FORRESTER®

Digital Identity: The Key To Optimizing Your Healthcare Ecosystem

Improve Security And Operational Efficiencies With An Automated Identity Governance Solution Purpose-Built For Healthcare

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Overview

When managing digital identities, healthcare organizations face unique challenges like role-based access, an everchanging workforce, and strict compliance requirements. In particular, the pandemic has made it difficult for healthcare organizations to easily and quickly manage their onboarding/offboarding processes of employees, temporary staff, returning employees, and employees taking on additional responsibilities. Healthcare business leaders have found that a healthcare-specific automated identity management and governance (IMG) solution can solve for these critical issues — improving security and operational efficiencies, enhancing compliance, and reducing risk.

Key Findings

Since the pandemic, organizations have shifted IMG priorities from basic utilization and turnover tasks to more advanced IMG tasks like reducing overassignment of access/entitlements and improving efficiencies.

Healthcare organizations struggle with getting the right access to the right users in a timely manner. Most decision-makers struggle to find the right solution and staff to manage identities.

Healthcare business leaders believe a healthcare-specific vendor for an automated IMG solution would reduce risk of breach and noncompliance (74%) and increase productivity (68%).

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IMG Priorities Shifted After The Onset Of The Pandemic

Identity decision-makers in the healthcare industry indicate a major IMG priority shift from 2020 to 2021. In 2020, organizations were focused on staff utilization and turnover since these were critical needs during the onset of the pandemic. However, based on their changing needs, healthcare leaders are now focused on enhancing their IMG capabilities. This signals a shift in priority as healthcare organizations move from firefighting mode to a more thoughtful, strategic approach. Applying role-based access controls, reducing overassigned privileges, and enforcing separation of duties are all higher-order identity governance tasks that organizations can now seek to formalize and automate.

Top Identity Governance Priorities For 2020 & 2021

2020   2021

Increase productivity/utilization of staff
69%
33%

Prevent data breaches
68%
50%

Top priorities for 2020 focused on baseline staff utilization and compliance tasks.

Reduce overassignment of privileges
48%
62%

Improve operational efficiency of our data governance staff
45%
56%

Enforce separation of duties
35%
54%

Improve return on identity management investments
31%
50%

Top priorities for 2021 focus on enhancing/maturing IMG capabilities.

Improving regulatory compliance, establishing role-based access control, and preparing for increased turnover in the workforce were also top priorities but did not shift significantly between 2020 and 2021.

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High Rates Of Staffing Changes Impact Operational Efficiencies

Unsurprisingly, healthcare organizations saw a significant increase in turnover from the pandemic. With many employees being hired, working in other locations or departments, and rejoining the workforce, healthcare organizations faced a high volume of identity governance requests: 63% of decision-makers report a spike in adds, modifies, and deletes from 2019 to 2020.

In 2019, the average rate of adds, modifies, and deletes was 22.9%; in 2020, that number nearly doubled to 40.9%. This was not without consequence, as 98% say an increase in staffing changes would impact their operational efficiencies, with one in four noting that the impact would be significant. The sudden, significant staffing changes in 2020 underscored the need for organizations to manage identities and access demands more effectively without impacting operations.

Staffing Changes And Their Impact

Decision-makers who saw an increase in the rate of adds, modifies, and deletes from 2019 to 2020:

63%

Average rate of adds, modifies, and deletes from 2019 to 2020:

2019   22.9%

2020   40.9%
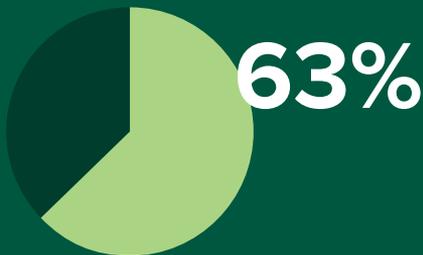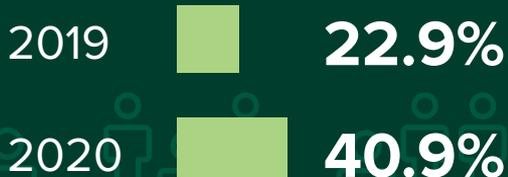
Decision-makers who said an increase in staffing changes would impact their operational efficiencies:

98%

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IMG Challenges Indicate Need For A Unique Identity Governance Solution

Unique workflows of healthcare organizations can add complexity to IMG. Only one in five healthcare decision-makers strongly agrees that they can get the right access to the right users in a timely manner from day one, and only one in three says their employees have access they need day-to-day. This is particularly challenging for users who have varying roles or are temporary workers.

Operational concerns include finding the right solution or the right staff to manage identities. Most healthcare leaders find it challenging to obtain the right solution to manage identities (97%) and the right staff to work within IMG (83%). These challenges stress the necessity of partnering with an identity governance vendor that handles the unique needs of the healthcare space and eases the burden on personnel through increased ease of use and education.

Operational Challenges Of IMG

35%
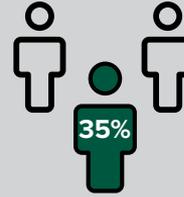
Only 1 in 3 strongly agrees their users have access to every system and application they need to do their job.

Only 1 in 5 strongly agrees they have the identity governance tools in place to make sure that all users have the right access from day one.

21%
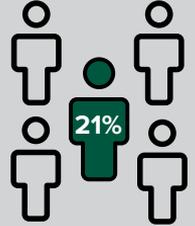
DECISION-MAKERS AGREE:

84% Managing access for users who have different roles or work in different locations during the day or week is a challenge.

63% Managing employee access for temporary workers is considerably more challenging than permanent employees.

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Security And Risk Gaps In Healthcare IMG Are Alarming

Not only do 77% of healthcare decision-makers agree they have unique workflow needs that other industries do not face, but 79% also say that healthcare organizations have unique data privacy issues. The stakes for healthcare organizations to maintain compliance are high, yet managing access needs is a challenge for many; only one in four regularly reviews access privileges, fueling the challenge of preventing breaches and managing compliance. Organizations must address these major weak points quickly to avoid significant fines or reputational damage.

Only 27% strongly agree they perform regular access reviews to ensure access privileges are appropriately assigned.

Challenging IMG Tasks

(Showing "Very" and "Extremely challenging")

Managing identity access needs for employees who are onboarding, offboarding, or rejoining the workforce

72%

Eliminating nonessential access

74%

Governing the identities and rights of privileged users

62%

Disabling all access, quickly and accurately, for anyone who leaves the organization

50%

Appropriately changing access when an existing employee moves permanently to a new role that requires different access

42%

FORRESTER OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT: A CUSTOM STUDY COMMISSIONED BY IMPRIVATA | MAY 2021

DECISION-MAKERS AGREE:

79%
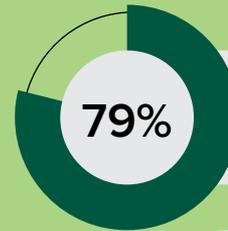
As a healthcare organization, we have unique data privacy issues that other industries do not face.
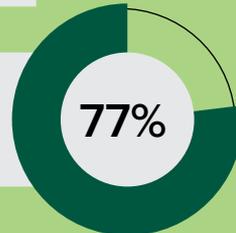
As a healthcare organization, we have unique workflows that other industries do not face.

77%

Base: 103 North America manager+ decision-makers in security/risk roles across the healthcare industry, responsible for or with insight into their organizations' identity access management strategies
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Imprivata, March 2021

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Automated IMG Solutions Address Security And Operational Concerns

Healthcare access and security complexities clearly demonstrate the need for an automated IMG solution that can reduce risk of breaches, increase compliance, improve access management, and ensure operational efficiencies. Decision-makers report that staffing changes would have an impact on their operational efficiencies but believe that an automated IMG solution could address those issues head-on by getting staff the right access from day one, improving staff productivity, and saving time when onboarding — all factors that increase the productivity of IMG administrators.

Top Benefits Of An Automated IMG Solution

Benefit	%
Reduced risk of data breaches	**52%**
Improved patient privacy protection /compliance with HIPAA	**46%**
Proper access for the right staff from day one	**44%**
Improved clinician experience with IT applications	**41%**
Increased employee experience/satisfaction	**36%**

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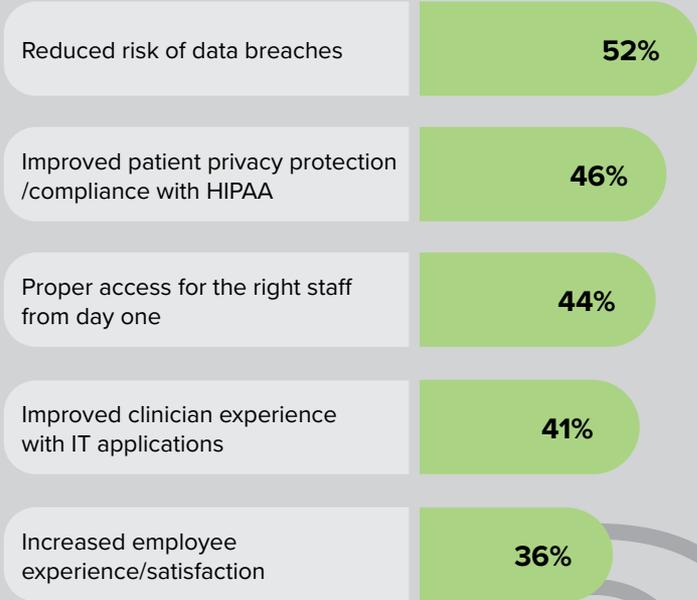
Healthcare-Specific IMG Vendors Reduce Risk And Improve Productivity

The unique challenges and workflows in the healthcare space highlight the need for a vendor that understands the nuances of the healthcare industry. A specialized vendor would improve key operational concerns such as integration with critical healthcare applications, staff education, and implementation times. A healthcare-specific vendor would also help organizations significantly reduce their risk of noncompliance and increase productivity as the vendor would have deep expertise in the unique requirements of healthcare compliance issues and workflows.

Because the stakes are so high for healthcare organizations to maintain compliance while remaining agile enough to meet new, unprecedented demands, it is critical to have an IMG partner that can support industry-specific needs.

Benefits Of Using A Healthcare-Specific Automated IMG Solution Vendor

Better integration with the key applications required in healthcare organizations such as the EMR system **74%**

Better education/training for employees who will be responsible for managing the tool after implementation **68%**

Shorter implementation time **61%**

Ability to connect with clinical applications that are only on-premises, not cloud based **57%**

Less expensive solution because the vendor can leverage experience with other healthcare organizations **42%**

ORGANIZATIONS AGREE THAT HAVING A HEALTHCARE SPECIFIC AUTOMATED GOVERNANCE SOLUTION WOULD:

74% Decrease risk of data breach or noncompliance

Increase employee productivity **68%**

Conclusion

An automated identity management and governance solution gives the right access at the right time to the right users. Those without formal IMG waste time on manual, error-prone tasks. In addition to budget constraints, a dynamic workforce, and strict regulations, healthcare organizations had many staffing changes in 2020 that strained homegrown identity governance processes, highlighting the need for commercial software tools.

Because the stakes are high for healthcare organizations to remain compliant while efficiently managing digital identity needs, healthcare organizations should look to a healthcare-specific IMG vendor. This type of partner understands the nuances of the industry and can reduce industry-specific risks while improving security and operational efficiencies.

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Forrester's Security and Risk

research group

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Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Imprivata. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting asked custom survey questions to 103 North America manager+ decision-makers in security/risk roles across the healthcare industry, responsible for or with insight into their organizations' identity access management strategies. The custom survey began and was completed in March 2021.

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Demographics

COUNTRY

United States 77%

Canada 23%

COMPANY SIZE (BY EMPLOYEES)

3,000 to 4,999: 34%

5,000 to 10,000: 40%

10,001 to 19,999: 11%

20,000 or more: 15%

RESPONDENT LEVEL

C-level executive 9%

Vice president 14%

Director 23%

Manager 54%

DEPARTMENT/ROLE

Security/risk 41%

IT 31%

Compliance 28%