CASE STUDY

Community Memorial Health System Reduces No-Shows by 29 percent

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

1.2 Million
Increase in annual revenue

29%
Decrease in no-shows

Prominent California nonprofit reaches patients when it counts and increases annual revenue.

A legacy reminder system

In 2017, the largest wildfire to date in California history, roared through Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. Many Community Memorial Health System locations had to close and providers could not go to work. Even the call center had to move to another location to escape the fastmoving blaze.

"It was a massive undertaking trying to reach that many patients," recalls Lori Hooks, Director of Practice Systems at the prominent Ventura, California healthcare nonprofit.

Even before the disaster, CMHS had significant challenges in reaching its diverse population and patient no-shows exceeded the industry benchmark.

As a result, clinics in the health system were often overstaffed for the number of patients who showed up, leaving other clinics understaffed. Doctors routinely prepared for visits only to have patients miss their appointments. Practices tried to double book patients, only to have both patients show up. "It was not an efficient use of time," Hooks said.

CMHS had a legacy appointment reminder system, but it only delivered messages in English—a problem for CMHS' significant Spanish-speaking population. Another problem was that it didn't allow patients to respond to staff.

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"Our old reminder system was not providing us the full ability to reach out to patients," said Ana Alatorre, the Practice Scheduling Manager.

CMHS had tried to implement a no-show policy to handle repeat offenders; however, proving that a patient had received a reminder message was not possible. The existing communication platform didn't offer the data, and the data it did provide was often wrong.

As a result, CMHS staff had to carve out time each morning to call patients to remind them of their appointments. Sometimes they got through and sometimes they left a message. Again, it was not an efficient use of time.

An overarching solution

CMHS sought out a communication platform with the flexibility to handle each location's unique needs while addressing the high noshow rate. They also wanted a platform with the ability to reach patients quickly in the event of an emergency. The Artera™ communication hub was their ideal solution.

The health system chose the Ashwood clinic, one of their busiest locations as the pilot site. Implementation went smoothly, the staff adopted the platform with ease, and productivity immediately improved.

"What surprised me the most is that there were no surprises, it just happened naturally."

Lori Hooks
Director of Quality and Practice Systems
Community Memorial Health System

"Artera is a mini- preparedness kit," Hooks remarked. "It became obvious to us very early that it was going to eliminate a lot of work...and it did."

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Patients welcomed the change

Before implementing Artera, Hooks had wondered how to get patients to use the new platform. Normally new programs would require some kind of promotion. But patients—even their senior population—eagerly embraced texting without any prompting or publicity.

For CMHS' Spanish-speaking population, Artera delivered messaging in the patients' preferred language as indicated in their EHR. It was especially helpful for patients who worked full time and could not take calls during the day.

"We found that our patients feel really comfortable texting us back," Alatorre said. "We've had full-on conversations with them using text, handling everything from medication refills to medical record requests."

Results exceeded expectations

Within two months of implementing Artera, CMHS saw its no-show rate drop by 29 percent. This resulted in an impressive estimated $1,169,600 increase in annual revenue.

Additionally, sending reminders at seven days, four days, and one day prior to appointments enabled CMHS to receive timely cancellations. This improved

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slot utilization and sped up the wait time for other patients to get an appointment. The result was a 28 percent increase in utilization rates for some providers.

Since implementation, CMHS has also used Artera's Broadcast function to send messages to large groups of patients during natural disasters and other emergencies, eliminating a significant volume of individual phone calls. They are also using it to enhance patient engagement for value based care programs.

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