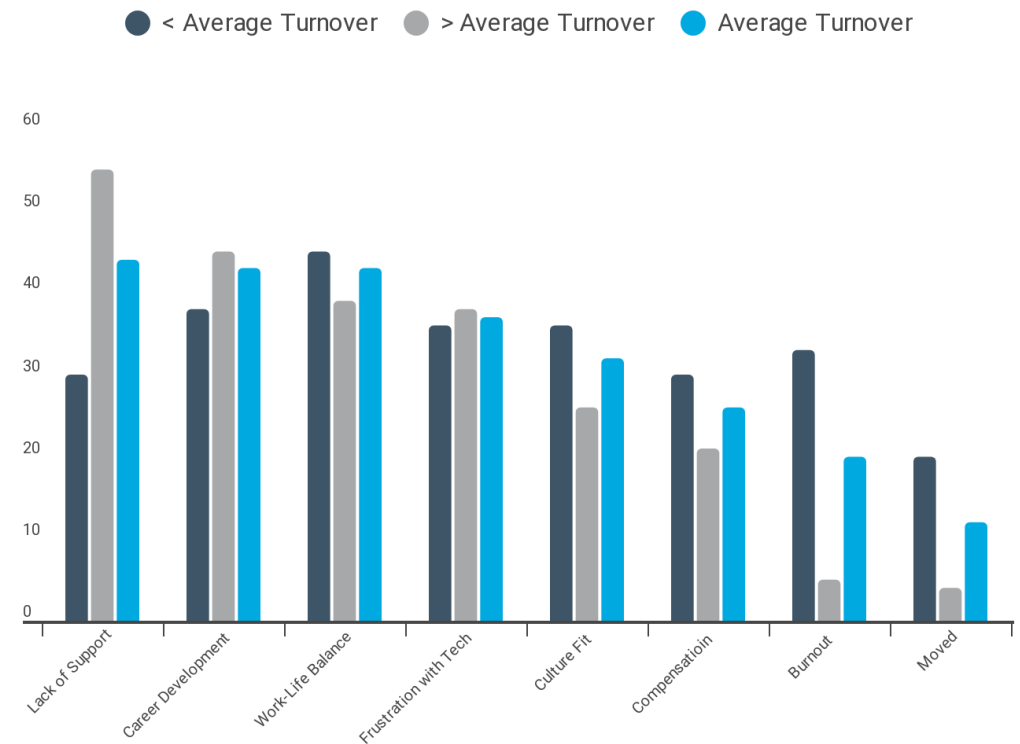
We asked respondents what top three issues lead to turnover and the impact of that turnover on their organization. The top five reasons were:

- 44% lack of career development
- 43% lack of support and resources
- 43% poor work-life balance
- 41% workplace violence
- 37% frustration with technology

We compared the responses of those below the average 46-percent turnover to those above it and found some interesting differences. Those with above average turnover were much higher on lack of support and resources and workplace violence, whereas organizations with below average turnover outpaced in not a culture fit, compensation, burnout, and a caregiver moving. Organizations with lower turnover are doing better at providing support, resources, and managing workplace violence.

87 % of respondents said mobile technology has a moderate to very high impact on satisfaction and turnover.

Turnover Reasons

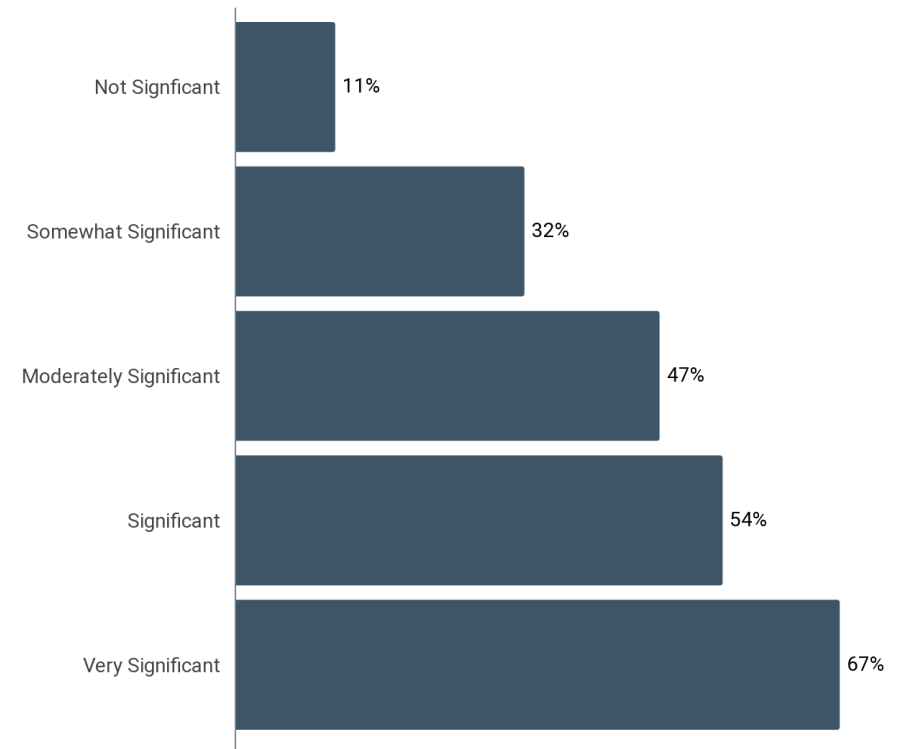


Turnover is Disruptive

Turnover is highly disruptive for any organization—with over 94 percent of our respondents saying it does impact overall productivity. Unsurprisingly, higher turnover rates in our respondents corresponded directly with the significance of the impact on their business.

Technology came up as the number one mitigation strategy for worker safety, and frustration with technology was one of the five leading causes of turnover. In fact, 87 percent of our respondents said mobile technology has a moderate to very high impact on satisfaction and turnover. Seventy-six percent said mobile tech has a high or very high impact on satisfaction.

Turnover Rate and the Business Impact



How Mobile Tech Impacts Satisfaction

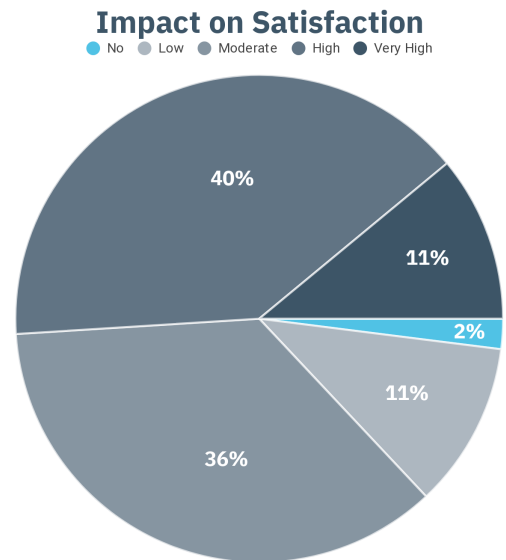
We asked respondents for more details about how mobile technology impacts employee satisfaction, and there was a discernable difference in the tone and implied strategic importance to the business for those who see high impact versus those who see low or no impact. Here are some of their answers:

High to Very High Impact Comments:

- "Enables quick decision-making through access to data and analytics anytime, anywhere."
- "Supports work-life balance by allowing employees to handle personal matters without leaving the workplace."
- "The availability of mobile support tools boosts confidence in handling tasks independently."
- "Reduces stress by enabling employees to manage their tasks efficiently."
- "Mobile apps streamline administrative tasks, reducing the time spent on paperwork."
- "It improves communication, leading to quicker decision-making and better team collaboration."
- "Mobile technology's network connectivity and network speed both affect employee satisfaction."
- "Employees can use mobile technology to communicate in real-time, which can reduce errors at work."

No or Low Impact Comments:

- "It has relative flexibility and can satisfy employees' remote work, which is very convenient."
- "Employees may have different work styles, and it can compensate for this shortcoming."
- "Helps make a work environment."



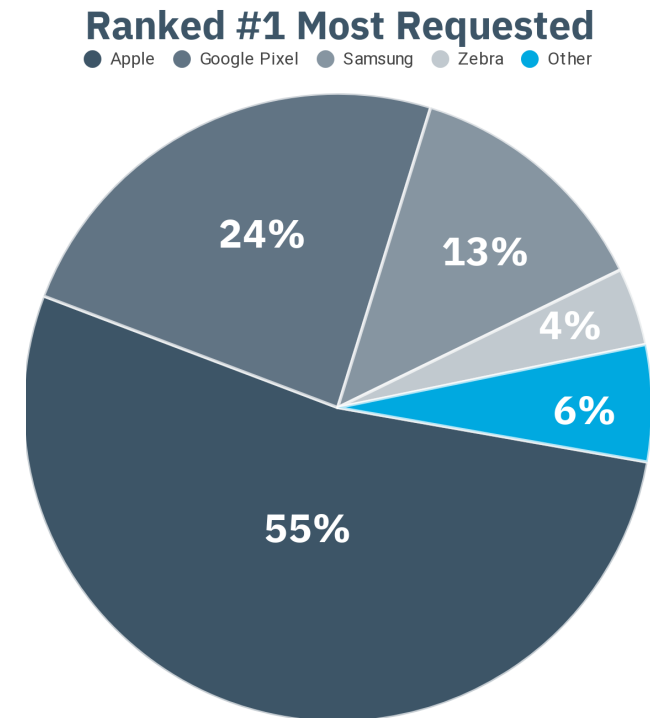
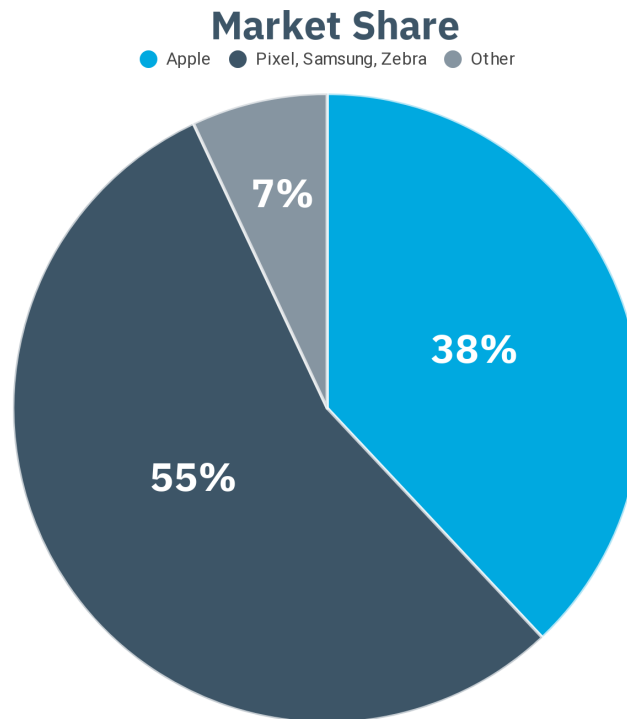
The responses show how organizations placing high importance on caregiver satisfaction with technology truly view it as a critical tool that helps care teams collaborate, handle tasks efficiently, enable efficient workflows, and better manage tasks and workflows.

Mobile Technology Brands.

35% of caregivers were very satisfied with their technology

Overall, 35 percent of respondents said their caregivers were very satisfied with their technology. So, we asked what brands of mobile devices home health agencies are using and found Android devices from various providers, including Samsung, Pixel, and Zebra, have 55 percent of the market. Apple is leading the other individual brands with a 38 percent share.

When asked to rank the brand of mobile devices employees ask for most, Apple ranked first 53 percent of the time. Apple has a clear advantage in recognition and familiarity.



Staffing Conclusions

Technology came up as the number one mitigation strategy for worker safety. Frustration with technology was one of the five leading causes of turnover, and 87 percent of respondents said mobile technology has a moderate to very high impact on satisfaction and turnover.

While respondents reported overall satisfaction with mobile technology to be good—showing that users like and depend on their mobile tools—we know that can quickly go south when technology is slow, doesn't work, or there are connectivity problems.

That means companies need to prioritize technology that works well for caregivers and that they're comfortable using. Tech should help them be productive and enjoy a good work-life balance.



EMR Upgrades are Coming. Are you Ready?

New releases like Swift Skin & Wound will empower caregivers to be even more nimble and productive. Digitized workflows offer faster access to the information caregivers need. The challenge for most home health agencies is that new releases and the aggregate number of apps required on a single device is requiring more powerful mobile devices to optimize the enhanced features. With many devices to choose from, it's a strategic investment decision that organizations need to balance carefully.

Device refreshes are a big investment, and every decision maker wants to not only choose the right equipment but also deploy the right overall program that makes it easy for the organization to get behind and support. That's why home healthcare providers are choosing Stratix as their partner. It's because we are so much more than a device reseller. We really work with you to design the right mix of devices, connectivity, and services that will keep your costs low. Our aim is to be cost-neutral through an upgrade.

[How You Can Stay Ahead of the Pack](#)

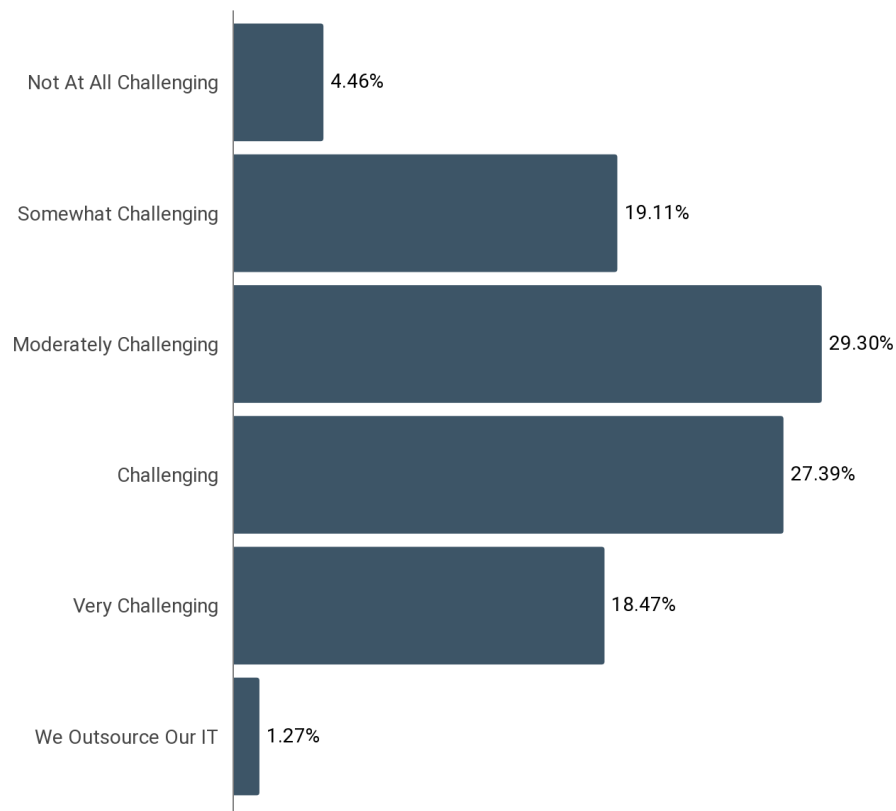


Technology

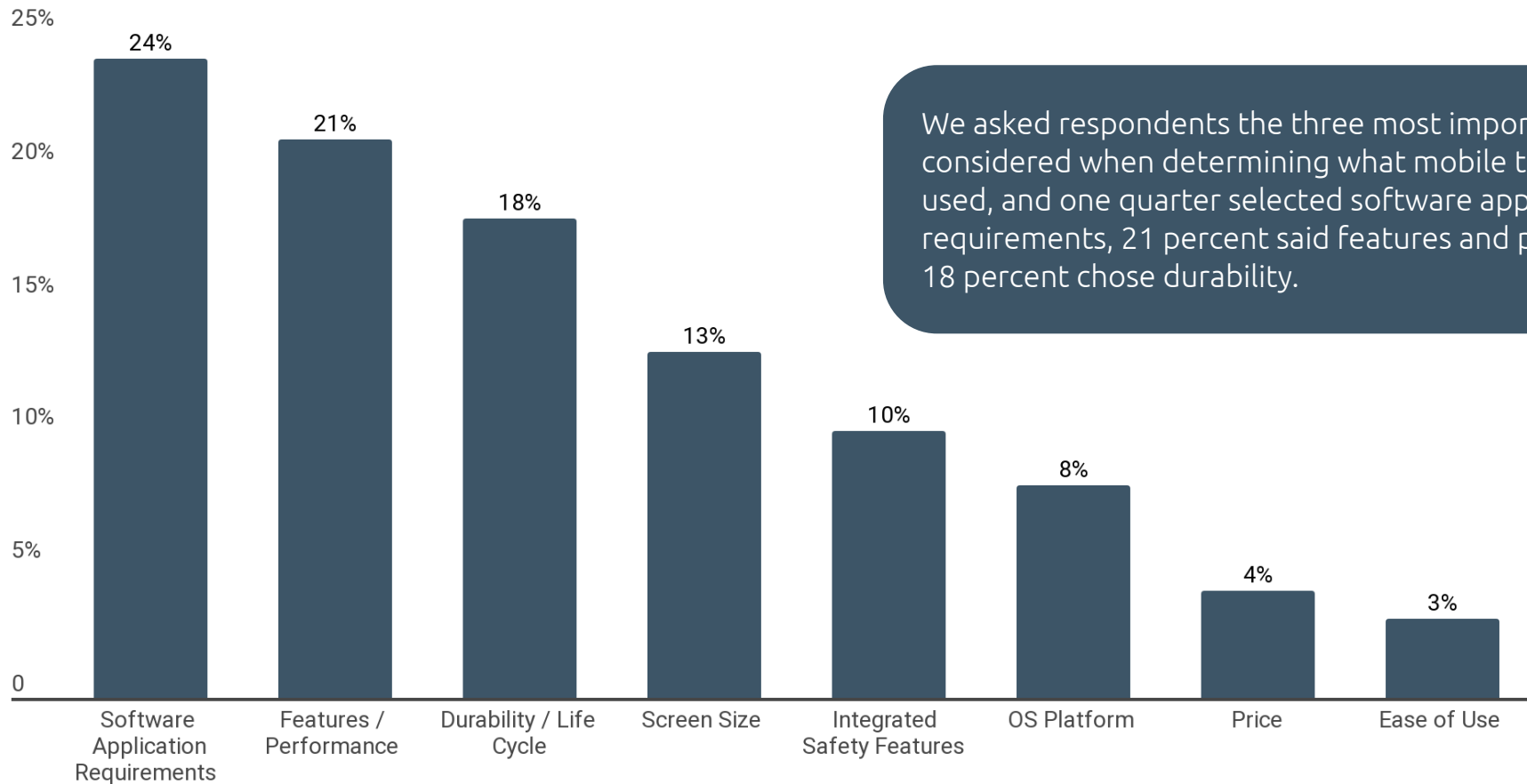
Challenges, But Big Potential Gains

Technology changes rapidly, and software platforms like EMRs are requiring more data to leverage all the features. Users typically have multiple apps running on single devices with higher device specification requirements than previously. IT teams are struggling to keep up with the basics—forget about security and AI. Our survey shows how hard it is for home health IT leaders—with 46 percent indicating it's challenging or very challenging to support their staff's mobile technology.

How challenging is it for your internal IT team to support your staff's mobile technology?

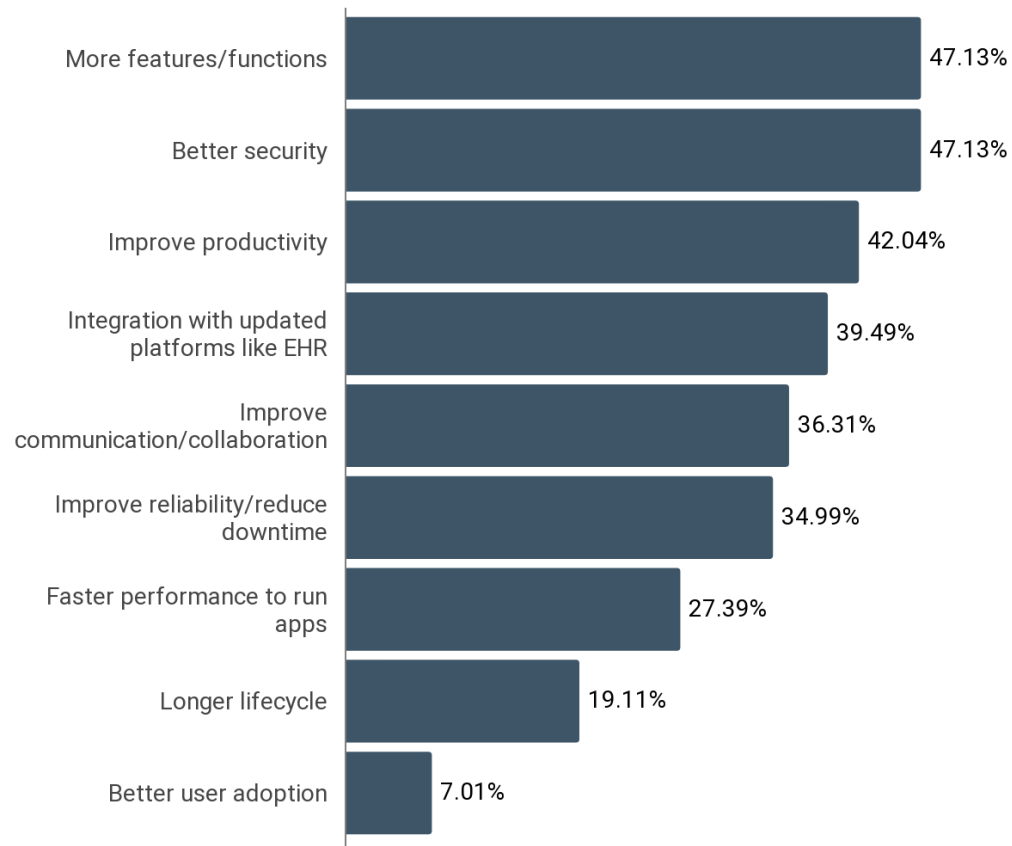


Most Important Technology Features



We asked respondents the three most important factors to be considered when determining what mobile technology will be used, and one quarter selected software application requirements, 21 percent said features and performance, and 18 percent chose durability.

What will you try to solve with your next device refresh?

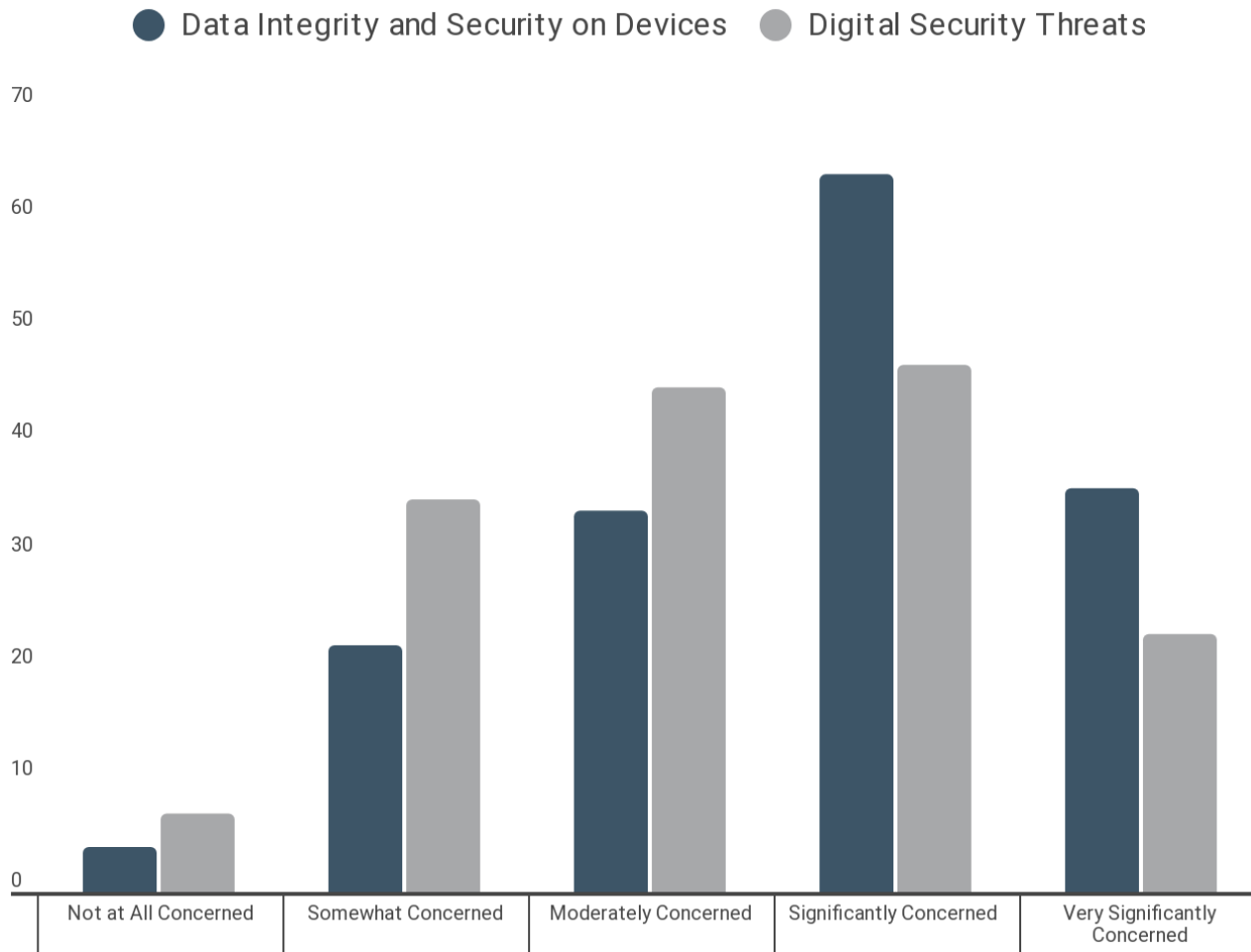


It was clear in the survey of respondents that organizations are thinking about future needs for their mobile tech in the next refresh.

Priorities are

- 1.) more features/functions
- 2.) better security
- 3.) improve productivity
- 4.) integration with EMR platforms

Mobile Device Security Concerns



Security is a top concern for home healthcare organizations. We asked survey respondents two key questions:

- How concerned are you with digital threats?
- How concerned are you with your data integrity and security on your mobile devices?

Sixty-three percent of respondents were significantly or very significantly concerned about their data integrity and security vulnerabilities of their mobile devices, and 45 percent were significantly or very significantly concerned about digital security threats.

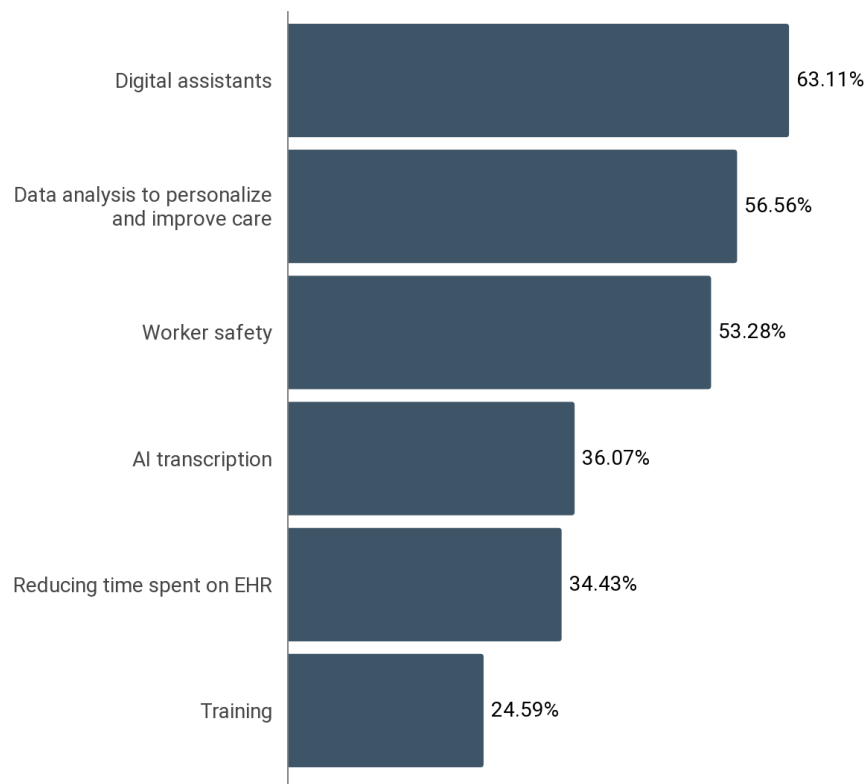
Unsurprisingly, 92 percent of organizations want to make security improvements.

Home health companies are already leaning hard into artificial intelligence. Nearly 79 percent say they're using it now, and another 19 percent plan to in the next 12 months. The use cases are varied, with digital assistants and data analysis leading the way.

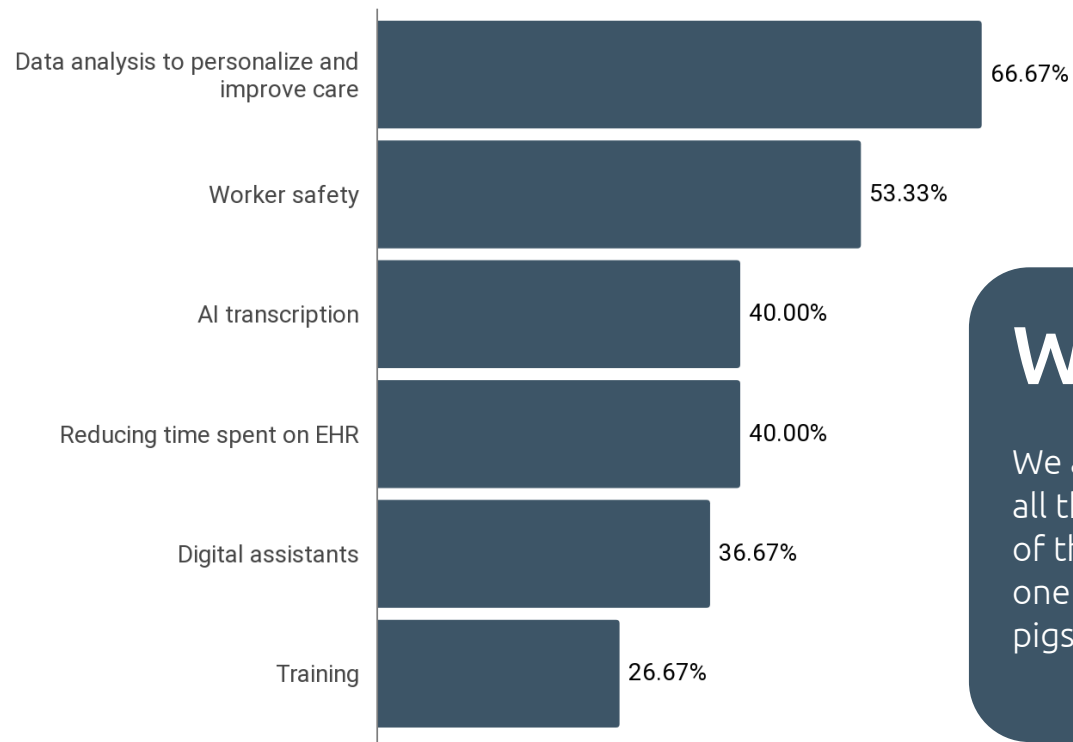
When asked about potential, or future use cases, data analysis moved in front followed by worker safety. For those using AI, we asked them how AI is impacting their business, and here are the most common themes:

- "Improve employees' working efficiency, reduce work mistakes, and relieve work pressure."
- "Reduce the time spent on boring tasks and alleviate employee stress."
- "It will improve patient engagement through AI-driven communication tools."
- "AI can support caregivers by providing real-time assistance and guidance."
- "Artificial intelligence can replace employees in handling some simple and tedious tasks, saving labor costs."

What use cases are you using AI for?



What are the potential use cases for AI in your organization?



Why Not AI?

We asked those respondents who are not considering AI—with all the possibilities—why they wouldn't be considering it? Three of the five told us they were focused on their current tech stack, one said they wanted others in the industry to be the guinea pigs, and one mentioned HIPPA concerns.

Technology Conclusions

With the rapid pace of software improvement—and the corresponding need for good hardware to run it—it's clear that companies need to purchase technology that not only solves the here-and-now needs but also for potential future needs.

Because security is such a high priority in healthcare and caregivers are nearly always widely geographically dispersed, companies must have advanced endpoint management strategies and platforms that keep devices updated and secure through automation.

While we're just at the beginning with AI, home health companies should be very focused on ways to leverage it—including productivity tools and faster data entry—because they are both crucial to profitability and quicker reimbursements.

MOBILE TECH TALKS



ON-DEMAND

AI in Enterprise Mobile

Journey to realizing true productivity gains using AI in the enterprise.

Learn practical AI applications that drive productivity and security, tailored for modern enterprise needs.

[Check Out the Webinar](#)



Stratix Can Help

You Don't Have To Go It Alone

Our research shows that mobile technology in home health should not be seen as just a cost but as a business enabler that can drive profitability, improve safety, and enhance worker and patient experiences. However, while mobile technology and AI are powerful tools for home healthcare organizations, they require significant expertise to get the total value. By managing the complexities of mobile technology, Stratix empowers home healthcare companies to focus more on patient care and less on managing IT and devices.

Stratix has extensive expertise in the home healthcare sector, and our team is ready to consult on any challenges you may face. With a deep understanding of the latest technologies, we can guide you through proven solutions that work while helping you avoid those that don't. As we partner with all major OEMs and software providers, our recommendations are entirely unbiased. Whether it's selecting the right hardware, managing telecom expenses, or ensuring lone worker safety, we'll help you find the perfect fit for your organization.

[Learn more about our Home Health Services](#)



Keep Up to Date With All Things Mobility