CASE STUDY

Jefferson Healthcare Reduces Patient No-Show Rate and Call Volume Using Artera

Jefferson Healthcare

Founded in 1890, Jefferson Healthcare is a healthcare system providing care to Jefferson County, Washington.

- A critical access hospital with 19 specialty clinics
- 10 locations
- 84 Providers
- 90,000 patient visits per year
- EHR: Epic

The Results

40% Drop in no-shows for the largest primary care clinic	**25%** Decrease in call volume for the general surgery office
99.6% Reduction in phone time for financial counselors prompting bill payments; increased efficiency	**10-15%** Increase in bill payments, resulting in greater income

Artera streamlines health system's patient communications, leading to lower call volume, no-show rate, and staff stress

Before implementing Artera™ in September 2021, Jefferson Healthcare could not seem to find a patient engagement platform that fit all of their needs. The health system, a Community Connect Partner with Providence, started out by using two different digital communication platforms. With over 80 providers at 10 different locations, however, these systems could not provide the flexibility that the Jefferson staff needed to fulfill their goals of reducing call volume and no-show rate, in addition to improving the patient experience.

"We couldn't see the messages going out, we didn't know when they were going out, and didn't have any control over what they were saying," said Rachel Barbieto, Business Applications Analyst at Jefferson Healthcare. The staff ultimately felt frustrated because they could not tailor the messaging to specific patients or practices. Some of the clinics had even decided to turn off the existing platforms, as they were causing significant confusion for patients and staff alike.

In an effort to reduce their no-show rate, however, the staff had to continue manually calling the patients to confirm their appointments, leading to an increase in phone calls and time spent on the phone. At this point, it was clear they needed a new system.

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A unique region with unique needs

As the largest healthcare provider in Jefferson County, Jefferson Healthcare wanted a system that would allow them to control and customize messages to meet the varying needs of their nearly 20 different clinics. Not only was it critical that these messages have the ability to be tailored by appointment type, but the texting system also needed to be bidirectional. The staff wanted the opportunity to seamlessly connect with patients who needed to cancel an appointment, request medication refills, or had questions about appointment information or specific care instructions. The Artera two-way texting feature enabled Jefferson Healthcare to do all of this.

In addition to being the largest provider in the county, Jefferson's practices are spread out across a unique region where cell phone coverage is quite limited. Patients oftentimes would report they couldn't hear voicemails left on their phones, or that the voice message was spotty. Thus, being able to send a text that eventually reaches the patient is critical.

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>
> **Rachel Barbieto**
> Business Applications AnalystInnovation, UNC Health

With a median age of 58.3, Jefferson County is also considered the oldest county in the state of Washington. This means many of Jefferson Healthcare's patients are seniors, so the ability for them to go back and reread a text as many times as they need is a plus. Despite initial hesitation from the staff on whether senior patients would text or not, they were pleasantly surprised when a few seniors texted them for medication refills and appointment cancellations before they had even advertised the two-way texting feature.

Largest primary care clinic sees a 40% decrease in no-show rate

Prior to using Artera, patients would forget to call back to cancel an appointment, so having them quickly respond via text has made quite a difference in the no-show rate for Jefferson Healthcare. "Just the ability to quickly respond back and have that auto-cancel in Epic if they can't make it – it's pretty amazing," said Barbieto.

Across all Jefferson clinics using Artera, the average no-show rate has consistently decreased over time. One year ago, the average no-show rate was hovering at six percent; now the average is trending near their goal of just four percent. The most notable decrease in no-shows is through their largest primary care clinic, which saw a 40% decrease in March 2022, compared to their average stats prior to implementing Artera.

With the auto cancellation feature through Epic, the staff is also able to try to refill any open spots. "What would have been a possible no-show – we're able to see that cancellation immediately and try and refill that spot," said Barbieto. "We're able to utilize provider schedules more efficiently now." But this goes beyond efficiency to the bottom line. Instead of costs incurred to prepare for an appointment that does not take place - which typically costs roughly $200 by industry-standard - clinics see revenue from a replacement appointment. Plus, improved patient satisfaction from the patient who is able to be seen sooner.

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Artera lowers call volume, improves staff efficiency

Jefferson Healthcare has also seen a decrease in call volume across nearly all facilities. One facility in particular - the general surgery office - has seen a 25 percent decrease, averaging 89 hours of phone time a month for the last four months, compared to an average of 120 hours per month before implementing Artera.

Additionally, Jefferson's imaging department and dental clinic have seen a roughly 18 percent decrease in call volume since implementing Artera. With fewer phone calls coming in every day, and less time spent on phones, the staff now has more time to dedicate to patient care and other priorities.

Leveraging the campaign feature, Jefferson's financial counselors have also saved significant time prompting patients to make a bill payment.

According to Barbieto, "What would have been roughly 80 hours worth of staff time making phone calls has been minimized to 15 minutes of effort." Not only did Artera help to improve staff efficiency, but the platform has helped to drive in income, as 10-15% of patients are responding to the bill reminders and paying in full.

Utilizing more features of Artera

Rated as one of the top hospitals for patient experience in 2022 by the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS), Jefferson Healthcare is clearly meeting patients where they are. As far as what's next for the healthcare system and Artera,™ the possibilities for future patient engagement are endless. "Everyone at the hospital is saying 'How can I use this?'" said Barbieto. "Lots of people are very interested in using Artera in different ways," and in general, it's "proving to be a great tool for the entire hospital."

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