

CASE STUDY

Hanger Clinic Deploys Conversational Messaging with Artera to Improve the Staff and Patient Experience



With more than 160 years of experience, Hanger Clinic is the nation's leading national provider of prosthetic and orthotic care. The customized O&P solutions they deliver improve the lives of millions of people with amputations, limb differences, neuromuscular disorders, and other musculoskeletal anomalies.

- 900 clinics nationwide
- 1+ million patients served
- 1700+ clinical providers
- EHR: NextGen

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Carrie Davis

VP of Patient Experience
Hanger Clinic

Hanger Values Patient & Staff Feedback Above All Else

Since 2017, Hanger Clinic has been listening to patient feedback in a variety of ways, including through its NPS scores, analyzing over 300,000 patient responses to date. What they found was a trend among patients asking for "an easier way to connect," said Carrie Davis, VP of Patient Experience at Hanger. In fact, just a year ago, the only way you could connect with the system "was through the phone or walking through our front door." Knowing there were opportunities to improve, Davis and her team began to seek out a patient communication platform – specifically one that enabled quick and seamless digital communication.

This was critical for Hanger's unique patient population. "It's hard enough to be a patient – we want to make their experience with us as positive and seamless as possible," said Davis, a prosthetic patient herself. Having such limited points of access only creates more unnecessary suffering for patients and thus, it was crucial to allow for more ease of access at Hanger – to meet patients where they are in a frictionless way, with no app to download or portal to login to.

In pursuit of a patient communication solution, Davis and her team developed a list of primary goals that covered three main areas: operational efficiencies, patient engagement, and growth. More specifically, Hanger was looking for a solution to help reduce call volume, increase office administrator (OA) job satisfaction, increase patient satisfaction and retention, reduce no-shows, and increase slot utilization.

Above all, they wanted to listen to – and empower – their front-end staff. "Our office administrators are incredibly important people in our organization – they're the first people to encounter our patients and have a big impact on the patient experience. We wanted to bring them a solution that made their jobs and their lives easier. We

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fundamentally believe they deserve the best, including the most innovative tools to deliver a truly amazing patient experience,” Davis said.

Hanger Pilots Conversational Messaging – and Sees Impressive Results

Artera’s conversational messaging, or dynamic, personalized conversations with patients through both human interaction and automated workflows, was what initially stuck out to Hanger in the search for a platform. They found the conversational piece to be “extraordinary in connecting people quickly and easily to care,” said Davis. She knew implementing Artera was going to be a way to “open a new pathway of communication and connection, and to increase patient satisfaction.”

To kick off using the platform in November 2022, Hanger “made a bold move” and started strong. They began by piloting conversational messaging across 29 patient care centers, their national call center, and their financial counseling department, using it for scheduling, payments, referrals, and insurance. “We could have come out with just appointment reminders, but our team pushed for the full breadth of conversational messaging out of the gate because our office admins needed additional support. They wanted a channel to engage with patients on a variety of topics beyond just scheduling and appointment workflows,” said Davis.

Streamlining the staff’s workflow and maintaining opportunities for them to connect and engage with patients was critical to Davis. With conversational messaging, it’s entirely possible to maintain the human element, which is “so important” to Hanger. According to Davis, “While efficiency is important, our people want to connect with people – and we don’t want to take that away from them. Since it feels so natural inside of the Artera platform, our staff are able to converse in their own unique, personalized way – something that helps drive deeper connections with patients.”

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Overall, the 90-day pilot allowed Davis’ team to reap impressive benefits that will eventually enable them to move forward with an expansion of conversational messaging to all of their 900 clinics nationwide. The results of the pilot demonstrated a reduction in no-shows, an increase in slot utilization, and a reduction in outbound and inbound call volume. During the pilot, Hanger staff saved nearly 330 hours of phone time (200+ for outbound and 130 for inbound).

Improving Staff Satisfaction, Reducing Burnout, and Building Deep Connections with Patients

Throughout the pilot and beyond, Hanger Clinic also gathered and reviewed critical employee feedback that would further support a greater investment in Artera. To do this, they performed an internal survey for their OAs – the first people who typically encounter their patients on the phone or in person.

In the survey, they were asked to rate whether the Artera platform had made their overall job easier or more enjoyable during the pilot. “Overwhelmingly, they said yes,” said Davis. The majority of staff said Artera made their job easier and more enjoyable. Even beyond that, giving the OAs the ability to text with patients has “reinvigorated them” and has given them more time to focus on direct patient care by getting them off the phones. Davis is hopeful that as they continue the rollout across all of their locations, more and more staff will feel relief in terms of less time spent on the phone.

As an organization with an expansive nationwide footprint, Hanger prioritizes a unified staff experience

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across all 900 clinics. A large part of this includes empowering staff to understand the ins and outs of every technology they implement. For Artera specifically, they not only shared relevant articles and resources to staff about the platform but administered a single training experience to ensure a cohesive experience regardless of location. This included showcasing a video message from their senior leadership and OA users around what Artera is, why they're implementing it, how it would affect their job, and how it supports their strategy.

Davis is also encouraging users to connect with other staff using the platform to share best practices and explore new ways to optimize the platform. Hanger believes it's essential to create opportunities for staff to engage with one another and learn from each other regarding how they are using the platform, helping to maximize the use of the platform and co-create new use cases between users across the organization.

While training the staff about the technology was important, it was also paramount for Hanger to keep everyone aligned around the bigger purpose of the system: to enhance patient engagement and access, develop deeper connections with patients, and deliver exceptional, personalized patient experiences to those who deserve it most. Launching a platform like Artera was more than a simple technology implementation; it was an opportunity to rally their organization around their bigger calling in health care.

Forging Internal Partnerships Early to Solve Business Problems

In fact, to move forward with Artera, key stakeholders across various teams were brought into the conversation early, including those from Operations, IT, Communications, and more. Kim Wiley, VP of Information Technology at Hanger Clinic, was one of those leaders. As a "technology liaison" and strategic partner, Wiley is responsible for selecting the right technology – making sure it's secure, and fits into

their architectural strategy and overall vision – as well as ensuring all IT groups work together to deliver the technology.

"As an organization, we start with the problem we're trying to solve," said Wiley. "When IT is involved, we're a true partner in solving business problems, looking out for the good of the organization, no matter what technology we're endeavoring to deploy – it's part of our DNA. Technology is just a vehicle in which we deliver to solve such problems."

"But we don't just focus on the technology itself," she said. According to Wiley, helping people understand the vision and the problems they were trying to solve with Artera really helped to rally the organization around a shared mission. This called for strong communication, engagement, and transparency, especially through early information-sharing sessions that enabled leaders to not only understand the benefits of implementing such a tool but also to become familiar with the lexicon around the technology.

Above all, this took cross-functional effort, collaboration, and alignment – and while different teams had different responsibilities to make this technology come to life, "it really helped to have the same shared vision," according to Wiley. "Partnerships

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What's Next for Hanger and Artera

Over the next 12 months, Hanger Clinic is expected to have all 900 clinics live with Artera. Outside of unifying the staff training and ensuring consistency, one of their first priorities is to deploy conversational messaging at each location.

As they learn more about the platform and its capabilities, however, they are eager to continue expanding beyond traditional use cases to help support other functions, such as recalls, trigger-based education, insurance and prescription collection, and off-site appointment reminders. "We're going to tap into every opportunity possible by making Artera our single, unifying platform for all patient communications. We plan to take advantage of every single thing that Artera can do and find ways to do even more," said Davis.

Additionally, Davis is hoping to hone in on available data and insights by creating regional dashboards using Self Service Analytics so that clinic leaders can see patient-response-time (PRT) data every week. This will then provide more direction to their staff, encouraging them to respond to patients more quickly via conversational messaging.

Above all, Hanger is dedicated to listening to their patients, prioritizing their feedback, and doing everything they possibly can to help people achieve their potential.



Lessons Learned



Empower, listen to, and support frontline staff and patients



Create opportunities for staff to share best practices and maximize the use of Artera



Fuel human connection and strong patient engagement through conversational messaging



Implement a diverse range of workflows to meet patients' diverse needs

