

Digital Health in 2026

A closer look at the next phase
of digital health



Introduction



In 2026, one thing is becoming more and more clear: digital health is entering a different phase. This change is happening not only because new technologies have appeared, but because people now expect something fundamentally different.

Throughout 2025, we've closely followed what's happening across the digital health landscape. We've done this by tracking trends and reports, but mostly through ongoing conversations with our customers and prospects, as well as the experts featured in our "Expert Report" series. Founders, clinicians, product leaders and policymakers all pointed to the same underlying shift: digital health is no longer about adding tools, but about rethinking how care works over time.

We see this moment as a transition. From isolated solutions to continuous models. From episodic interactions to ongoing journeys. From innovation driven by possibility to innovation driven by responsibility and impact.

This report offers a view of what is currently shaping the digital health industry in 2026. Rather than trying to predict everything that might happen, we focus on the areas where momentum is already undeniable.

We structured this report around two main pillars:

- How prevention and care are merging into one continuous health journey
- How to keep feeding that health journey to ensure it remains continuous for your users

These pillars are closely connected and reinforce one another. Together, they offer a lens to understand how digital health is moving from isolated initiatives towards more coherent, sustainable models of care.

So here it is. We hope this report helps you reflect on where digital health stands today and how to approach 2026 with clarity and focus.

We're looking forward to seeing how this next phase unfolds and to continuing the conversation with you along the way.

Talk soon,
Brecht
CPO of IntelliProve





Prevention and care merge into one continuous health journey



For a long time, prevention and care have been treated as two separate domains. Prevention was positioned as something optional, largely driven by personal motivation and lifestyle choices. Care, on the other hand, began once a problem was identified and someone formally entered the healthcare system. That distinction is increasingly breaking down.

Digital health is a key driver of this shift. It enables early signals to be captured outside traditional care settings through digital assessments and connected tools. These signals no longer need to remain isolated insights. When integrated into broader care pathways, they can trigger guidance, follow-up or professional intervention when needed. The World Health Organization explicitly frames this shift as a move towards people-centred, continuous care models, supported by digital health infrastructure rather than episodic encounters.¹

This convergence reflects how people actually experience their health. Health is not lived in separate phases of prevention, illness and recovery. It is shaped by daily routines, gradual changes and long-term patterns.

For healthcare institutions and digital health solutions, this shift has concrete implications. Early signals increasingly inform risk stratification, clinical decision-making and care prioritisation. At the same time, responsibility for care no longer ends at diagnosis or discharge. Follow-up, monitoring and guidance extend care beyond hospital walls. The OECD highlights that chronic conditions already account for the majority of healthcare expenditure across member states, making integrated prevention and care essential for long-term system sustainability.²

In practice, organisations that succeed in this space tend to align around a few shared principles:

- **Design for early signals, not diagnoses**
Enable lightweight monitoring and assessments that surface meaningful changes before they escalate, without relying solely on formal care entry points.
- **Organise around the person, not the setting**
Ensure that data, insights and context move with the individual, rather than being locked within specific tools, departments or care environments.
- **Adapt care intensity over time**
Allow support to scale up or down depending on need, enabling people to move fluidly between self-management, digital guidance and professional care.

Yet despite this progress, a persistent gap remains...

Research across Europe shows that awareness of prevention has increased significantly over the past five years, yet many people still struggle to translate intention into sustained action. A lack of confidence, guidance and continuity often stands in the way.

This gap between knowing and doing is exactly where digital health is now being tested. It's not only about its ability to generate insight, but in its ability to support people over time.

¹ World Health Organization, Global strategy on digital health 2020–2025.

² OECD, Health at a Glance.

³ Simon-Kucher, Better Health Report 2025.

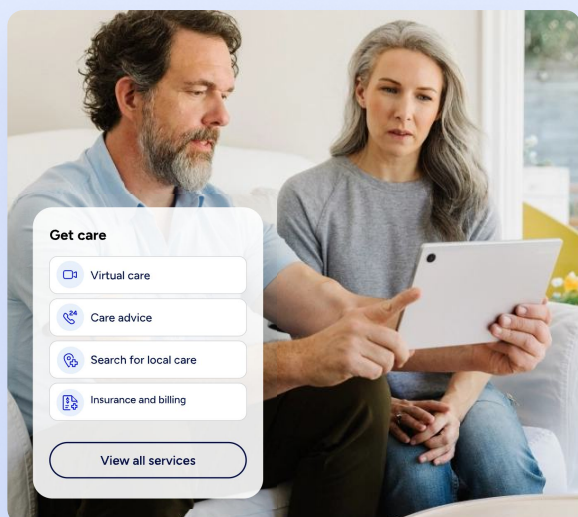


To make this a bit more tangible, we've included a company that we believe is tackling this shift headfirst (in a good way).



Included Health is a clear example of how prevention and care can be organised as one continuous health journey rather than as separate services. The platform brings together digital navigation, virtual primary care, specialist support and mental health services into a single, integrated experience for its members.

At the core of their model is the idea that care should start before a formal diagnosis or referral. Members can engage with the platform for preventive guidance, symptom exploration or health questions long before they enter a traditional care pathway. Early signals, whether behavioural, mental or physical, are captured through digital interactions and ongoing assessments rather than one-off clinical encounters.



What sets Included Health apart is how these signals translate into action. Insights do not remain isolated within a self-care tool or AI interface.

When risk increases or complexity grows, users are seamlessly guided towards higher levels of care, including virtual consultations with clinicians, mental health professionals or specialist support. This escalation happens within the same environment, without forcing people to navigate fragmented systems or repeat their story across providers.

Care intensity adapts over time. Users may move between self-management, digital coaching and professional care depending on their needs at that moment. Follow-up and monitoring ensure that support does not stop after an interaction, but continues as part of an ongoing relationship.

By organising care around the individual instead of around settings or departments, Included Health demonstrates how prevention and care can function as one connected system. The result is a model where people are supported continuously, from early awareness to intervention and back to reassurance, reflecting how health is actually experienced in everyday life.

In 2026 and beyond, the boundary between prevention and care will continue to fade. The most effective digital health platforms will be those that support continuity by design, helping people move seamlessly from awareness to action, from monitoring to intervention, and from care back to reassurance.

Proactive health and care are part of the same system. They are connected by data, guided by insight and shaped around the realities of everyday life.



Engagement as the true differentiator of continuous health



The rise of proactive health brings us to the next pillar of 2026. As digital health moves towards more proactive and continuous models, the real challenge becomes how to keep that journey alive over time. There is no continuous health journey without engagement. Without it, monitoring becomes noise, data remains unused and even the most advanced digital health solutions fail to create impact.

Over the past years, digital health has made enormous progress in capability. Tools can measure more, analyse faster and integrate more deeply into care systems than ever before. Yet one challenge continues to limit scale and effectiveness: sustained use. While awareness and initial adoption are rising, long-term engagement remains fragile. Industry research shows that sustained engagement with digital health and mHealth apps is a core challenge. Average 30-day retention rates can be as low as ~3.5–4 %, with over 90 % of users discontinuing use within the first month.⁴ This trend aligns with broader evidence of high dropout rates in mobile health interventions, highlighting the difficulty of maintaining long-term engagement.

This gap matters because digital health is increasingly built around continuity. Proactive care and integrated care pathways all rely on repeated interaction over time. When engagement drops, continuity breaks. Signals are missed, trends disappear and care reverts to episodic snapshots.

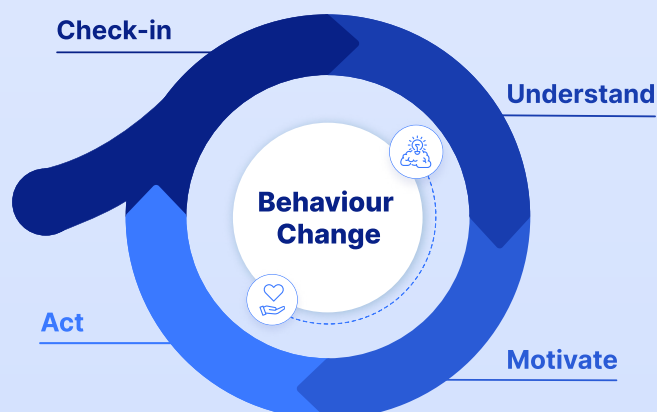
Engagement is often framed as a behavioural problem, but in practice it is a design problem. Many digital health tools still assume that motivation is constant and that users will know what to do with the information they receive.

Prevention research shows the opposite. A significant share of people indicate they would engage more consistently if they had better support, clearer guidance and more confidence in their next steps.⁵

Engagement will become the clearest differentiator between digital health solutions that scale and those that stall. Not because one measures more than the other, but because one fits better into real lives. Successful platforms will design for continuity, not just activation. They will guide users through cycles of insight, action and reflection, reinforcing behaviour over time rather than relying on initial motivation.

> The Adaptive Health Flywheel

A useful way to translate the engagement challenge into concrete design choices is to look at how experiences are structured over time. One example of such an approach is the Adaptive Health Flywheel, a framework used by IntelliProve to support sustained engagement and behaviour change. The model is built around four interconnected moments: **Check-in**, **Understand**, **Motivate** and **Act**.



⁴ Daryl Solutions, The Impact of Healthcare App User Retention.

⁵ Simon-Kucher, Better Health Report 2025.



Check-in

Every cycle starts with a moment of check-in. This moment should feel lightweight and accessible, not like a task or assessment. When interaction requires too much effort, engagement drops quickly. A low-effort check-in creates space for awareness and lowers the threshold to interact.

Effective check-ins focus on reflection and awareness rather than reporting, lengthy surveys or repeated forms introduce friction and quickly discourage repeated use. It's important to allow users to reconnect with their health in seconds, making engagement feel like a natural part of daily life rather than a clinical obligation.

Practical considerations:

- Design check-ins as brief moments of awareness rather than data collection exercises.
- Keep interaction lightweight and repeatable, so check-ins can fit naturally into everyday routines.
- Avoid making engagement dependent on a single input method. Relying solely on wearables or connected hardware risks excluding users and increasing drop-off.

One way to support low-friction check-ins is through camera-based health assessments. A short face scan can capture objective health signals in seconds, without requiring additional devices or setup. When combined with a brief moment of reflection, this creates a lightweight entry point that reconnects users with their health in a natural and accessible way.

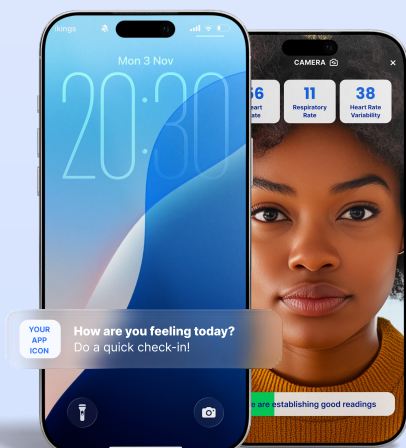


Image source: IntelliProve Face Scan (www.intelliprove.com)

Understand

Data becomes engaging when it is meaningful. Insights that require explanation, comparison or interpretation quickly lose their impact. For engagement to last, users need to grasp what their data means in a single glance, without being overwhelmed by numbers, charts or medical terminology.

Clear explanations and validation strengthen trust and make it easier for users to relate insights to their own experience.

Practical considerations:

- Design insights to be immediately interpretable, without requiring explanation or prior context.
- Use visual structure and hierarchy to guide attention, making it clear what matters most at that moment.
- Avoid overloading users with numbers or clinical detail during the first interaction with their data.
- Allow users to explore more detail when they choose to, rather than presenting complexity by default.

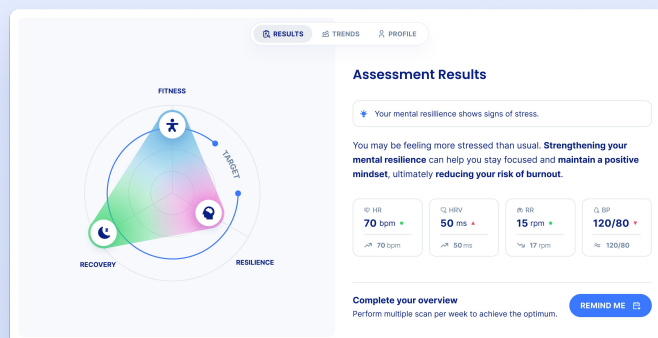


Image source: IntelliProve Main Widget on website (www.intelliprove.com)



Motivate

Showing progress over time helps users understand the impact of their actions and reinforces confidence. Motivation grows when improvement is visible, even when changes are gradual.

Visual simplicity is key. Clear charts, colour cues or short summaries allow users to understand progress at a glance. The goal is not to push performance, but to reinforce continuity. When users can easily see where they started and where they are now, confidence grows and engagement becomes more natural.

Practical considerations:

- Focus on making progress visible over time rather than highlighting single moments or peaks.
- Reinforce consistency and continuity, especially when changes are gradual or incremental.
- Use simple, familiar visual patterns that users can recognise across interactions.
- Frame progress as reassurance and confidence-building, not as performance pressure.



Image source: IntelliProve Trends Widget (www.intelliprove.com)

Act

Understanding without direction often leads to drop-off. Engagement increases when insights are directly connected to realistic, personalised actions. Small, achievable steps help users move forward without feeling overwhelmed.

Importantly, actions should not only appear when something needs improvement. Reinforcing positive behaviour is equally important. Acknowledging when users are doing well and suggesting actions that help maintain progress strengthens motivation and prevents engagement from becoming problem-focused.

Practical considerations:

- Offer a limited number of relevant actions
- Focus on actions that fit into daily routines
- Make next steps explicit rather than optional

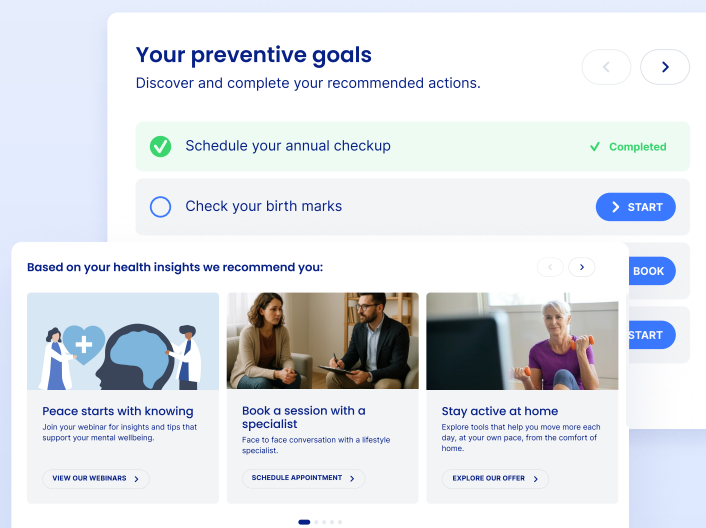


Image source: IntelliProve To-Do Widget and Recommendations Widget (www.intelliprove.com)



Conclusion



Taken together, these shifts point to a clear direction for digital health in 2026. Prevention and care are no longer separate strategies, and engagement can no longer be treated as a secondary concern. Continuity has become the organising principle that connects both.

As health journeys extend beyond single interactions or episodes of care, the role of digital health changes accordingly. Platforms are no longer just measurement tools or access points. They become environments in which awareness, guidance and action unfold over time. This requires moving beyond one-off interventions towards experiences that are designed to support people through changing needs, motivations and moments of engagement.

The examples explored in this report show that continuity does not emerge automatically from better technology or richer data. It is shaped through deliberate design choices: how early signals are captured, how insights are made understandable, how actions are introduced and how progress is reinforced. Engagement, in this context, is not something to be optimised at the margins, but something to be built into the core of the health experience.

Looking ahead, the digital health platforms that succeed will be those that reflect how health is actually lived. They will support people across periods of activity and inactivity, confidence and uncertainty, improvement and maintenance. By aligning prevention, care and engagement into one coherent journey, digital health can move closer to its promise of supporting better health outcomes over time, for individuals and for systems alike.

At IntelliProve, these themes closely align with how we approach digital health. We continue to explore how low-friction health assessments, secure data practices and meaningful engagement can contribute to more sustainable care models.

If you would like to learn more about IntelliProve or continue the conversation sparked by this report, feel free to reach out. We highly recommend our very own Health Tech Specialist: gregory.reynoldspayne@intelliprove.com or get inspired on our website: www.intelliprove.com.

We'll see you later!