CASE STUDY

FQHC Reduces Abandoned Calls by Over 1,000 Per Month with Artera Call to Text

ALTURA
CENTERS FOR HEALTH
a california health+ center

In 2000, Altura became an FQHC and is governed by a Volunteer Community Board of Directors, the majority of whom are also patients.

- 8 locations
- 50 providers
- 12 specialties
- 140,000 patient visits per year

The Results

1000↓
Call abandonment rate dropped 5%, a decrease in nearly 1,000 abandoned calls per month.

90%–95%
Over 100,000 sessions per month

Busy FQHC with constant high call volume pilots new Artera feature to great success and increased patient satisfaction.

Altura Centers for Health is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in California's Central Valley that initially implemented the Artera™ platform to help them reduce call volumes. With a typical rate of 18,000 to 20,000 calls a month, managing a large number of calls is an ongoing challenge for Altura, especially since it affects their staffing budget. "As a nonprofit, finding the appropriate staff or staffing levels is kind of hard, because we have a very fixed budget," says Arnie Reynoso, Altura's Chief Information Officer.

New Artera feature offers time-saving texting as an alternative

Altura's broader strategy to automate routine messages, decrease response times, and increase patient satisfaction made them an ideal participant in the Artera™ "Call to Text" pilot program. The new Call to Text feature enables patients who call their providers to continue engagement via text messaging. Call to Text works with phone systems—including GoToConnect and Cisco—and is designed to help expedite routine administrative tasks and alleviate the pressure on call centers and office staff. This kind of technology ultimately "eliminates the need to actually make a phone call and talk to someone," explains Reynoso.

With Call to Text, the patient will receive a message with the option to choose to start texting with a staff member instead of staying on hold or getting a return phone call. The feature can also sense when a caller has abandoned the call and will send a text to the caller to invite them to start a text conversation.

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The phone system can also tell if the patient response is coming from a landline and if so, it will check patient records for a number, and send a text to that mobile number. If no mobile number is listed, it will alert the office staff to call the patient.

Call to Text feature saves 1,000 monthly abandoned calls

Altura piloted Call to Text during the COVID-19 pandemic which clearly proved to them the value of the technology. "During COVID, we were short-staffed, yet we were still able to handle the volume we typically handle," Reynoso said. Within 90 days of implementing Call to Text, Altura's call abandonment rate dropped from 20% to 15%, a decrease in nearly 1,000 abandoned calls per month. With Call to Text, patients move from synchronous to asynchronous texting communication that allows them to keep a conversation going with their providers. This option is a huge benefit to a patient's busy schedule. "For our patient demographics, they're usually working eight to five, or sometimes two jobs so being on hold is quite precious time," Reynoso explained. In fact, Reynoso reports that patients who started communicating with Altura via text messaging during the pilot often do not use the phone anymore. Reynoso said, "They just text us to request an appointment or a medical record. It's pushed them in that direction."

> ***"The staff would love for everyone to utilize the texting feature. It's less burdensome, and it allows them to handle multiple patients almost simultaneously."***
>
> **Arnie Reynoso**
> Chief Information Officer

Patients and staff want to use texting

Altura surveyed patients using texting to gauge how they felt about using this method to communicate with the FQHC. Between 90% and 95% of Altura patients said they appreciated the ability to reach their providers via text. Altura's front office and call center staff, the personnel who patients are initially contacting, also approve of the shift to texting. "The staff would love for everyone to utilize the texting feature," Reynoso says. "It's less burdensome, and it allows them to handle multiple patients almost simultaneously."

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