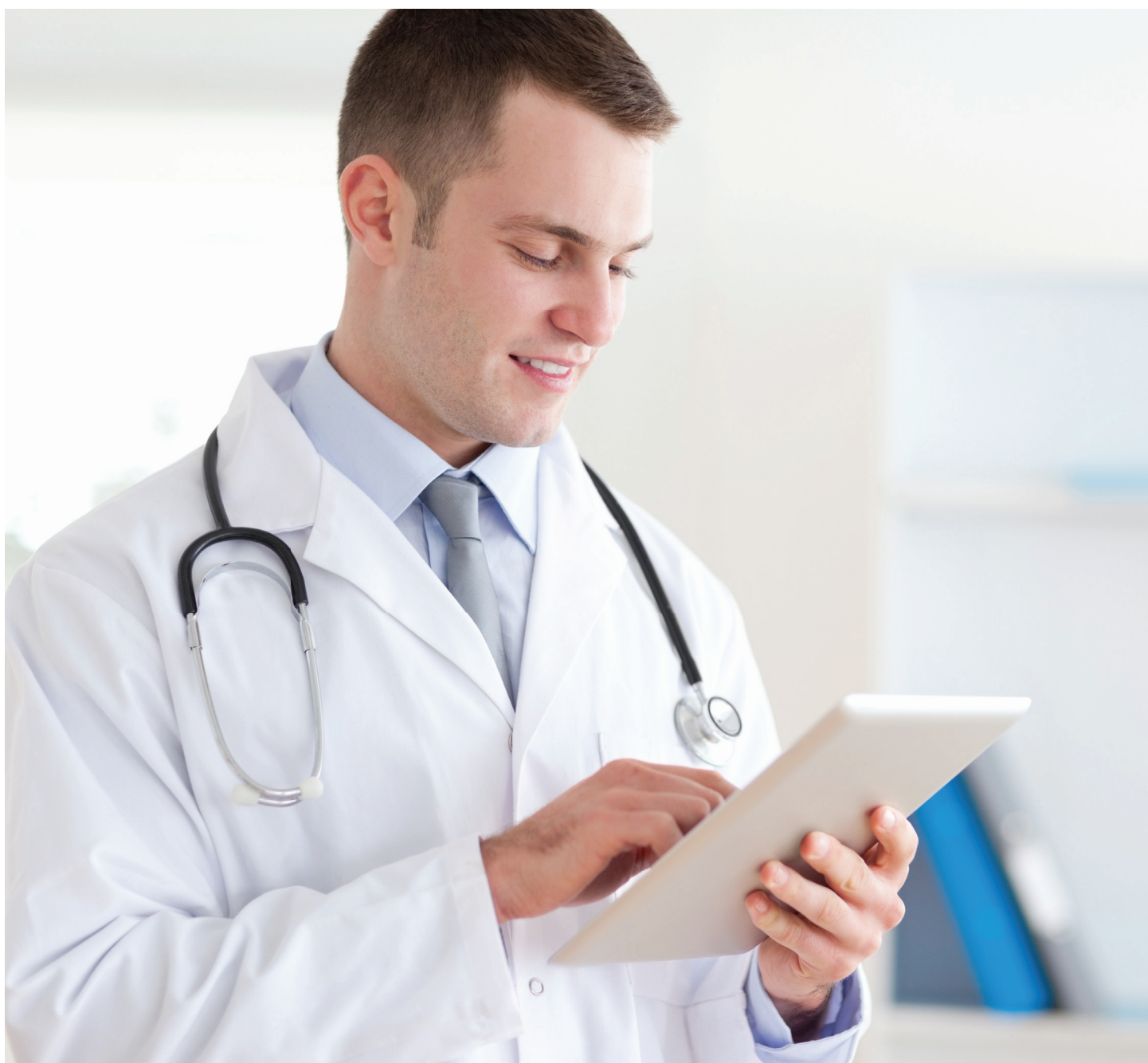


A CASE STUDY BY SOLUTIONREACH

USING TECHNOLOGY

TO IMPROVE MEDICAL PRACTICE PRODUCTIVITY
AND PATIENT ENGAGEMENT



“ ... IT'S ABOUT CREATING MORE VALUE-ADDED TIME ... FOR THE PATIENT AND THE PRACTICE ”

SCOTT LOVIN is in the business of helping physicians improve patient engagement, practice efficiency — and their bottom line.

As the founder of MD-LEAN®, LLC in Jacksonville, FL, Lovin provides consulting services to medical practices and physician groups, typically working with family practitioners as well as optometrists, ophthalmologists, and other specialists. He approaches each engagement with the dual goal of improving the patient and clinician experience and increasing productivity for the practice. He finds that clients are usually skeptical at first, worried that a focus on greater productivity may lead to a decline in patient satisfaction and engagement.

What they discover, however, is that the exact opposite is true. By relying on data-driven insights, analyzing and revising daily office practices, and leveraging state-of-the-art technologies, physicians find they can score a win-win scenario — their practice becomes more efficient, effective, and profitable, while significantly enhancing patient engagement and the overall patient experience.

“You can improve the patient experience and practice productivity at the same time,” Lovin says. “It’s about creating more value-added time — taking out waste and replacing it with value-add for the patient and the practice.”

ENHANCING PATIENT FLOW THROUGH THE OFFICE

When Lovin and his team first start working with a practice, they assess the systems and procedures already in place, taking a close look at the roles and responsibilities

of everyone in the office — from the front desk receptionist to the practicing physicians. The goal is to identify ways to reorganize and reprioritize the practice that make the best use of everyone’s time, while also adding smart technologies and new approaches that enhance efficiency. Specifically, they are looking to address anything that disrupts the steady and efficient flow of patients through the office.

Typical scenario: MD-LEAN® will contract with a large, multi-practice, multispecialty group to identify logjams and improve productivity. Physicians there will be seeing, on average, 15-17 patients a day. **The goal:** increase that number to at least 23 patients per day. Lovin often finds the patient journey through the practice will take an hour or more, with less than 50 percent of that time adding any value. He seeks to decrease visit times to about 30 minutes.

Recent initial results for a provider showed visit times cut from more than an hour to less than 40 minutes on average. Other similar PCP offices have reduced a 58-62 minute patient visit to an average of 31 minutes by leveling out the work from the clinical decision-maker and transferring that work to an LPN or MA, the experience becomes smoother for the patient. Each resource in the practice has their work and the time it takes balanced with each other so that the patient journey never stops. The clinical decision-makers are focused on making decisions, engaging the patient, and ensuring that the patient is involved in their care plan.

Essential to improving efficiency is identifying tasks physicians can delegate to other staffers. “If you have a doctor seeing a diabetic patient with a history of problems

with nutrition, instead of that doctor being tied up 15 extra minutes talking about diet or nutrition, it should be handed off to a health coach who likely will do a better job of explaining things in a way that patient understands, while also allowing the doctor to stay on schedule,” Lovin says.

TAPPING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT, IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

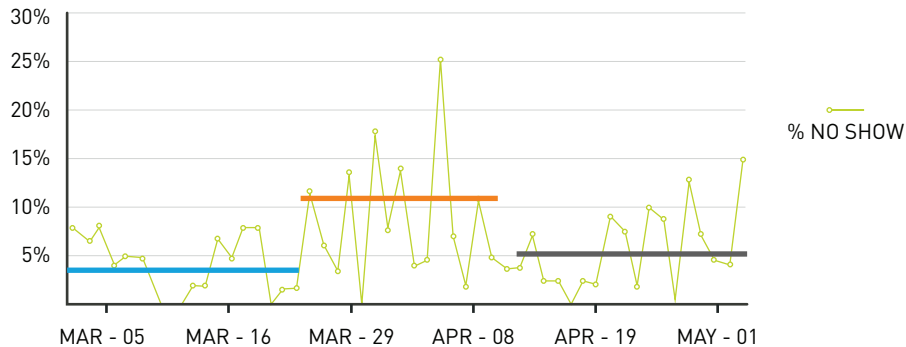
Effectively using technology is a key tool in the dual goal of enhancing patient engagement and improving office efficiency.

With the right tools and technology, improved engagement doesn’t just benefit your patients. It also instills efficiency and effectiveness to your practice in ways that can improve profitability, as well as boost employee morale. The same technology that reminds and confirms patients by email and text reduces front desk or call center calls, most of which only result in “left message.”

Appointment reminders delivered by text message to smartphones are critical to reducing no-show rates and getting patients to the office on time. Lovin typically recommends technology tools provided by Solutionreach, which offers a range of smart technology solutions to deepen patient engagement and enhance practice efficiency.

“With Solutionreach you see results right out of the gate,” says Lovin. “As soon as it’s activated and operating, you see no-show rates come down.” Patients also frequently comment on preferring the convenience of a digital reminder, especially the two-hour prompt by text message prior to the appointment. Lovin has consistently seen practices reduce 10 percent no-show rates down to 4 percent.

% NO SHOWS



He has a real-life example to prove it. At one point, one practice inadvertently disabled Solutionreach. No shows jumped to more than 9 percent (orange line) from a 4 percent baseline (blue line). When both patients and providers complained (no more “cool” text reminders and increasing no shows/lost revenue, respectively), the issue was quickly addressed. Almost immediately, the no-show rate went back to and stayed below 5 percent (black line). With each patient representing on average \$100 to \$110 in revenue, the 5 percent improvement can markedly boost profitability over the course of a year.

Fewer no shows are critical as the practice flow improves because the clinicians are on time. A no show that, in the past, served as a needed break to catch up (due to being behind schedule) is now acutely obvious downtime because the clinicians and support staff are operating in a choreographed process sequenced to patient arrival times.

Another benefit of electronic appointment reminders is freeing staff up to focus on more high-value activities as well as paying more attention to patients who are in the office. When staffers are repeatedly distracted by making reminder phone calls or rescheduling appointments, it not only hampers in-office patient engagement but can have a financial impact as well.

“I can’t tell you the number of times that I have seen someone at the front desk on the phone trying to confirm a patient and then just wave checking-out patients out the door,” said Lovin. With increasing

patient responsibilities for payment via high deductible plans, it’s very expensive to let patients leave without collecting their balance. “In Florida, it’s a joke that the fastest way to turn a dollar into thirty cents is to let it walk out the door.”

Solutionreach also has ASAP Messaging technology. When a patient cancels an appointment at the last minute, Solutionreach can instantly send a message to everyone on the wait list until the opening is filled. With typical cancellation rates ranging from 11 to 15 percent, ASAP messaging can deliver a significant financial boost to the practice.

The system has multiple capabilities to enhance patient engagement in ways that ultimately create more efficiency and deliver better business results (e.g., sending out electronic newsletters that contain relevant and timely content).

“It’s just human nature; if you send me something relevant, I am going to pay

attention,” Lovin said. “For instance, relevant nutrition or exercise tips help me stay on track and keep me connected to my care team.”

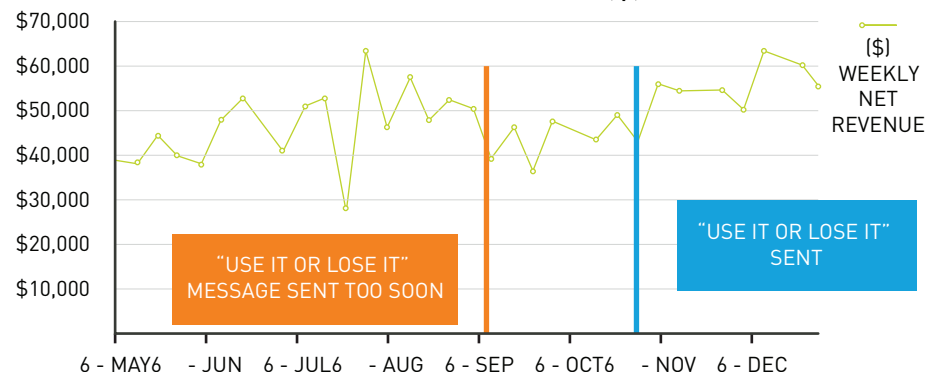
INCREASING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH NEWSLETTERS

Practices that decide to send newsletters can use Google Analytics to track Web traffic and make comparisons with their actual appointment data, which can be extracted from the practice software and correlated to their website hits. They have found that the timeliness of these messages is critical. For example, one newsletter went out on September 9th featuring a “use it or lose it” year-end benefit message for vision benefits. The website traffic jumped from a daily average of about 22.8 hits to more than 40 hits per day. However, due to the early nature of the message, the web traffic didn’t result in any added appointments.

Meanwhile, a similar message delivered in the second week of November moved the website hits up by more than 30 percent, but this time the appointments increased from 22/day to over 26/day. At more than \$400 per patient, this effectively timed and relevant newsletter produced more than \$1,600 per day over the next twenty days. More importantly, patients appreciate the reminder from the practice letting them know that they may have paid for benefits that will expire if not used.

This example demonstrates the criticality of relevant timing and content. Similar results are typified in flu shot reminders sent both when the vaccines are available and at the optimum time to ensure efficacy over the critical period of the flu season. One

WEEKLY NET REVENUE (\$)



simple newsletter campaign in 2013 resulted in over 700 flu shots being given versus 230 the prior year when the shots were promoted with routine posters in the practice. Done correctly, newsletters sent via systems like Solutionreach offer increased connectivity between the clinical care team and the patient, and offer one of the best available returns on investment for practice growth. Applied in the chronic disease states like diabetes, COPD, and hyperlipidemia, these systems may hold the key to improving quality metrics in the shared savings/fee-for-value arena of tomorrow.

Patient engagement to improve healthcare outcomes is an increasingly critical component of improving healthcare. Engaged patients are an important step in changing lifestyles that are a major contributor to the chronic diseases the U.S. healthcare system spends much money on. With sophisticated patient engagement systems like Solutionreach, clinicians are effectively engaging their patients as partners in improving their health and creating better economic and patient health outcomes.

“What a gratifying change to move from discussing ‘firing’ non-compliant patients to thinking about how to use Solutionreach to get the right nutrition, exercise, or medication information to our patients to improve their lives,” said Lovin.

