



# How automated communications help providers improve patient engagement

**Intelligent, automated patient communication systems extend far beyond the phone to reach patients where and when they will be most responsive to clinical, administrative and financial messages.**

Acute and ambulatory healthcare organizations all face the challenges of increasing access, improving patient engagement and making care more cost-effective.

Providers are making strategic investments in online bill pay, digital communication, social media, nurse hotlines, online scheduling, care manager services, clinician support and interactive patient engagement<sup>1</sup>—each of which can benefit from a collaborative, automated contact center.

Today's healthcare contact centers are a far cry from call centers of the past. Modern contact centers employ multi-channel outbound and inbound communications to deliver convenient, personalized support that keeps patients safe, informed and engaged in their care.

## Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) impacts three major healthcare functions

### Clinical

The fear that automation in healthcare will detract from the human interaction that patients expect is most prevalent when it comes to provider communications. This fear has handcuffed many healthcare organizations into inefficiently dedicating skilled clinicians to making manual phone calls to patients for continuing care.

Practices like this are not sustainable as organizations must serve a growing patient base with limited clinical resources.

Contrary to these fears, automation doesn't force patients to speak to a machine. Instead, intelligent automation helps connect patients with clinicians when the patient is ready, extending the reach of those same clinicians to do more impactful work in the meantime.

Automating basic interactions with a reliable cloud-based infrastructure helps providers better utilize clinical resources to serve all patients, drive business value, and improve patient and employee satisfaction.

### Administrative

Despite the increased attention to patient engagement, 51% of healthcare consumers are unsatisfied with their consumer experience.<sup>2</sup> Providers must do better.

**With multiple touchpoints throughout the patient journey—including acquisition, care and post-service--the contact center is uniquely positioned to improve satisfaction with timely, targeted communication.**

## EXECUTIVE BRIEF

### CONTACT CENTER AS A SERVICE

Healthcare organizations that can successfully automate multi-channel patient communication—with options such as interactive voice response (IVR), self-service appointment scheduling, digital messaging and chat, appointment reminders, transitions of care, and centralized scheduling and billing—will realize the benefits of enhanced patient engagement and satisfaction.



Reduce no-shows by **5–44%**



Reallocate **27-40%** of cancelled slots<sup>3</sup>

*Personalized communications, streamlined scheduling and timely patient alerts help healthcare providers reduce no-shows and scheduling gaps.*

### Financial

The key to better profit margins is higher patient satisfaction, and the key to higher patient satisfaction is improving the overall consumer experience, not just the clinical experience. A Deloitte report reveals that hospitals with “excellent” HCAHPS patient ratings had a net profit margin of 4.7% compared to 1.8% for hospitals with “low” ratings.<sup>4</sup>

Effective communication not only brings more patients in the door and influences the billing cycle but also quite literally impacts health outcomes. An estimated 30% of all malpractice cases against doctor’s offices and hospitals in the U.S. are the result of communication failures, adding up to astounding legal costs and unnecessary patient deaths.<sup>5</sup>

Automated communications can safeguard healthcare providers from detrimental errors by ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of patient information communicated between medical staff, patients and caregivers.

## Ready for a next-generation contact center?

The role of the contact center is rapidly expanding across healthcare organizations to critical patient touchpoints from patient acquisition to patient retention. If your organization is struggling to improve patient engagement and satisfaction, consider cloud-based contact center technology that can unify your voice to the consumer and deliver a more personalized healthcare experience.

<sup>1</sup> PwC Health Research Institute Provider Executive Survey, 2017

<sup>2</sup> “3 Ways an Engagement Center Can Improve Customer Experiences.” Becker’s Hospital Review. April 18, 2018. <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/patient-engagement/3-ways-an-engagement-center-can-improve-customer-experiences.html>

<sup>3</sup> “Appointment Reminder Systems Are Effective But Not Optimal: Results of a Systematic Review and Evidence Synthesis Employing Realist Principles.” Dove Press. April 4, 2016. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4831598/>

<sup>4</sup> “The Value of Patient Experience.” Deloitte. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/life-sciences-and-health-care/articles/hospitals-patient-experience.html>

<sup>5</sup> “Communication Failures Linked to 1,744 Deaths in Five Years, US Malpractice Study Finds.” STAT. February 1, 2016. <https://www.statnews.com/2016/02/01/communication-failures-malpractice-study/>

### About Windstream Enterprise

Windstream Enterprise collaborates with businesses across the U.S. to drive digital transformation by delivering solutions that solve today’s most complex networking and communication challenges.

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