

Utah Spine Care Uses West to Increase Adoption of Online Patient Portal

WEST HEALTHCARE



Shortly after adopting an online patient portal in December 2009, Tina Carney, EMR Administrator for Utah Spine Care, was tasked with manually calling each patient two weeks prior to their appointment, encouraging them to complete pre-registration materials online. While excited to have patients begin using the new technology, Carney now struggled to complete a daily calling list of 10-15 patients who needed to be notified about the portal.

It's an increasingly common situation among practices that are improving patient service by introducing an online portal. Increased usage is beneficial for both the providers and their patients, but finding the resources to promote the new service can be a challenge. After several months of manually calling patients about the portal, Carney enlisted West's automated messaging system to handle the task.

Every Wednesday, West's system delivers personalized messages to each new patient with an appointment scheduled two weeks out. That message introduces the practice's website and portal and asks patients to contact the office to obtain their unique PIN for registration. Delivering the messages on Wednesday increases the likelihood that patients will call on Thursday when the practice is open. Carney's team can provide registration information to interested patients while keeping close tabs on the success of the West portal promotion.

After the first month of availability, 10% of appointment reminders to Vanderbilt's patients were delivered via text. Seven months into the program, and thanks to the efforts of Director of Capacity Management Paul Schmitz and other key team members involved in the system-wide implementation, Smith notes that text now accounts for 28% of all appointment reminders. Rather than opting every patient in on a mass level, Vanderbilt prefers a more organic, patient-driven approach to opt-in. Schedulers consult with patients on an individual basis to help them select a preference for how they will receive appointment communications moving forward.

Comparison to pre-West adoption rates shows a 500% improvement since introducing the portal through West messages. In the first three months of use, Carney also reports that 31% of the patients who receive a portal registration call contact the practice to request their PIN.



500%

increase in patient portal registrations

31%

response rate to West's portal registration notifications

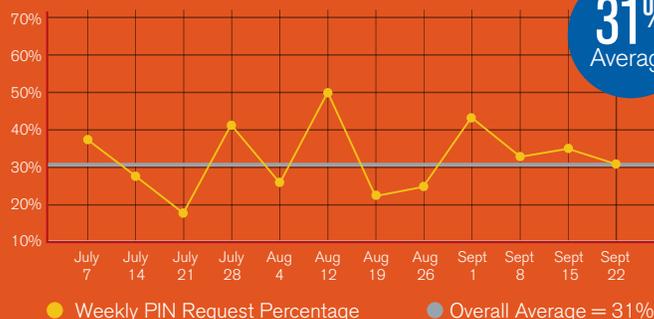
Elevated cancellation rate improves access for wait list patients

"Since we began delivering portal registration messages with West, we've noticed a significant increase in patients who contact us to obtain their unique PIN."

Tina Carney

EMR Administrator, Utah Spine Care

PERCENTAGE OF CALL RECIPIENTS WHO TRANSFER TO REQUEST PIN



Automating the portal registration messages is also beneficial for other patients who are calling the practice. Since the staff is no longer tasked with making portal registration calls, they can focus more energy on fielding inbound call requests. That means quicker service for patients calling the practice and a better overall experience. Even seemingly minor improvements such as this are proving to be important in today's competitive healthcare industry.

For patients, the benefits of the new online portal are numerous. They are encouraged to complete pre-registration information before the visit, and this allows them to conveniently complete the required questions from the comfort of their own home, devote ample time to explaining their current health status and readily access information

such as their spouse's SSN and emergency contact numbers. Patients often experience anxiety just before a scheduled appointment, and visiting the portal before coming to the office eliminates pages of paperwork once they arrive.

Thanks to West and increased portal registrations, Utah Spine Care's Dr. Winters also has his own sense of being better prepared. Patients using the portal before their visit complete a Present Illness form that imports information directly into the EMR. During the appointment, Dr. Winters can simply review the information previously submitted with the patient. That takes a lot less time than asking all of the questions and clicking buttons as the appointment progresses. The increase in portal registrations has allowed for a more efficient appointment flow.

About West Healthcare

West helps healthcare providers, payers and pharmacy organizations optimize communications, drive better patient activation and lower the overall cost of delivering care. Whether you want to manage healthy populations more effectively by increasing immunization and screening rates or you need to reduce hospital re-admissions for patients with chronic disease, Technology Enabled Care or TEC™ is the communication linchpin for engaging and activating patient populations beyond the clinical setting. West takes a "continuum of communication" approach, offering a range of condition-focused solutions that support evidence-based care plans, as well as scalable solutions to support key prevention and wellness initiatives.