

Healthcare AI, Patient engagement

Intelligent patient experiences, part 4: How effectively can your clinicians manage patient care?

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In the penultimate installment in our five-part series, we flip perspective and explore how AI-powered technology can lighten the load on care teams, while helping clinicians communicate with patients at key moments to effectively manage their care.

The quality of patient outcomes isn't just determined by what happens in the procedure room or during the exam. So much depends on the rest of their care journey. From ensuring they adhere to discharge instructions to checking in on their progress, following up in the right way, at the right time, has a profound impact on patient health.

But the process can be extremely time-consuming. It's another set of tasks that contribute to the growing workload of care teams, whose capacity to directly engage with patients is already being eaten into by inboxes cluttered with questions and an [increasing amount of time spent in the EHR](#).

Now, AI-powered technology is supporting clinicians to manage patients' ongoing care more efficiently. Healthcare organizations can automate many of these crucial but repetitive tasks and reduce manual work for care teams—all while driving positive patient outcomes.

Freeing up clinicians to follow up

As discussed in the last blog post in this series, [Intelligent Virtual Agents](#) have a key role to play in helping care teams quickly and efficiently respond to routine patient inquiries.

AI can automatically answer many patient questions before they hit a clinician's inbox. What's more, it can

ensure questions are routed correctly, saving care teams the hassle of redirecting inquiries themselves, and shortening the time between patients reaching out and patients receiving the information they need.

Streamlining scheduling for care teams and patients

alike

AI-powered technology can also streamline the scheduling of follow-up and preventative care—whether you're inviting a post-op patient in to review their progress or reminding a patient who's developed asthma to book their seasonal flu shot.

Let's take the latter scenario.

Winter is on its way, and Jane's healthcare provider is inviting patients with a high risk of influenza complications to get vaccinated. Jane receives the automated notification by SMS, her preferred channel. She can't make the proposed date and time, so she replies to the message and interacts with the provider's Intelligent Virtual Agent to book a more convenient time.

A few months later, Jane has a knee replacement, and after she's discharged, she receives an SMS message checking to see if she filled her prescription. She replies that she was unable to pick up her prescription, so the provider sends the prescription to a pharmacy that delivers.

Later, she receives a phone call checking on her recovery, and she provides feedback through a survey about the condition of the wound, her pain level, and her range of motion. She also receives a daily SMS reminding her about the importance of exercise, with a link to some recommended moves. And when Jane forgets when she can shower, she refers to her plainly written discharge instructions. Then she visits the hospital website to find out when she can get back to playing pickleball.

In this scenario, all of this is automated communication that would normally be led by a care team member. It's more convenient for Jane, anticipating her needs and giving her information that's vetted and trusted by her provider—all with minimal effort from the care team.

Helping clinicians keep eyes on their patients

Successful care management depends on clinicians' understanding of each patient's progress. This is another area in which AI-powered technology can support your care teams' efforts, while reducing their cognitive load.

A great example? Patient surveys. Whether you need a patient to report on their recovery after a knee replacement or their side effects from their latest round of chemotherapy, automating the process lets you make sure they're surveyed at the right time, on their channel of choice. Answers are recorded in the patient chart and care teams can reach out if there are any concerns.

Ensuring patients understand their care plans

As well as automating patient surveys, AI-powered technology can orchestrate the timely reminders needed to keep patients following their care plans. And increasingly, it can even help patients to better understand *what* they need to do—translating medical jargon into everyday English—helping reduce readmissions and improve care outcomes.

With the help of large language models like GPT-4, some solutions are now able to automatically provide discharge instructions in layperson's terms, helping to align patient and provider expectations and put patients firmly on the path to recovery. What's more, patients can ask medical questions and receive automated answers from trusted sources vetted by their provider in conversational, easy-to-understand language.

Next time... How strategic is your patient engagement strategy?

In these ways, and many more, AI-powered technology is helping healthcare organizations to streamline and enhance care management—while promoting patient accountability and helping care teams to make more effective use of their precious time.

[Join me for the final article in this series](#), and we'll explore the technological foundation organizations need to implement AI and automation successfully and build towards more cohesive patient engagement and better patient outcomes.

Tags: [Patient experience](#)



About Anthony Oliva, MD, D.O. MMM CPE FACPE

Dr. Anthony (Tony) Oliva, D.O. MMM CPE FACPE, is the vice president and chief medical officer for Nuance's Healthcare division. Dr. Oliva draws on more than 15 years of executive healthcare experience. As chief medical officer, he personally has been involved with the implementation and expansion of clinical documentation programs since 2004. Previously serving as chief medical officer for Borgess Health, Dr. Oliva was accountable for the clinical practice of medicine across all Borgess Health entities including ambulatory care, hospital care and extended care services. He is currently Board Certified in Family Medicine. Dr. Oliva received an MS in Medical Management from Carnegie Mellon University Heinz School of Public Policy & Management. He is a Certified Physician Executive, a designation earned from the American College of Physician Executives.

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