



COVID-19 and The Road to Financial Recovery

Strategies for Restoring Revenue



COVID-19 has revealed that a healthcare organization's ability to instantly communicate with the entirety of its patient population is critical in a crisis situation. And from a patient communication perspective, the healthcare industry has been caught off guard. There is a communication gap between healthcare organizations and their patients at home.

People across the country are waking up each morning to watch the news and search the internet for the latest updates. They are scared and seeking information, mostly on a national or statewide level.

But **healthcare is local**, and patients are looking to their healthcare providers for direction and "Information Therapy." Providing continual updates and guidance (i.e., Information Therapy) on COVID-19 is critical to improving the knowledge and healthcare decision-making abilities of patients. In addition, healthcare organizations have a need to communicate to their patients how to best engage with them during this crisis. Proactively instructing patients where to go and what to do (**controlling the flow**) can help reduce the spread and protect both patients and our heroic healthcare workers on the front line. Even the US Surgeon General is running a TV commercial asking patients to "Call First".

Preparing for Post-COVID-19: When the COVID-19 curve begins to flatten and current social distancing restrictions are reduced/lifted, healthcare organizations will again want patients visiting their providers and receiving needed/desired healthcare services as they did in a pre-Coronavirus world. To support this effort, healthcare organizations may want to consider establishing a Patient Engagement Center (sales team) to proactively drive the much-needed revenue lost to this crisis.

What is a Patient Engagement Center (PEC): A Patient Engagement Center is a healthcare organization's "Sales Team." Its job is to proactively generate visits and procedures by identifying patients with healthcare needs and then scheduling them for their visit or procedure. Nationally, 45% of patients have an outstanding "Gap in Care" and are due for a visit today. A PEC is designed to convert this opportunity by identifying and scheduling these visits (or telehealth visits). PEC360 can provide three critical functions on the road to recovery:

- **PEC360 Smart Communication Platform:** From an "Emergency Preparedness" standpoint, healthcare organizations need to be able to instantly communicate with the entirety of their patient population and texting is by far the best option for mass communication. Texting averages a 95% read rate and the ability to reach large numbers of people immediately. Therefore, it's incredibly important to know your cell phone capture rate and how to grow it. PEC360 can send out hundreds of thousands of messages immediately to your patients to educate them on COVID-19 and instruct them on how to best engage with you during this crisis. While text has a 95% read rate, email has only a 20% open rate and automated phone has a 17% listen rate.



- **PEC360 Patient Engagement Center (PEC):** A Patient Engagement Center is designed to identify patients with “Gaps in Care” and schedule them for telehealth visits, office visits and or procedures. It is your sales team, guiding and convincing patients to get the care they need. It lets patients know you are “open for business” and available to perform the many postponed visits and procedures generated by this crisis. A PEC operates on a sophisticated technology platform that interfaces with your EMR, queries your data to identify patients with Gaps in Care and formats this information so a PEC Care Advisor can contact the patient and schedule the appropriate type visit. A PEC can be outsourced to PEC360 or we can help you establish your own.
- **PEC360 Smart Appointment Confirming:** PEC360 leverages predictive analytics to score each appointment based on its likelihood to show. Smart Confirming then tailors the confirmation process (timing, frequency and messaging) to each unique appointment based on its score. Smart Confirming is not a ‘set it and forget it’ strategy. A PEC360 team is dedicated to finding the lowest possible no-show rate for each practice/facility. The end result is reduced no-shows and increased patient access.

With these capabilities in place your healthcare organization can support the following strategies:

- Phase 1 – Create a “Call First” text messaging campaign with a COVID-19 hotline that allows you to **“control the flow”** of potential COVID-19 patients by triaging them first and then directing these patients to the appropriate facility where a prepared team is awaiting them. This helps protect both patients and healthcare providers.
- Phase 2 – Provide “Information Therapy” to your patients by texting links to videos and other educational content. Updating patients on the crisis from a local perspective provides comfort and improves their healthcare decision making.
- Phase 3 – High Risk and Rising Risk patients: Have your Patient Engagement Center contact these patients with a script designed to identify those patients in need of care. Once identified, the Patient Engagement Center “Care Advisor” can escalate the call to the appropriate clinical resource. This form of care escalation is much more cost effective and can cover many more patients in a shorter timeframe than having your clinical staff make these calls. It also allows your clinical team to “practice at the top of their license” by not wasting time working the phones.
- Phase 4 – Telehealth is here to stay, and it seems the days of asking healthy patients to visit a doctor’s office are over. Telehealth will quickly become a competitive frontier with many businesses ranging from startups to healthcare systems racing to engage your patients on their telehealth platform. Another tremendous benefit from Telehealth will be its positive impact on physician burnout by allowing providers to complete visits from any location.
- Phase 5 – When the time comes, begin proactive outreach to patients by saying “We’re open and ready to see you!” A combination of text messaging and live calls from your Patient Engagement Center will help restore visit volumes and the financial health of your organization.
- Phase 6 – Proactive Healthcare Delivery: Once the crisis is over, your Patient Engagement Center can support the proactive delivery of healthcare by identifying patients with “gaps in care” and



getting them scheduled with the appropriate provider or facility. Proactive healthcare delivery is especially important for disease management and preventive care visits.

- Phase 7 - PEC360's Smart Appointment Confirming service will find your lowest no-show rate by facility while simultaneously increasing patient access.

With a **#Healthcare is Local** text messaging campaign, a wide variety of relevant educational content can be used, whether specific to your organization or referencing the CDC, local/state agencies or other sources. The content can be fluid and updated frequently. The following are examples for a text messaging campaign that can be delivered via a text message link to a video or other hosted information.

Text #	Purpose	Potential Content (text, links, video links, etc.)
1	"Call First" campaign. What to do if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.	Call our COVID-19 Hotline at (800) xxx-xxxx if you feel you are experiencing symptoms
2	Telehealth Link for a virtual visit with a healthcare provider	<i>Enter the link to your telehealth connection here.</i> Note: Many healthcare organizations are providing free telehealth screening to their patients. Anyone experiencing symptoms can visit your telehealth website and use the promo code COVID19 to be screened without having to leave their home.
3	How can I get a link to the latest coronavirus update in my area	<i>Enter link to response here</i>
4	How to spot the symptoms	<i>Enter link to response here</i>
5	Testing: Who, When and Where	<i>Enter link to response here</i>
6	Am I at a higher risk for COVID-19?	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/people-at-higher-risk.html
7	How can I access my patient portal?	<i>Enter link to response here</i>
8	What should I do if I've had close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?	https://s3.amazonaws.com/Documents/Fact+Sheet+for+Close+Contacts.pdf
9	COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#basics

Please contact Chris Brunson at (843) 708-3279 to discuss potential strategies for your organization.