Ambient AI Solution Adoption in Medical Practices

A JOURNEY TO EFFICIENCY, ACCURACY AND BETTER PATIENT OUTCOMES

According to a Sage Growth healthcare C-suite survey, more than seven in 10 (71%) healthcare executives believe it is still too early to determine the long-term cost savings and revenue increases promised by AI technologies. Despite this uncertainty, **AI investment in healthcare is projected to grow significantly, from $20 billion in 2024 to $150 billion over the next five years.**

While the broader implications of AI in healthcare remain uncertain, specific applications such as ambient listening technology are already significantly enhancing healthcare practices.
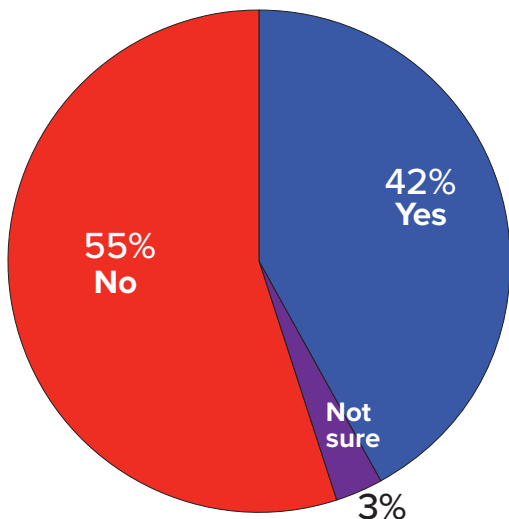
AN INDUSTRY REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY

MGMA MEDICAL GROUP MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

WITH SUPPORT FROM

nextgen healthcare

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CURRENTLY USE ANY AMBIENT AI SOLUTIONS WITHIN YOUR MEDICAL GROUP PRACTICE?

42% Yes

55% No

Not sure

3%

A recent survey by MGMA found that **nearly 42% of medical group leaders report using some form of ambient AI solution.**

While this is an encouraging sign of adoption with potential to improve practice operations and patient visits, the extent to which ambient AI solutions are used may not be as advanced as many platforms have developed:

- **64% of medical groups using ambient AI use it for visit transcription or speech recognition, and more than 4 in 10 (43%) have scribe and replay technology.**

- **However, less than 3 in 10 (29%) are using ambient AI for clinical/SOAP note generation, and even fewer (21%) say they have an AI documentation assistant.**

TODAY'S LANDSCAPE

**WHAT TYPES OF AMBIENT AI SOLUTIONS DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION USE TODAY?**
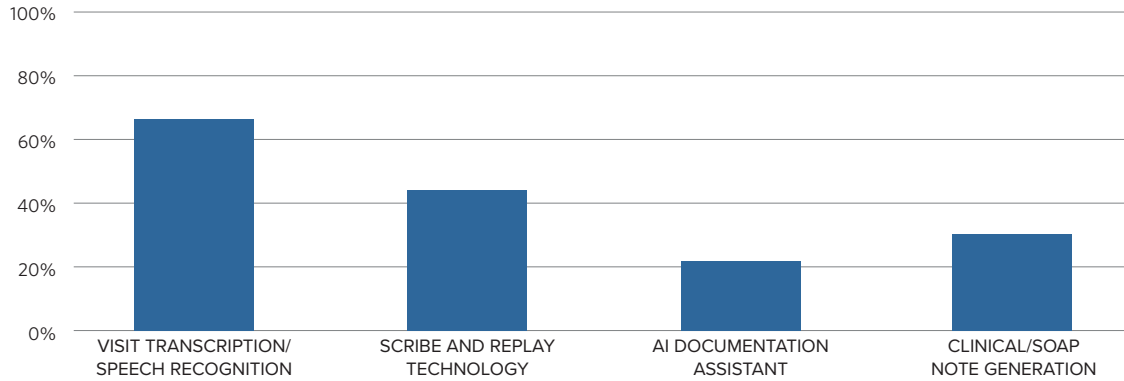
While those specific use cases for ambient AI technology might be underleveraged today, **the vast majority (80%) of medical group leaders say they are very likely (53%) or somewhat likely (27%) to implement or update an ambient AI solution in the next 12 months.**

As for what factors are motivating these healthcare leaders to adopt or expand ambient AI solutions, **all respondents (100%) noted reducing administrative burdens on clinicians as a major factor.** Nine in 10 (90%) listed enhancing operational efficiency, and another 80% pointed to improving clinical documentation and accuracy. *[Continued on next page]*

**HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING OR UPDATING AN AMBIENT AI SOLUTION IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?**
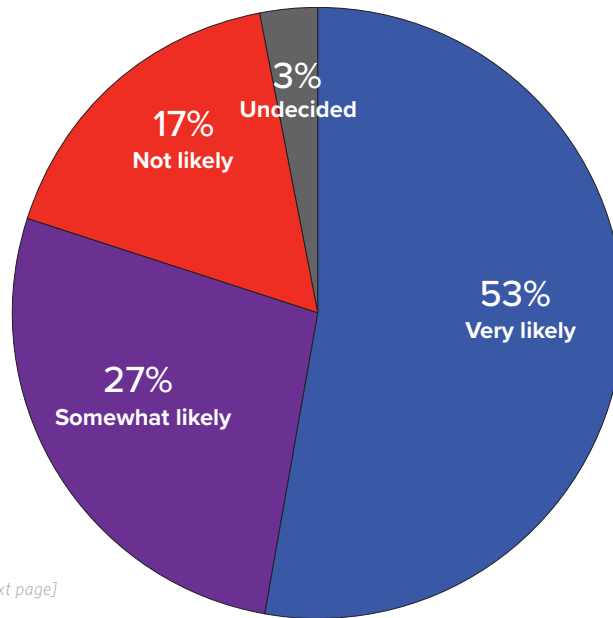
WHAT FACTORS WOULD BE THE PRIMARY MOTIVATIONS FOR ADOPTING OR EXPANDING AMBIENT AI WITHIN YOUR MEDICAL GROUP PRACTICE?
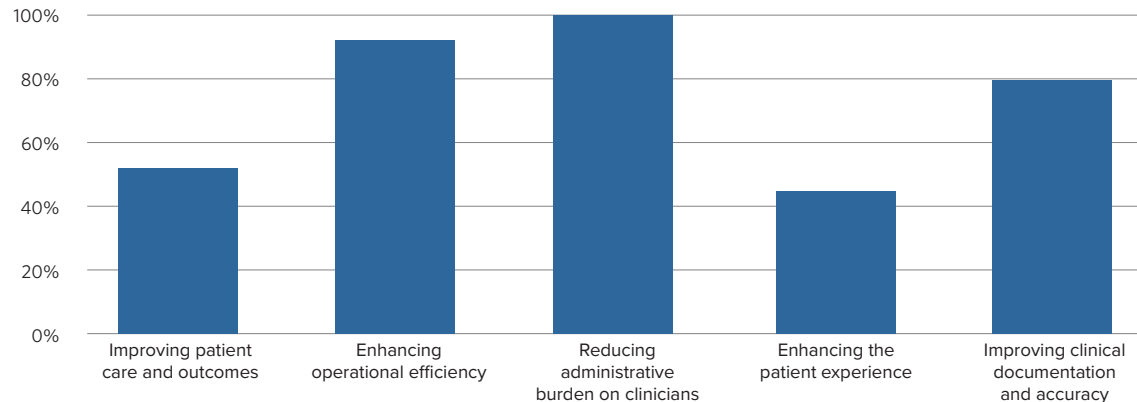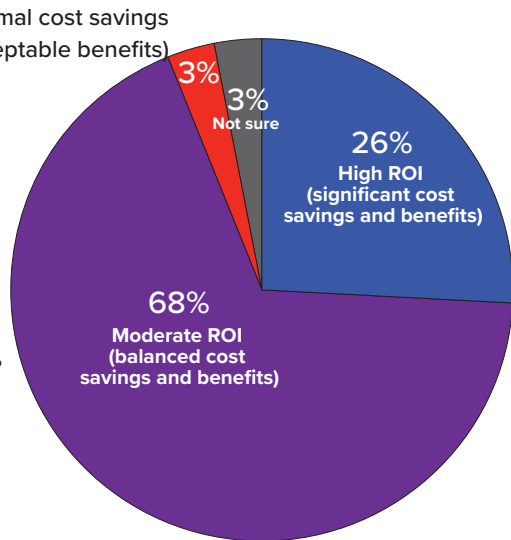
RATE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC CHALLENGES OR CONCERNS YOU ANTICIPATE IN ADOPTING AMBIENT AI WITHIN YOUR MEDICAL GROUP PRACTICE

Weighted average
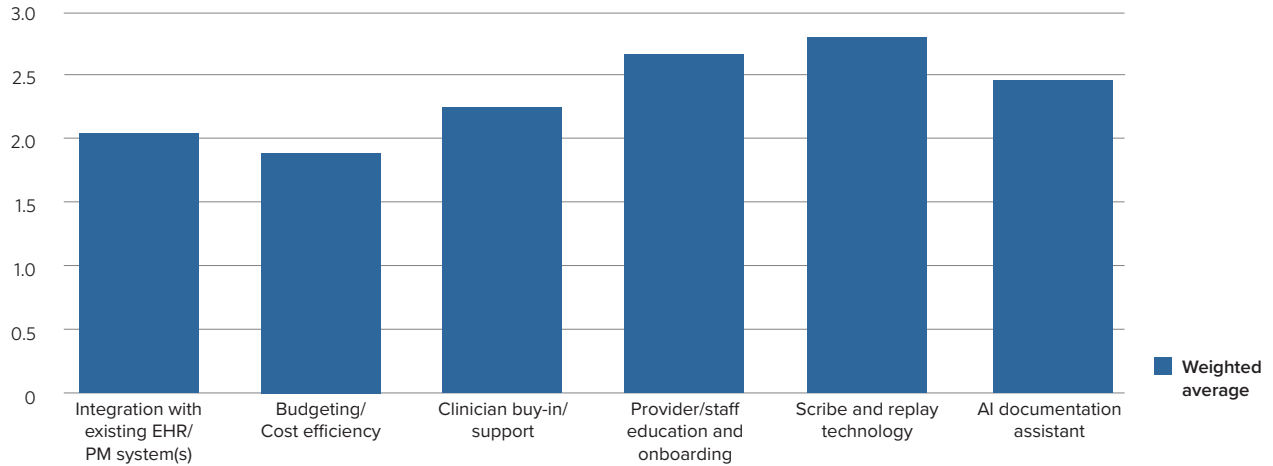
WHAT LEVEL OF ROI WOULD YOU NEED TO SEE TO COMMIT TO ADDING AN AMBIENT AI SOLUTION TO YOUR PRACTICE?

Low ROI (minimal cost savings with acceptable benefits)

3%

3% Not sure

26% High ROI (significant cost savings and benefits)

68% Moderate ROI (balanced cost savings and benefits)

Most healthcare leaders rated budgeting or cost efficiency of an ambient AI solution as their lowest concern or challenge in adopting a solution. The most highly rated challenges included:

- Getting a handle on scribe and replay technology
- Provider/staff education and onboarding
- AI documentation assist.

Just as budgeting and cost efficiency weren't major concerns among practice leaders, the cost savings expected, in terms of time and resources, was the mostly highly ranked factor – alongside increase provider productivity – when asked how they would evaluate the ROI of an ambient AI solution.

WHAT FACTORS DO YOU CONSIDER WHEN EVALUATING THE ROI OF AMBIENT AI SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR PRACTICE?
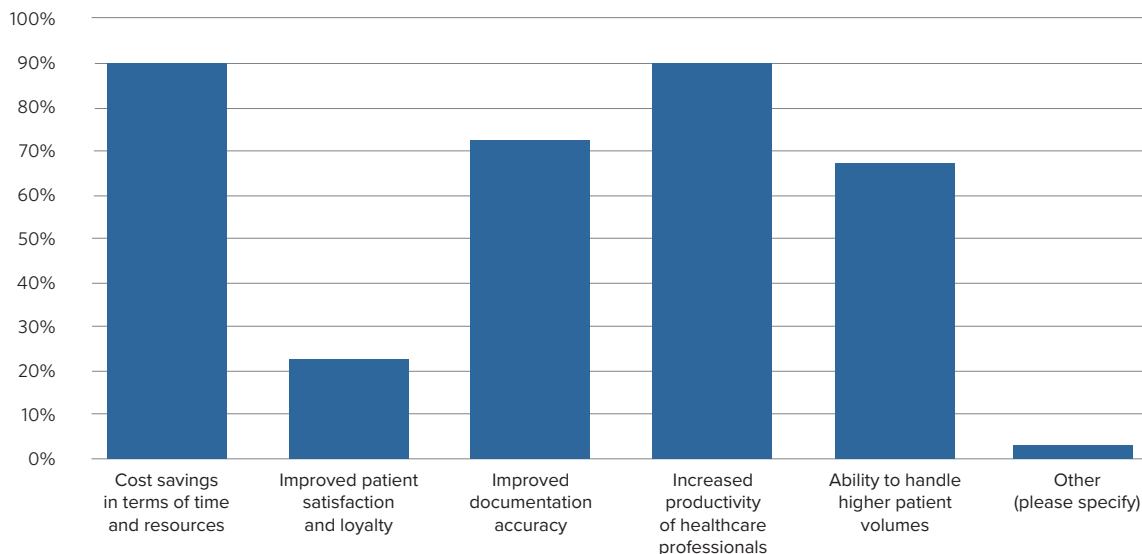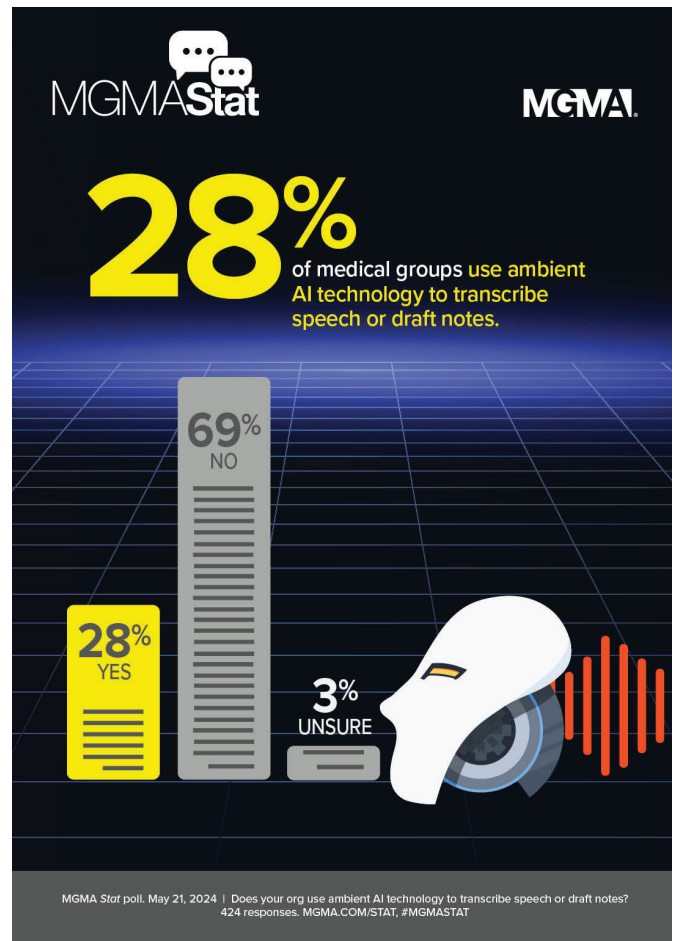
REAL-TIME POLLING ON
AMBIENT AI IN HEALTHCARE TODAY

These findings suggest that the healthcare industry is beginning to refine its approach to AI and delineate the many use cases for emerging technologies. For example: A May 21, 2024, MGMA *Stat* poll found that 28% of medical groups report using ambient AI technology specifically to transcribe speech or draft notes, while most (69%) did not and another 3% of respondents were unsure. That poll had 424 applicable responses.

When asked about their experiences using ambient AI technology for transcription or note creation, medical group leaders who responded to the MGMA *Stat* poll shared a variety of opinions on the experience of implementation and clinicians' reactions to the new workflow:

- Many respondents noted that their **providers were pleased with the time savings around documenting visits**, especially using platforms that help create summary notes.

- Several practice leaders noted they are **still in a pilot phase** with this technology, generally with positive results thus far; however, some respondents did share some clinician dissatisfaction around certain transcription results and the need for close review for quality/accuracy.

- Among respondents who said they are not using ambient AI technology, their reasons included:

  - Waiting for their existing EHR platform to add this functionality
  - Having organizational policies that specifically limit the introduction of AI tools pending internal evaluation
  - Being in the process of an EHR transition or merger/acquisition that eventually enable them to use a new platform with similar functionality for transcription and note creation
  - Waiting out an existing contract for similar services with another vendor.

MGMA *Stat* poll. May 21, 2024 | Does your org use ambient AI technology to transcribe speech or draft notes? 424 responses. MGMA.COM/STAT, #MGMASTAT

WHERE AMBIENT TECHNOLOGY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

In a recent MGMA webinar, "Sight Unseen: Unveiling the Magic of Ambient Assist in Your Specialty Practice," Kristi Bolinger, director of specialty solutions, and Bob Murry, PhD, MD, FAAFP, chief medical officer, NextGen Healthcare, explored the impact of AI listening technology in practices.

Addressing physician burnout

High administrative burdens frequently are cited as worsening the widespread issue of physician burnout. Long hours spent on documentation and administrative tasks can leave physicians feeling overwhelmed and exhausted, leading to decreased job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of burnout. The webinar highlighted how ambient AI could play a crucial role in reducing these demands and mitigating burnout.

"Burnout leads to behaviors in physicians, and the most common is seeing fewer patients, which directly impacts practices and businesses," Murry noted.

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By automating notetaking, ambient AI helps providers maintain a better work-life balance, manage their patient loads more effectively and focus more on patient care rather than spending countless hours on paperwork. Murry emphasized, "There is no question that it saves me time. I was using voice-to-text for documentation before this, and it's even faster than that. It allows me to concentrate on the patient and the conversation."

Streamlining administrative tasks
Ambient AI technology can significantly reduce the administrative work-load for healthcare providers by automating the documentation process.

"It saves time and mental energy, allowing providers to concentrate on the patient and the conversation," said Murry. By reducing the time spent on documentation, ambient AI frees up physicians to spend more time on direct patient care, enhancing the quality of the healthcare ex-perience for both patients and providers.

Murry further explained, using an example from the mock patient-physician interaction demonstrated during the webinar. "I don't need to record or write down the fact that [the patient's] A1C was 5.4 or five months ago — that's going to show up in the note and the details of her cough."

The ability to automate routine tasks also helps alleviate some of the pressure on healthcare providers, he added, ultimately leading to a more productive and satisfying work environment.

Enhancing patient-provider interaction
Ambient listening technology aims to improve the quality of patient-provider interactions by automating documentation, enabling doctors to maintain eye contact and engage more fully with their patients.

Murry shared feedback from one user of the technology, Dr. Christopher Wixon, Savannah Vascular: **"When in the exam room, I don't have to take notes; I can just listen and be present. When I go back to document, I don't have to relive the visit in my mind."**

Murry said that one of the best functions for him is having the patient plan available more quickly. "You can get that plan into patients' hands much sooner with this kind of technology because you don't have to type it."

TIPS FOR PROVIDERS:

1 **Set realistic expectations**: Understand that the AI does not do everything perfectly. It aims to save time and mental energy, but you still need to review and edit the notes.

2 **Add medical reasoning**: Be prepared to supplement the AI-generated notes with your medical decision making (MDM), as the AI won't capture all nuanced reasoning.

3 **Experiment and adapt**: Try the technology with different types of encounters to see where it works best and where more manual intervention might be needed.

4 **Maximize advantages**: Utilize the tool to reduce computer time during patient interactions and say more details out loud to ensure they are captured accurately.

5 **Workflow integration**: Adjust your workflow to incorporate the technology effectively, such as reviewing charts and setting agendas before patient visits.

He added that physicians can better focus on understanding their patients' concerns without the distraction of notetaking. "I also noticed that ambient AI … forces me to say more things out loud," Murry explained. "So, I will say, 'Here are the things going on, these are the tests we're going to do, here's what you can do to make yourself feel better,' and it captures all that."

Bolinger agreed that ambient listening technology enhances the physician-patient relationship. "There have been times when I've talked with doctors," she said, "and before they started using ambient, they wouldn't even enter into certain aspects of the [patient] conversation because they felt like they didn't have time."

Bolinger continued, "So, just the idea of having something taking the notes for you — that is huge, and you can actually have an extremely thorough chart note at the end of the visit."

"I think this is really transformative technology," Murry agreed. "It's a game-changer."

Flexibility and facilitating workflow integration

Murry said that the flexibility of ambient AI technology allows it to be integrated into existing workflows. Providers can customize the level of detail in the notes, standard phrases or procedures, adapting the technology to fit their documentation style.

"One of the biggest advantages of this technology is that it can be adjusted to meet the specific requirements of different specialties and individual providers," Murry noted. This customization ensures that the AI can support a wide range of medical practices, from routine check-ups to more complex procedures, as well as various clinical settings, from large hospital systems to small private practices.

By integrating seamlessly into existing systems, he added, ambient AI can streamline documentation processes without disrupting the established workflows of healthcare professionals.

ABOUT NEXTGEN HEALTHCARE

Since 1974, NextGen Healthcare has been on a mission to empower ambulatory practices with innovative health IT solutions. We continually strive for better — helping clients achieve clinical, operational, and financial success. We proudly support the providers of ambulatory care and the communities they serve. **Learn more at nextgen.com.**

ABOUT MGMA

Founded in 1926, the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) is the nation's largest association focused on the business of medical practice management. MGMA consists of 15,000 group medical practices ranging from small, private medical practices to large national health systems, representing more than 350,000 physicians. MGMA helps nearly 60,000 medical practice leaders and the healthcare community solve the business challenges of running practices so that they can focus on providing outstanding patient care. Specifically, MGMA helps its members innovate and improve profitability and financial sustainability, and it provides the gold standard on industry benchmarks such as physician compensation. The association also advocates extensively on its members' behalf on national regulatory and policy issues. **mgma.com**

TIPS FOR ADMINISTRATORS:

1 **Proactive implementation**: Ensure that answers to security, privacy and regulatory questions are known and communicated to providers to avoid initial resistance.

2 **Collaborate with compliance**: Work with the compliance department to address concerns early on and avoid letting these concerns hinder implementation of the technology.

3 **Set proper expectations**: Communicate clearly that the AI will not do everything but is a valuable tool to save time and improve efficiency.

4 **Patient feedback**: Gather feedback from patients to understand their experiences and use this to support adoption among providers.

5 **Adoption strategy**: Avoid pushing the financial aspect upfront. Allow providers to experience the benefits first, which can naturally lead to them advocating for the technology's continued use.

6 **Support and training**: Provide adequate training and support to ensure providers can use the technology effectively and understand its capabilities and limitations.