

HOW TWO-WAY TEXTING IS PROVIDING HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS WITH IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

TWO-WAY TEXT MESSAGING FOR ENTERPRISE-WIDE COMMUNICATION



The challenges healthcare organizations were already facing are now exacerbated because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It's never been more critical to **leverage mobile technologies to improve efficiencies, communication, optimization, productivity and even morale**. If healthcare organizations hope to maximize the numerous benefits of text messaging, they must rely upon a texting platform with several qualities. Among them: The platform must be **easy to use** and **integrate with existing electronic health record** or like systems. It must be **HIPAA compliant**. And the platform should offer organizations **multiple texting solutions** that can help meet current and future needs — everything from automated, two-way texts to direct/live texting to mass text alerts and even multiple language options to accommodate diversifying patient populations.

One quality that is often overlooked but critical if organizations want to leverage the power of texting to its full potential is the platform's **ability to scale across their entire enterprise**, thus allowing text messaging to be **used by multiple departments across and throughout a patient's care journey to reduce manual communication tasks and increase productivity**.

This e-book highlights some of the most impactful ways healthcare organizations are using text messaging throughout their enterprises. By doing so, they are strengthening patient and staff communication and engagement in ways that are improving care quality, satisfaction, revenue, compliance, and more.

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5 WAYS TO USE TEXTING ENTERPRISE-WIDE



Content in this e-book is organized by stage in the patient journey, which is broken down as follows:

- Pre-appointment
- Appointment
- Post-appointment
- Billing

The e-book concludes with a chapter on staff communication, which is essential to supporting successful communication throughout the patient-focused stages.

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PRE-APPOINTMENT

APPOINTMENT - DAY OF

POST-APPOINTMENT

BILLING

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Cancellations, no-shows, and no-go's

Text messaging is a proven way to reduce cancellations, no-shows, and no-go's. For example, a physician group used texting to drop its collective no-show rate by about 34% over a seven-month period (yielding a projected \$100,000 in additional revenue).

Prior to an appointment, organizations can send a text message reminding patients about their scheduled treatment and include key details such as facility address and time of appointment. If a patient must miss an appointment, an organization cannot assume they will pick up the phone and call the organization. However, patients may feel more comfortable cancelling via text, especially if prompted by a message asking patients to confirm their appointment or asking if patients have any concerns. A follow-up text is valuable helping with rescheduling a canceled appointment.

Appointment preparation compliance

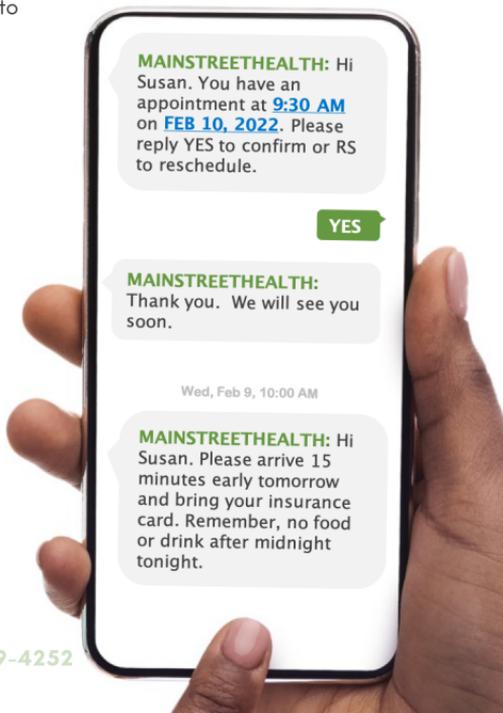
Text reminders can help keep patients compliant with pre-appointment requirements, such as fasting, modifications to medication regimens, COVID-19 testing, and securing transportation.

Texting can also be used to remind patients about what they should bring with them for their appointment, including insurance information, photo identification, medication list, driver contact information, and appropriate method of payment.

Finally, organizations can use text messaging to remind patients about what they should do if they have questions or concerns about preparation compliance or if they are not feeling well the day before or day of their appointment.

Pre-screening questionnaire

Text messaging has proven to be a valuable tool for organizations to streamline completion of pre-screening questionnaires. If a pre-screening questionnaire requires patients to complete a longer form, organizations can send hyperlinks that direct patients to online forms and surveys.





Telehealth preparation

The usage of telehealth and virtual services has surged over the past few years. Many organizations are making text messaging an integral part of their telehealth programs. From a pre-telehealth appointment perspective, texting can provide instructions to patients on the software/app they will need to download and set up to join their upcoming telehealth appointment.

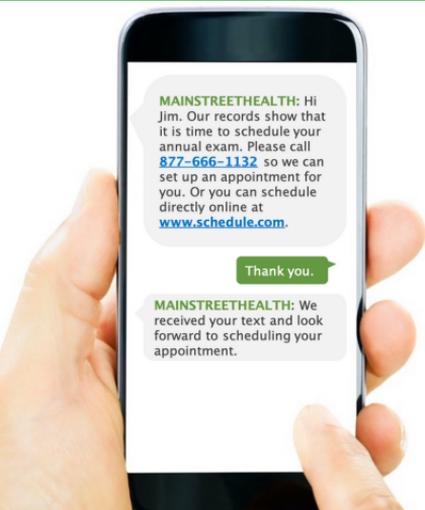
Texting can also provide instructions to patients on what they should do if they have technical questions concerning telehealth technology. Providing technical assistance in advance reduces the likelihood that patients will miss appointments and can help patients feel more comfortable with telehealth.

Kick off the patient journey

The pre-appointment period is an optimal time for organizations to initiate a texting campaign that would then follow patients throughout their treatment journey. By sending texts during this initial period, organizations are establishing the usage of text messaging as an option for their patients – one that can continue through subsequent stages with the same sender number.

Evolving policies and procedures

Text messaging can provide the most current information about an organization's patient-facing policies and procedures, including requirements concerning the wearing of masks, new waiting room and visitor policies, and revised check-in and discharge/patient pickup procedures.



Patient volume and revenue

Texting is a proven method to educate patients about services, encourage them to schedule services, show up for appointments, and generate revenue. Text messaging is being used to help streamline the scheduling of routine services, such as lab tests, imaging, rehabilitation, and physical therapy; driving recall programs for services like mammograms, colonoscopies, physicals, vaccines, and immunizations (and dramatically decreasing future appointment phone calls in the process); and helping patients reschedule appointments postponed during the COVID pandemic, such as annual physicals, annual wellness visits, other preventive services, and surgical procedures.

Coordinate with loved ones and caretakers

Organizations are using texting, including automated messaging, to share real-time patient progress updates with loved ones and caretakers. Text messaging is also being used to inform loved ones, caretakers, and transportation providers when patients are ready for discharge and provide instructions on where drivers should go to pick up patients.

Migrate to contactless/paperless

One of the safety protocols instituted by many organizations early in the pandemic was moving away from as much in-person communication as possible to reduce the risk of COVID transmission. On the day of a healthcare appointment, such communications included safety protocol reminders, pre-screening questionnaires, and the paying of bills. For healthcare organizations leveraging text messaging, texts can provide instructions and include hyperlinks that direct patients to complete appointment-related tasks online.

While healthcare organizations have returned to some pre-pandemic methods of communication, many saw how much text messaging helped streamline appointment communications are continuing to use texting in such a manner. By doing so, they are freeing up valuable staff time and embracing a communication method favored by a growing number of patients.

Initiate telehealth

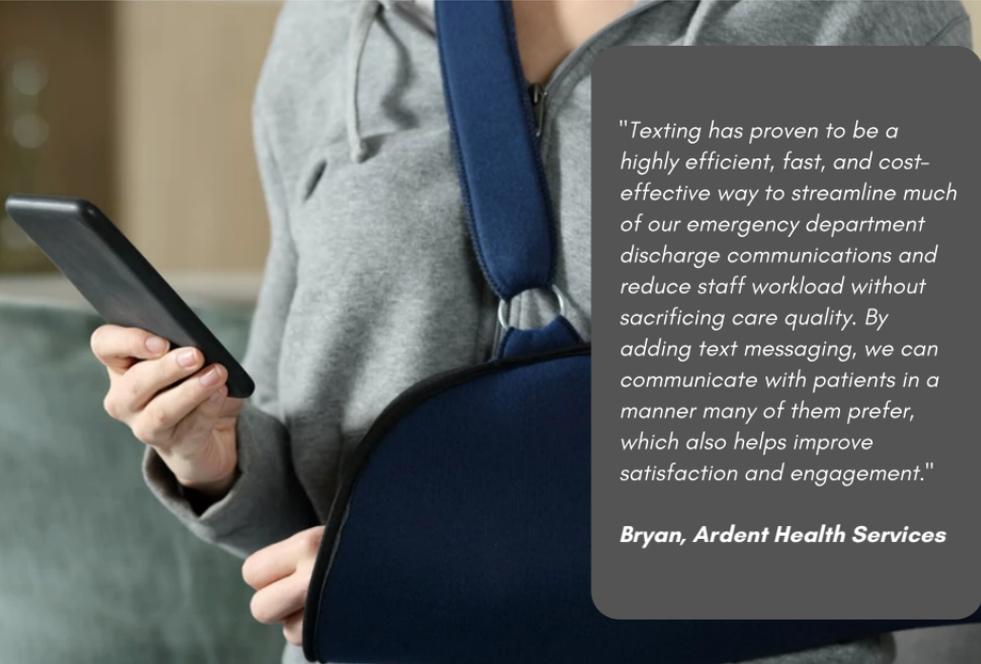
Organizations are using text messages to initiate telehealth consultations. When a hyperlink in a text is selected by the patient, a web browser or default videotelephony app should automatically open and the camera on the patient's phone should activate.

Post-discharge follow-up calls

Text messaging is an effective way to reduce an organization's number of discharge phone calls without hurting quality of care. One study demonstrated that text messaging can eliminate about 7 out of every 10 emergency department discharge phone calls. Texting can also help identify those patients who require or desire a phone call and better ensure the phone is answered when a post-appointment call is made.

Reduced readmission rates and penalties

Following up with patients after discharge is essential to decreasing readmission rates and avoiding readmission financial penalties. By using two-way text messaging, one hospital was able to achieve a more than 80% reduction in readmissions in just 90 days.



"Texting has proven to be a highly efficient, fast, and cost-effective way to streamline much of our emergency department discharge communications and reduce staff workload without sacrificing care quality. By adding text messaging, we can communicate with patients in a manner many of them prefer, which also helps improve satisfaction and engagement."

Bryan, Ardent Health Services

Compliance

Text messaging is an effective way to improve patient and caregiver compliance with discharge instructions that can keep patients on the path to recovery and successful treatment. Texts can include links to discharge instructions, ask whether patients or their caregivers have questions or concerns about instructions or medical developments, provide reminders about post-discharge tasks, include links to resources to support compliance, and remind patients and caregivers of what to do if they have questions or concerns following their appointment.

Satisfaction survey participation rate

Text messaging is not only a practical way to encourage patients to take satisfaction surveys, but texting is an efficient way to conduct patient satisfaction surveys. One study showed that more than 4 out of every 5 patients are willing to take their satisfaction surveys via text. This figure is important when you consider that some facilities struggle to achieve a patient response rate of just 20%.



Online reputation

Organizations are using text messaging to digitally engage and steer patients with positive experiences to rate and comment about their experience online. A positive online reputation has become increasingly important. One study revealed that 95% of U.S. adult respondents trust online ratings and reviews, and 75% of Americans say online ratings and review sites have influenced their decision when choosing physicians.

Follow-up appointments

Many healthcare appointments are part of a series associated with ongoing treatment. This includes everything from physical therapy following a total joint replacement surgery to chemotherapy treatments for cancer to meeting with a primary care physician after a visit to the emergency room or urgent care. Organizations are using texting to remind patients to schedule follow-up appointments and of the importance of keeping these appointments.



Verification of coverage and benefits

For staff members tasked with outbound insurance verification, calls to patients are time-consuming and often unsuccessful. A TrueCaller survey found nearly 9 in 10 Americans answer calls only if they can identify the caller. However, almost every inbound call to an organization during hours of operation will be answered by a staff member. Organizations are sending texts to patients letting them know that a staff member needs to verify their insurance and benefits and then asking patients to call the organization, streamlining the verification process.

Pre-treatment collections

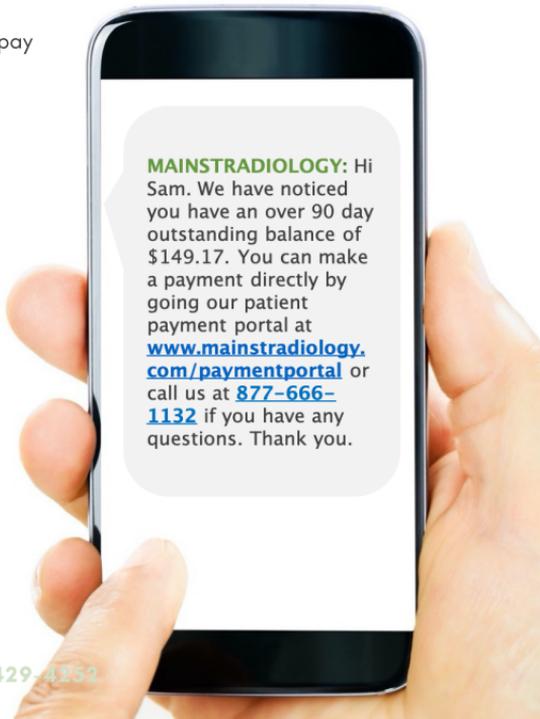
Text messaging is a highly effective way to initiate the pre-treatment collections process. Organizations can use texts to inform patients of their estimated payment and then direct patients on ways they can pay, such as via portal — with the text providing a hyperlink — or by calling the organization to pay via credit card, with the text providing a direct phone number.

Outstanding accounts receivable

Text messaging can help organizations reduce accounts receivable (A/R) and get paid faster. For example, one ambulatory surgery center used texting to decrease its outstanding A/R by more than half in just six weeks. Employees sent direct texts to patients that included a link to the ASC's payment portal and a phone number the patient could call if they wanted to pay over the phone or had questions.

Reminders about balance and payment options

If pre-treatment collections are not an option or if patients indicate they will only pay in person, a text message to patients in advance of the day of treatment can provide their balance and identify the methods of payment the organization accepts on site. This can better help ensure patients arrive knowing what they owe and prepared to pay using an approved payment method.



Emergencies

The pandemic has served another reminder about the need for business resilience planning and importance of an effective emergency communication channel to support a resilience program. Texting has proven to be a fast and efficient means of keeping personnel current on expectations and developments affecting operations, such as the risk of a natural or man-made disaster, a team member testing positive for COVID, and facility closures and delays in opening.

Mass/group announcement

Healthcare organizations can use mass/group text messaging to inform and remind staff about many more topics, including:

- policy and procedure changes;
- road and mass transit closures/delays that may affect commutes;
- construction that may affect parking and entering/exiting the building;
- scheduling gaps that must be filled;
- revised hours of operation;
- new staff arrival procedures;
- updated staff schedules; and
- company initiatives (e.g., blood drive, milestone celebration).

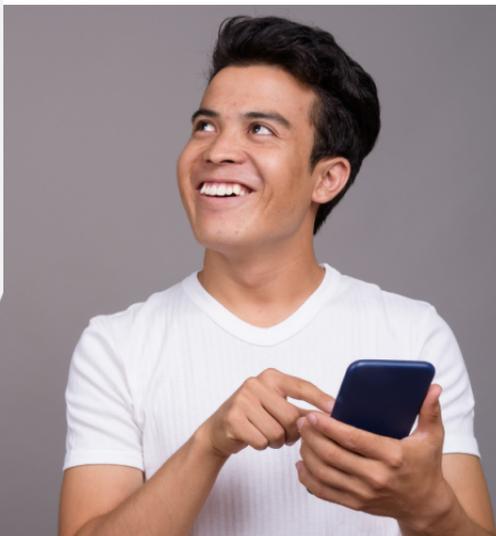


Open enrollment and insurance

Automating a series of texts that go out before open enrollment begins and continue throughout the enrollment period — providing everything from deadlines to reminders to links for resources to surveys about the enrollment process — is a simple way to increase engagement during and participation in open enrollment.

Texting can also provide staff with timely information and answers to frequently asked questions concerning their sponsored health insurance, including funding a health savings account, availability of mental health services and alternative therapies, where to receive vaccines/boosters, and telehealth options.

GOODCOHR: Hi Erin. We noticed you have not completed your benefit enrollment selections. The deadline is **5:00 PM, SEPT 30, 2022**. You can make your elections directly by going to your employee portal at www.gcbenefitsform.com or call us at **877-666-1132** if you have any questions. Thank you.



New employee processes

Human resources departments can leverage texting in many ways to support their new hires. This includes sending reminders about training sessions, information about paperwork, and links to educational materials. Organizations can also survey new staff about their comfort with and questions concerning the onboarding progress and training. Surveying new hires at regular intervals can help improve retention and identify opportunities to strengthen the onboarding experience.

Surveys

Speaking of surveys, healthcare organizations can conduct staff surveys via two-way texts, asking personnel to reply to questions via text, or provide links within text messages that direct staff to online surveys. Possible topics for staff surveys include comfort with new policies and procedures, feedback on initiatives, and availability of educational resources. Targeted pulse surveys can also help organizations address issues before they become bigger problems, identify areas for improvement, and drive changes that can enhance staff satisfaction, productivity, and retention.

Staff morale

As organizations confront staff burnout, staff shortages, and retention challenges, it's important for organization leadership to remind staff that their work and dedication to patient care and the organization is not only noticed but appreciated. Organizations can send emotional and inspirational support texts to personnel to provide a lift to staff members' mental health. The benefits of a message of appreciation can make a significant difference in personnel morale while also boosting productivity.

Texting to Support the Entire Healthcare Enterprise

Text messaging delivers tremendous value at each stage of the patient journey. But when used throughout the enterprise, the benefits of texting are magnified substantially and often contribute to incremental improvements in all facets of a healthcare organization's performance.



***"SENDING TEXTS TO OUR EMPLOYEES ...
DURING COVID-19 HAS BEEN AN EASY, QUICK,
AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT,
ENCOURAGEMENT, AND GUIDANCE DURING A
CHALLENGING TIME."***

-- SERENA PETTES, LOVELACE HEALTH SYSTEM

Text messaging is a proven method for engaging patients, enhancing outcomes, improving staff productivity and strengthening workflow, among other benefits. As text messaging has become the preferred communication method for a growing number of Americans, healthcare organizations should evaluate how they can incorporate two-way text messaging as a communication platform across the organization.

If you are interested in strengthening your organization's communications, please schedule a demo...we would love to show you how our HIPAA-compliant texting platform can help your organization.

Please text or call (877) 666-1132 or email info@dialoghealth.com.

Thank you,

The Dialog Health Team

