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Data analytics, cybersecurity and mobile technology among the top 10 challenges for health executives in 2018

by *Evan Sweeney* | Oct 10, 2017

Data analytics are the number one challenge for healthcare executives in 2018.

Health IT is evidently top of mind for healthcare executives going into 2018.

Data analytics, cybersecurity and harnessing mobile health technology were listed among the top 10 challenges for executives, according to a **survey** by the Healthcare Executive Group. Notably, the need to leverage data analytics to drive population health and clinical decision making was ranked as the number one challenge for healthcare leaders in the coming year.

All three issues made the top 10 concerns for 2017. Big data and analytics have been a staple on the group's list dating back to 2012, but it's the first time it's made an appearance in the number one slot.

Meanwhile, a new IT component made the list's tenth spot: The "engaged digital consumer." For executives, that includes the use of patient portals and wellness education.

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It's no surprise that analytics has become a foremost challenge moving forward. Health systems are increasingly entering **new partnerships** to boost analytics capabilities and analysts **predict** the market is moving away from data collectors and towards companies that can provide clinical insights.

Likewise, the growing number of data breaches targeting healthcare has shined a spotlight on cybersecurity vulnerabilities. In June, a Department of Health and Human Services task force **outlined** a comprehensive list of recommendations for the industry following a global ransom ware **attack** that shut down portions of the UK's NHS system.

At the American Health Information Management Association's (AHIMA) annual convention, ONC National Coordinator Donald Rucker, M.D., acknowledged that cybersecurity is a "massive problem" that the agency is looking to integrate into health IT certification, **according to** the Journal of AHIMA. But he also said some onus is on patients to protect their data.

"When patients get their data electronically, it is their data, and it is their responsibility to protect it," he said. "I believe the practical solution is a marketplace of companies providing help for patients [to minimize security risks]."