



# THE EMPOWERED PRACTICE



# Using technology to power a successful practice

In the consumer-driven world beyond the exam room walls, the public has come to expect an engaging digital experience everywhere from retail to the workplace to entertainment. Similarly, patients today desire a more engaging digital healthcare experience.

The move to healthcare information technology was accelerated by COVID-19 — telehealth became the norm, as did online provider search, scheduling visits and viewing test results. The pandemic forever changed the way patients and providers alike view access to healthcare. Patients have begun to embrace technology which could provide better communication, and treatment in the safety and convenience of a virtual setting. More and more, patients are taking the reins of their own healthcare with the use of patient portals and the help of devices such as wearables and healthcare monitoring on easily accessible smartphone apps.

Millennials and Gen Z especially desire an [effective digital healthcare experience](#). If your practice doesn't keep up, you will lose them.

## **But it's not just the younger generation.**

[67%](#) of consumers over age 60 agree that availability of relevant and accurate information online has impacted their decision to choose one care provider over another.

## **Attracting new patients**

Studies indicate that [71%](#) of searches resulted in a Page 1 Google organic click.

# How to acquire patients

Whether through their insurance provider's website, or through a search engine like Google, patients will [research online](#) for a new provider. Make sure your website is current and your professional headshots, bios, logos and 'About us' information are consistent across all platforms. This is the first impression of the provider to a new patient. In fact, even when given a referral, patients turn to the web to do their own research and read reviews.

Favorable patient reviews belong front and center on your website, making it easier to control first impressions and attract patients. Spending time monitoring and responding to reviews which are posted online enables your practice to engage current patients and connect with new ones.

Once a prospective patient has made the decision to schedule with your practice, be sure to give them an easy, online option for making the appointment and filling out initial paperwork — streamlining the patient onboarding process.



[71%](#) of patients use online reviews as the very first step in choosing a provider.

# Efficient practice management

Practice Management has become more important than ever for the healthcare industry to maintain cost effective operations. One strategy for transitioning your practice to a more efficient system is to increase patient engagement with technology like “the digital front door.” While the benefits of the digital front door in enhancing the patient experience are well known, it can also have significant impact in improving your practice management.

Read more about the [digital front door](#) ▶

## The digital front door

This refers to an integrated approach which brings patients a more meaningful and connected experience every step of the way through their healthcare journey. It leverages existing technology like patient portals, text messaging and email to create a simple, on-demand, interactive patient care strategy and it empowers practices to meet and exceed the patient’s expectations on their journey to wellness.



“A [digital front door](#) is anything but a front door. It’s much more than that. It’s a technology vehicle. It’s a fabric. It’s a layer that spans from and that scales the digital and virtual care journey to meet the patient where they are.”

# Efficient practice management

## The digital front door — Types of technology

Each patient will have their preferred type of engagement, so your practice should create a seamless experience across multiple channels. This may seem like a complex proposition, but it is important that the technology allows the patient to engage in their own way, without adding complexity.

**Telehealth:** Patients have fully adopted the virtual visit and options for telehealth. In fact, the growth in telehealth has stabilized to approximately [38x](#) the instances of pre-pandemic telehealth claims, and it seems that it will remain at that elevated state in the future.

**Patient portals:** There may be no single innovation that gives patients more autonomy over their own healthcare than the patient portal. It enables rapid two-way communication between provider and patient, sharing of test results, following up on treatment and care.

**Mobile apps:** Mobile apps are a significant help to healthcare providers when trying to encourage healthy habits and home care beyond the appointment. Technology such as mobile apps shift the conversation to more of a preventative healthcare story than a reactive one.



Nearly [40%](#) of individuals nationwide accessed a patient portal in 2020.

Just [36 mobile health apps](#) account for nearly half of all downloads. So it is important, as a physician, to vet these apps and recommend the best and most accurate, FDA approved options for your patient's use.

[85%](#) of individuals who have a mobile health app reported using it at least once in the past year.

# Efficient practice management

**Texting:** Effective healthcare means working health decisions into a patient's daily life. Texting and SMS help providers meet patients where they are, even when they are on the go. It is used for communicating with patients, setting up or confirming appointments, even post-visit follow-up and instructions.

**Chat bots and live web chat:** Both chat bots and live web chat offer real-time answers to patient inquiries, the difference is the type of technology. A chat bot is an automated way for patients to get anonymous answers to health questions. Then they can determine whether the next steps should be a visit to their primary care provider, an urgent care clinic, the emergency room or treat their symptoms at home with an OTC medication.

Live web chat offers similar anonymity, but the conversation is with an actual person, rather than a machine who is answering your questions. It bridges the gap between technology and human interaction, giving a level of personalization and connection that makes some patients feel more confident in their decision making.



# Efficient practice management

## The digital front door – Benefits to patients

**A seamless experience:** By providing patients with a single point of access, providers can streamline the process of delivering quality care. A self-service portal removes barriers to scheduling appointments, and when patients keep regular appointments, outcomes are significantly improved.

**Speedy results:** It may not be instant, but it feels like it. With an online patient portal, test results are more quickly received, appointments can be scheduled without being placed on hold and payments can be made without writing a check. This reduces the frustration often associated with visiting or communicating with a medical practice.

**Familiar technology:** By employing the technology that is already in use across other industries, medical practices break down the barriers to care, leveling the playing field between providers and patients.

**Transparency and access:** When practices place medical records online, patients have the ability to review financial statements, test results, medications and treatment options at will. The information is right at their fingertips whenever they need it, which empowers patients to take control of their own health.



# Efficient practice management

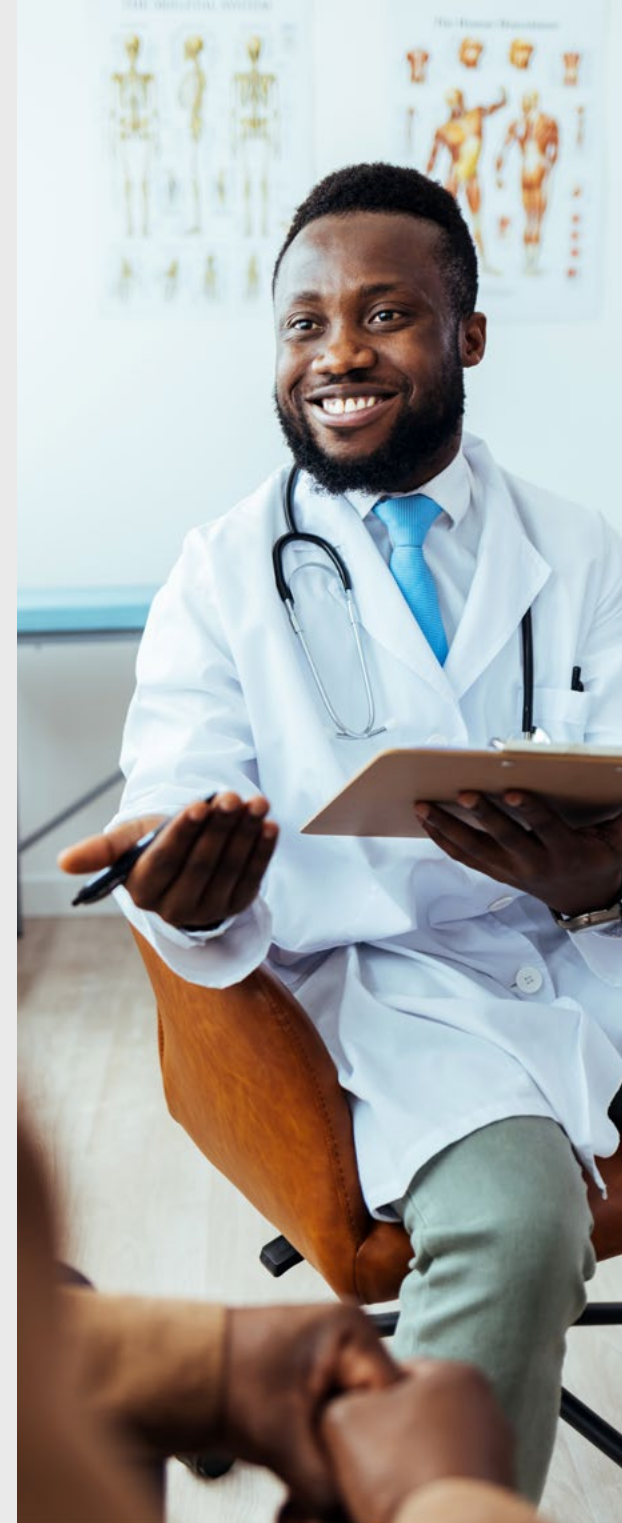
## The digital front door – Benefits to your practice

**Improved efficiency:** Technology facilitates automation and greatly speeds work-flow in your practice and reduces clinician burnout.

**Better coordination:** Emerging technologies and network integration are knocking down the silos of traditional healthcare systems to empower better patient care. With the right technology in place, all care providers, from primary physicians to specialists, have access to the right data at the right time.

**Patient retention:** Using patient portals, text messaging, wearable devices and mobile apps to create a [higher level of personalization](#) goes a long way to ensure patient loyalty and revenue consistency for the practice.

Overall, digital tools facilitate automation and allow the replacement of manual handoffs, ensures revenue continuity and improves cost-effectiveness. Putting non-clinical tasks in the hands of machines will reduce your overhead, minimize manual errors and ultimately free up your staff for the important human work of caring for patients.





# Integrated, patient-centric care

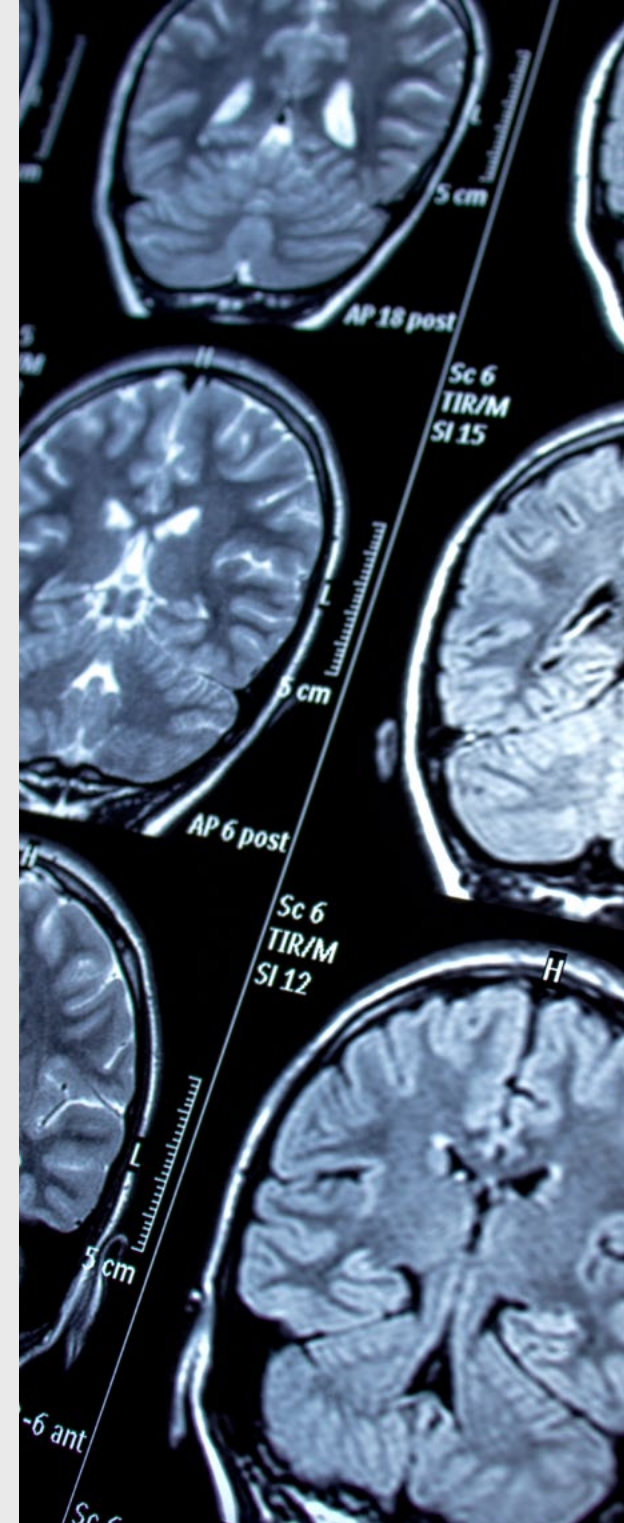
Care coordination is a pillar of patient-centric care. It is the process of proactively managing a patient's experience across parts of the healthcare ecosystem that are often otherwise disconnected. As a discipline, patient-centric care seeks to create a more proactive, whole-person focused healthcare experience that keeps the patient well, rather than only treating them when they are ill.

The Electronic Health Record (EHR), is the digital version of a patient's medical chart, maintained and kept up to date by the provider at each visit. The EHR allows instant access to information captured at appointments and can significantly streamline the clinician's workflow. It is an efficient way to reduce instances of duplicate tests ordered, as well as maintaining an updated list of medications prescribed by different doctors. As reports and test results are uploaded to the EHR, the data gets to the clinician faster for a more efficient, accurate diagnosis and treatment recommendation. This [improves communication](#) between primary care physicians and specialists in order to treat the whole person.

# Integrated, patient-centric care

Not only is the transfer of health records accelerated in the digital practice, but large medical images can be more easily read and collaborated on with the use of advanced technology. AI and machine learning will allow healthcare facilities to sift through vast amounts of data to identify patterns in past behavior, family history and responses to past treatments.

Multi-source data aggregation, intelligent workflows and timely communication are all critical elements of coordinated, patient-centric care. Quickly getting test results, reading film, collecting findings and getting them to a nationwide or global archive creates a more collaborative network of learning.



# Big data for better outcomes

Today, more and more data is being collected from wearable devices, which can help to identify useful personal patterns. In some cases, patients can be discharged with medical devices to measure their blood pressure, glucose levels, heart rate and other metrics and then upload their results into a secure platform, where physicians can digitally monitor progress and address issues with the patient before they require another hospital stay.

Each person with a wearable device is collecting so many more datapoints that they can share with their healthcare provider. These large amounts of data would be virtually impossible to sift through manually in the midst of a growing caseload, but the use of emerging technologies makes it possible for a clinician to delve deep into the patterns and use that knowledge to deliver better quality care.



# Big data for better outcomes

## Innovations in the treatment of mental health patients

[Behavioral Health](#) is one area which has greatly benefitted from emerging technologies, such as teletherapy, Artificial Intelligence and the data collected from wearable devices. While the challenge remains to ensure the power of human interaction in treatment, these innovations, when applied to behavioral health, improve a practice's ability to match therapists with patients, refine diagnoses and manage costs.

Mobile apps have also become an effective tool to extend treatment beyond the constraints of an office visit or telehealth session. Patients now can track their blood pressure, heart rate, ovulation and stress level with devices right at their fingertips. This empowers the patient to take control of their health between appointments.

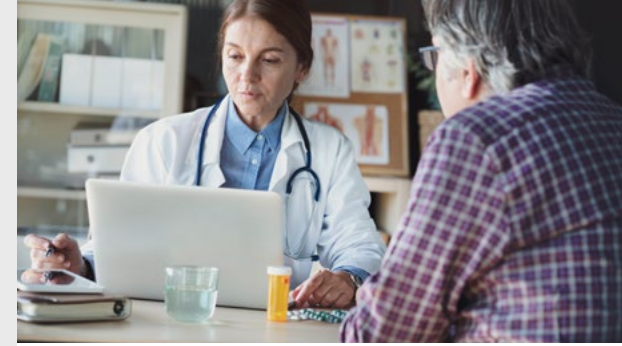


# Patient retention and referrals

The adoption of digital healthcare allows a practice to increase personalization in patient care. Your practice can tailor communication to each patient's needs, even after the appointment is over, by sending information about specific medications and educational materials. Technology, such as social media, also simplifies ongoing communication between scheduled visits.

Through [social media](#), patients can direct message the practice with questions or network with other patients experiencing similar symptoms. They can join virtual communities, participate in research, receive financial or moral support, set goals, and track personal progress.

Other [advantageous uses for social media](#) in healthcare include professional networking, education, promoting the practice, recruiting and patient care. However, it is important for physicians, administrators, nurse managers and other leaders in healthcare to balance the benefits of social media usage and HIPAA compliance, training their staff accordingly.



Approximately [60%](#) of physicians favor interacting with patients through social media for the purpose of providing patient education and health monitoring, and for encouraging behavioral changes and drug adherence, with the hope that these efforts will lead to better education, increased compliance, and better outcomes.

[83%](#) of healthcare organizations are participating in content marketing. Patients respond more positively to providers who stay active on social media, blogs and newsletters.

# The ROI of investing in tech

In healthcare IT, as opposed to other industries, the question of ROI is a complex one. It necessitates balancing the reduction of operating costs such as staffing and resource requirements with maintaining the quality of care.

HIMSS assigns the value of [health IT](#) to three groups – patients, providers and communities.

For the [patient](#), this means carefully weighing patient satisfaction scores against the cost of care in order to maximize value. In order to do this, successful practices consistently measure ongoing performance to ensure they are meeting their business goals. This can be done with online satisfaction scores.

From the provider's perspective, driving operational efficiency and productivity is what measuring ROI comes down to and it should always incorporate substantial financial components. These can be greatly aided with the implementation of digital systems, such as automation which reduces staffing, speeds the process of accounts receivable and reduces the claims denial rate.

Learn more about [modernizing IT for contemporary practices](#) ▶



# The ROI of investing in tech

There is a domino effect in the community with the implementation of healthcare information technology. The impact on the larger ecosystem is one of increased healthcare equity, access and overall wellbeing.

While the benefits of emerging technologies are well-documented, the question becomes whether or not your practice has the correct infrastructure in place to offer these services to patients. The connectivity necessary to fully immerse your practice in a digital landscape is growing, particularly with the advancements in AI and Machine Learning for analysis of large databanks and improved diagnosis. It is important to confer with your IT department or expert to understand the capabilities of your current network and to detail the new digital tools that will help your practice succeed.

## **The first step in embracing these digital tools and advanced technology is investing in the correct infrastructure to support them.**

When determining if your network is up to the task, you need to ensure you partner with a provider that can deliver high-performing and secure, private connections that can scale with the needs of your practice. If the purpose of utilizing technology is better collaboration and faster response times, choosing one full-service provider, rather than several, can help alleviate any IT concerns. This will avoid downtime, reduced productivity or patient frustration in the event of service interruptions.

Read more about [creating a scalable and tailored IT healthcare infrastructure](#) ▶



# The partner for your practice

At Spectrum Enterprise, we have partnered with healthcare practices for decades. With our team of Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) certified experts, we are ready to tailor a solution to best meet the needs of your practice. Our suite of managed services make it easy for practices of any size to meet the digital expectations of today's patients.

Our comprehensive solutions, technical expertise and reliable fiber network will empower your practice to improve efficiency, better manage costs and enhance the patient experience. We provide a secure, reliable network that will evolve with you into the future of healthcare. Let our team design and implement the ideal network for you, including professional installation and always available, U.S.-based support.

For additional information on how Spectrum Enterprise can help your practice create a strong foundation for telehealth, cloud-based applications and digital health transformation, visit [enterprise.spectrum.com/practices](https://enterprise.spectrum.com/practices).





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