CASE STUDY

Artera Enables CMHS to Quickly Pivot During COVID Crisis

Community Memorial Health System

Founded in 1902, CMHS is an expansive healthcare system that serves patients throughout Ventura County, California.

- 1 Community-based teaching hospital
- 21 Satellite locations
- 3 Urgent Care Centers
- 23 Specialties
- Over 300,000 annual clinic visits
- 1 Critical access rural community hospital

The Results

192,000 Messages

Over 192,000 messages sent at the start of pandemic in March 2020

47,113 Patients

15 campaigns sent to 47,113 patients in March & April 2020

Using the Artera platform, CMHS goes from zero telehealth to 9000 visits within two months

Like most healthcare providers in early March 2020, Community Memorial Health System (CMHS) had to quickly react to the overnight COVID-19 shut down. Located in Ventura, CA, the community-based, nonprofit health system closed its offices thinking that it would only be for two weeks. Two weeks soon started to become "indefinitely" so CMHS turned to Artera™ to help them send out mass communications about their new telehealth system so they could continue servicing their community. At the beginning of the pandemic in March, CMHS used Artera to send over 192,000 messages. CMHS soon discovered they would use Artera in situations that they had never expected or faced before.

CMHS had previously used Artera before to help them through another crisis so they were familiar with the platform and its agility. Kristine Supple, Director of Population Health said, "Using Artera, we were able to go from zero telehealth visits to 300 in the last week of March, to 9,339 visits in April. Artera was a fundamental piece that made telehealth accessible to our patients."

Texting allows CMHS to continue operations

Along with appointments, CMHS had to quickly transition their new patient forms to online. However, their patient portal was not an effective option since only a small percentage of their patients used it, and sending emails was not effective as a means of real-time communication. CMHS decided to use Artera Enables CMHS to Quickly Pivot During COVID Crisis

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Artera to text patients a link to intake forms so they could be completed digitally and patients could also securely send their photo ID and any necessary documents back to CMHS. Lori Hooks, Director of Quality and Practice Systems explained, "Not all of our patients are technologically savvy but they can click on a link. We served it up to them. Here it is on your phone, just click right here. And that's really what made this explosion in numbers doable. I don't know how else we could have done it."

Artera implemented for COVID test results and virtual patient monitoring

In addition to telehealth, CMHS also offered COVID testing and urgent care appointments for those who had to be seen in person. For these visits, Artera was used to send a variety of patient communications including appointment confirmation and safety protocol messaging. CMHS also used Artera to securely send negative COVID test results so people didn't have to call in for their results. This way, a nurse or a healthcare provider's time could be reserved for calling and helping people who had positive results.

By April 2020, it became clear that their offices were not going to be fully operational. However, the CMHS pediatric staff wanted to check in on their infant patients, especially those from their large Medicaid and migrant farmworker patient population. In March and April, CMHS had sent out 15 outreach campaigns to 47,113 patients, targeting their elderly, pediatric, pregnant, and diabetic populations with specific messaging for each group's needs.

These campaigns inspired obstetricians to start a pilot project using Artera for fetal monitoring where providers texted their pregnant patients to check in on them, and then gathered data in a telehealth appointment. The feedback was so positive from both staff and patients, CMHS is considering continuing this practice even after the pandemic is over.

CMHS answers Ventura County's call for mass vaccinations

When the COVID-19 vaccinations first started in December 2020, Ventura County asked CMHS to be a vaccination center for their elderly patients. The county suggested sending a printed letter to every patient that qualified for the vaccine but CMHS knew by the time the letters were received, protocols would have already changed. Because CMHS had Artera, they were confident they had a more efficient way to fulfill the county's request. Hooks commented, "We told the county, 'Just bring it.'"

After CMHS sent out thousands of COVID vaccine invitations with a sign-up link, their hospital immediately started vaccinating over 1,000 people a day. As eligibility widened, CMHS continued to be one of Ventura County's go-to health centers for vaccinations due to their ability to send mass communications. To ensure no vaccine was wasted, CMHS monitored the vaccine clinic's schedule before sending out invitations and used Artera to easily communicate with their patients about open slots or any changes in procedures.

> ***"I don't think we could have made it through this past year without using Artera as our primary tool for communicating with patients because it made a lot of things possible."***
>
> **Kristine Supple**
> Director of Population Health

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Streamlining workflows by automating patient touchpoints

Another way CMHS used Artera to continue operations during the pandemic was to streamline workflows by automating several customer service touchpoints like referral notifications. Since Artera easily integrates with CMHS's EHR, patients automatically get a text after a referral has been submitted. This has helped to significantly lower the number of inbound calls from patients inquiring about the status of their referral.

Surgery schedulers also implemented Artera to remind surgical patients of any needed preparations such as fasting or taking medications. This decreased the number of canceled surgeries due to patient misinformation or unpreparedness. Hooks explains, "We've seen good success with just being able to send more automated communications since we're trying to reduce the number of phone calls that the surgery schedulers are having to do."

Although preventative health was a challenge during COVID and took a back seat to more urgent medical issues, CMHS was still able to remind patients to schedule a telehealth Annual Wellness Visit by sending outreach campaigns using the Artera Broadcast Campaign feature.

New Artera Call to Text feature to ease phone system demands

CMHS is currently implementing the new "Call to Text" feature from Artera so that patients who call their offices can choose to get a text from a staff member instead of holding or getting a return phone call. They hope patients select this feature often to execute administrative requests like appointment scheduling since it will take pressure off their phone system and help to expedite routine tasks.

In thinking about these exciting new developments with Artera™ and musing on how CMHS had to rise to the occasion in the face of COVID, Supple said, "I don't think we could have made it through this past year without using Artera as our primary tool for communicating with patients because it made a lot of things possible."

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