

Reimagining Communication Workflows

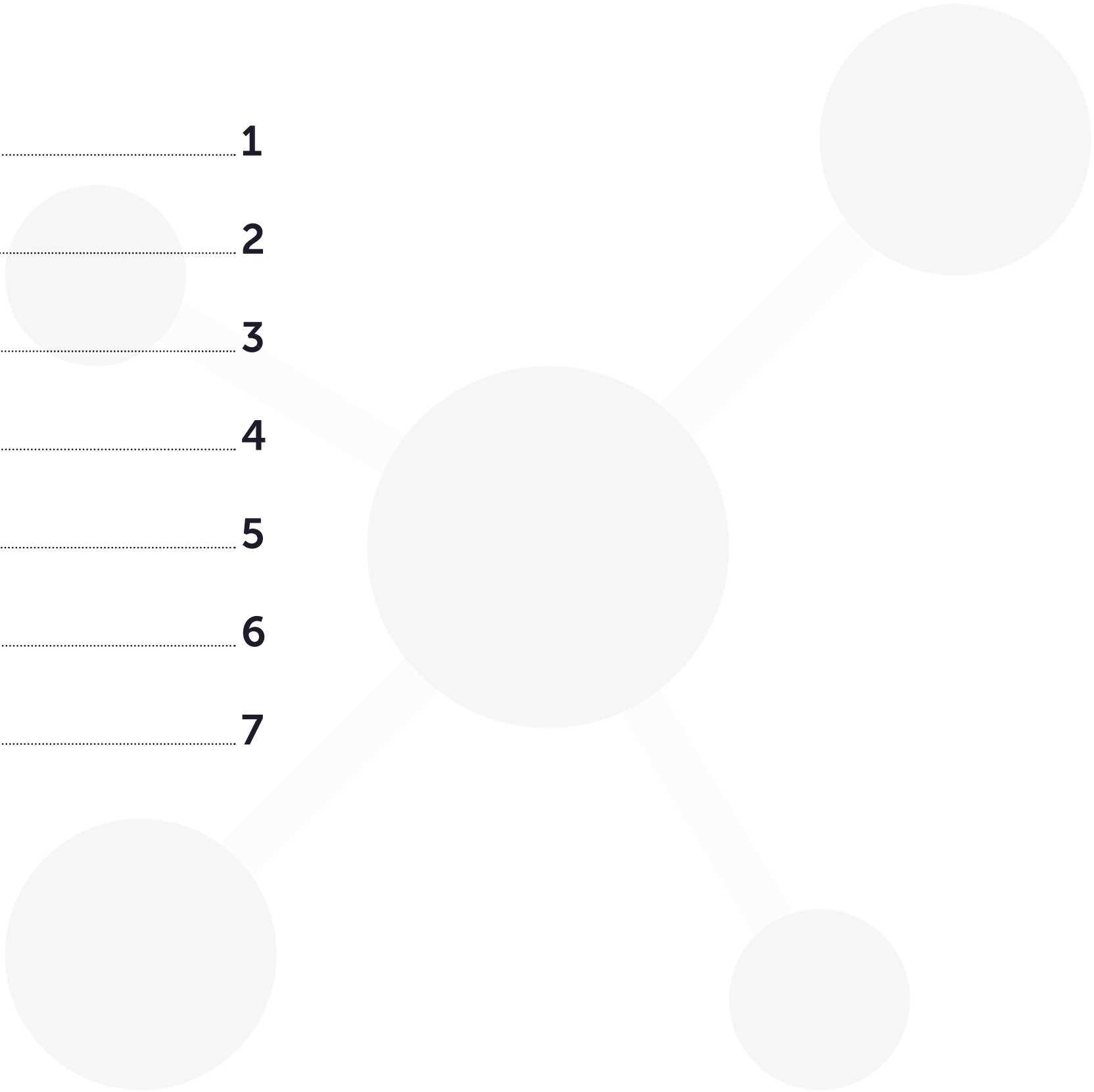
How to Connect the Modern Care Team Using a Clinical Communication Platform

eBook

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Introduction



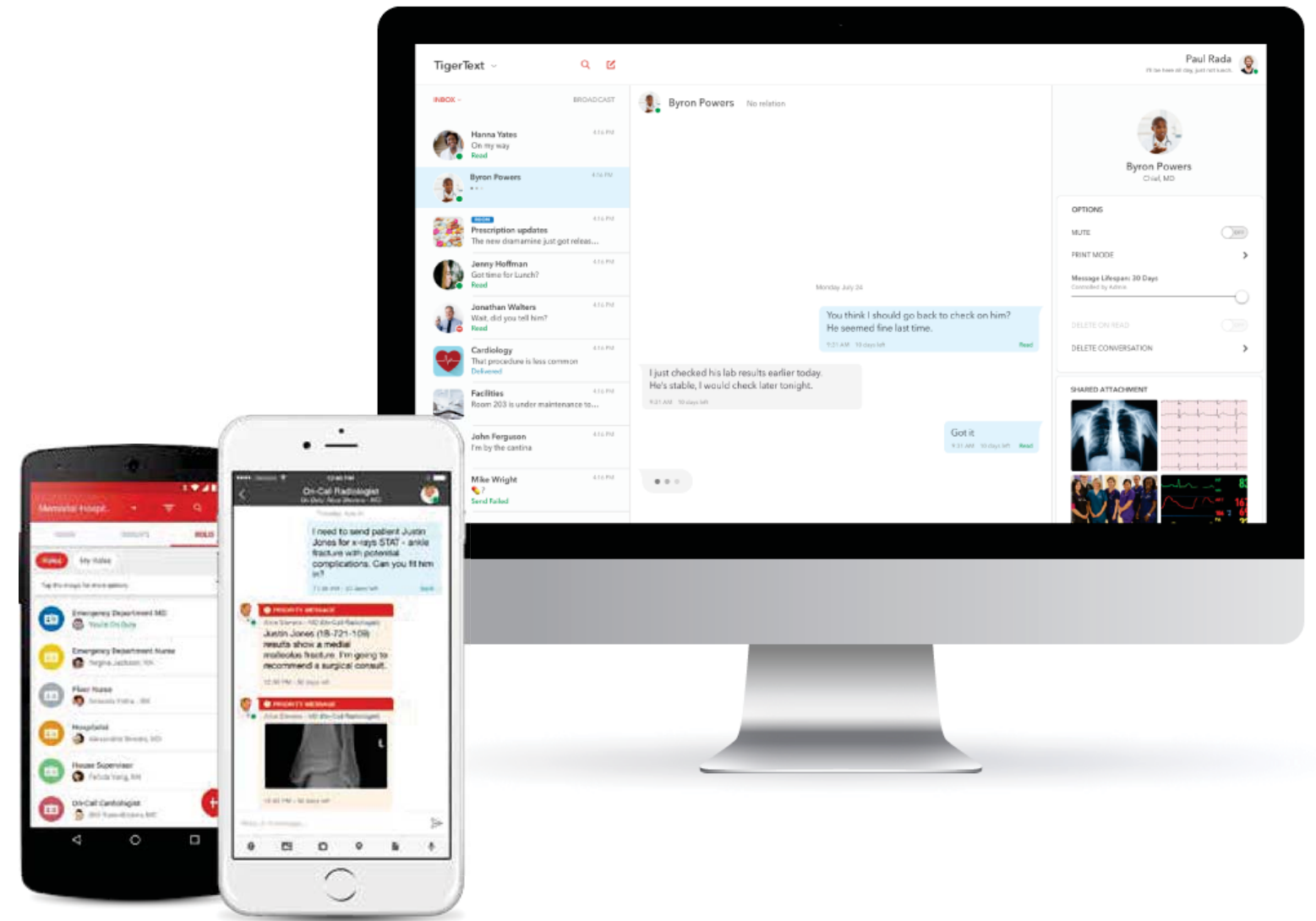
Achieving the triple aim of better outcomes, reduced costs, and a better patient experience calls for new care delivery systems, advanced technology and adherence to best practices at every point of the patient journey. It also requires all care providers to communicate clearly and completely across the care continuum.

TigerFlow, TigerConnect's's new enterprise-wide clinical communications platform, advances healthcare organizations to the next level of clinical communications. Designed to serve as the central hub for the care team, TigerFlow centralizes system-based patient information, enabling physicians, nurses, and support staff to access a wide range of information that is normally accessible only via disparate workstations. This includes clinical data, shift schedules, nurse calls, Electronic Health Records (EHR) alerts, medical images, medication lists, and lab test results. In practical terms, it means that hospitalists can instantly identify and contact on-call specialists; ER physicians can easily share images with on-call cardiologists; and discharge coordinators can mobilize social workers, pharmacy, and physical therapists to expedite discharge.

To ensure widespread adoption, TigerFlow incorporates a range of analytics and tracking information so that organizations can monitor usage by role and department to identify areas for utilization improvement.

This eBook explores how organizations can leverage TigerFlow to reimagine workflows in six areas that directly impact outcomes, costs, productivity, and patient satisfaction:

- Communication
- Care coordination
- Consult turnaround
- Communication of critical test results
- Discharge processes
- Patient engagement



How common communication deficiencies impact care

Nurses are often overwhelmed by overhead pages, incoming text messages, voicemails, and constant interruptions by colleagues, patients, and patients' loved ones.

Communication breakdowns have long been the root cause of errors and adverse clinical outcomes. Research has shown that effective communication and collaboration strategies lead to better outcomes, fewer errors and more efficient care. Unfortunately, the healthcare industry has been remarkably slow to adopt modern communication methods, in part due to regulatory mandates that have restricted the use of new communication tools.

As a result, nurses are often overwhelmed by phone calls, voicemails, and frequent interruptions by colleagues, patients, and patients' loved ones. At the same time, physicians are forced to repeatedly log in and out of the EHR and other clinical applications to access the latest patient information. Further, physicians must frequently use outdated communications tools such as pagers, voicemail, and even faxes to share information with colleagues.

Healthcare organizations simply cannot improve or compete in the modern healthcare marketplace by relying on such ineffective communication tools. A comprehensive, integrated mobile communications platform is the answer. A true clinical collaboration tool must streamline common workflow processes and enable care team members to communicate instantly and securely, regardless of their location. It should provide them with point-of-care access to a vast array of information, such as EHR data, Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), nurse call systems, scheduling services, and answering services. Most importantly, it should enable providers to spend more time with patients and less time trying to track each other down.

Improving consult turnaround times for patients

One of the biggest delays in treatment occurs with specialist consults. Once the Emergency Department physician (ED) enters a consult request into the EHR, the hospitalist or unit manager must identify the relevant on-call specialist and provide him or her with pertinent patient information. However, precious time is squandered searching for a paper schedule or calling the operator to identify the name of the on-call physician. And that's before multiple rounds of phone tag ensue.

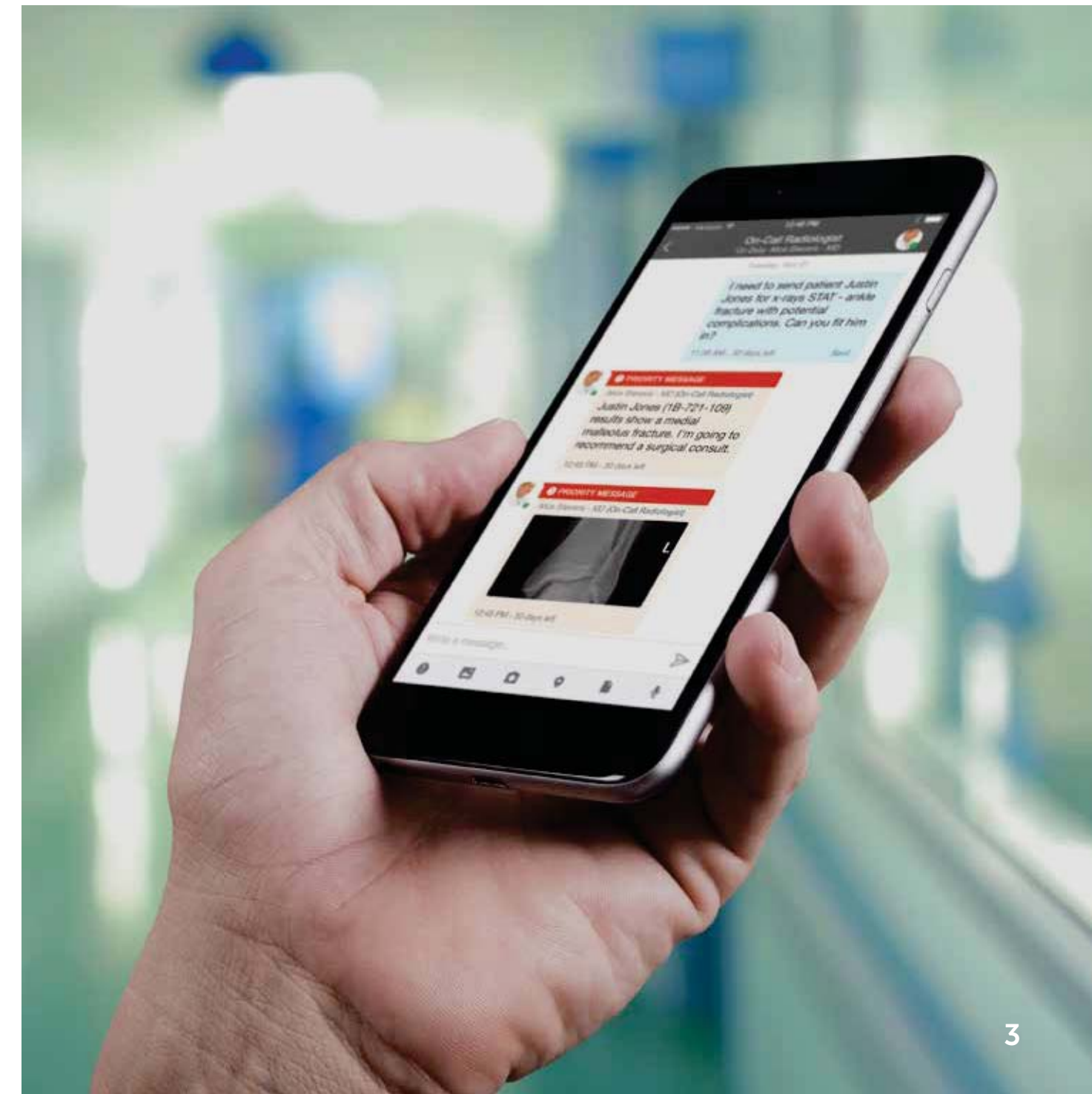
It's no wonder the consult process in many hospitals can take 24 hours before a physician examines the patient, leaving the patient inconvenienced and dissatisfied— and potentially causing a negative financial impact to the hospital.

Clinicians should be able to access the on-call schedule from a mobile device and quickly identify the appropriate contact for any given role. They should be able to instantly share relevant images, photos and other vital patient data with an on-call specialist to enable more accurate diagnosis and timely care.

When a clinical communication platform is integrated into PACS systems, for example, the hospitalist can order an X-ray and the radiologist can simultaneously send the image to the ordering physician as well as an on-call specialist. The specialist can immediately text a question to the radiologist without involving voicemail or pagers.

Such communication improvements enabled Connecticut-based Waterbury Hospital to decrease its consult turnaround time by 21 hours. By integrating TigerConnect's secure messaging solution with its Cerner EHR platform, the 357-bed teaching hospital enabled all members of a patient's care team to instantly receive exam reports, test results, and critical alerts, even if they weren't interacting with the EHR. The real-time flow of information resulted in better care coordination and faster patient throughput, which led to shorter lengths of stay and an average savings of \$2,220 per patient.

See the full case study [here](#).



Communicating critical test results in real time

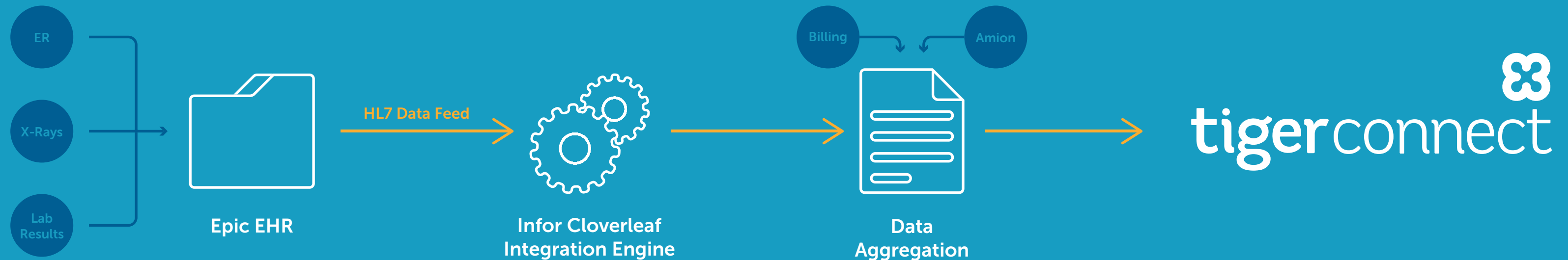
Ordering physicians should be notified as soon as critical lab and test results are available. But reliance on ineffective communication methods causes potentially harmful delays. Too often, a tedious volley of pages, phone calls and voicemail messages ensues between nurses, the unit secretary, the lab and the ordering physician the minute a stat lab is ordered—with no way for senders to confirm whether the message was received. When valuable time is wasted, delays in diagnosis and treatment can have devastating consequences.

Kadlec Regional Medical Center, in Tri-Cities, Wash., sought a mobile solution that would enable nurses, physicians, and lab technicians to instantly share critical lab and test results without relying on phone calls or pagers. The 270-bed, not-for-profit medical center is often short on beds and needed a care collaboration tool that would help reduce unnecessary and delayed admissions of noncritical patients.

Part of the problem was its lab result notification process. If a patient lab result was logged and noted as “critical” within the EHR, the nurse would receive a phone call and then would have to pass the call along to the appropriate doctor. This process could take hours.

By integrating TigerConnect with its Epic EHR platform, Kadlec can now route automated data from its Epic EHR through its Infor Cloverleaf Integration Suite, and push it out directly to the physician’s mobile device. Physicians receive an alert on their mobile device the moment abnormal results are entered into the EHR, and can easily share the information with other specialists, even those outside of the hospital system.

See the full case study [here](#).



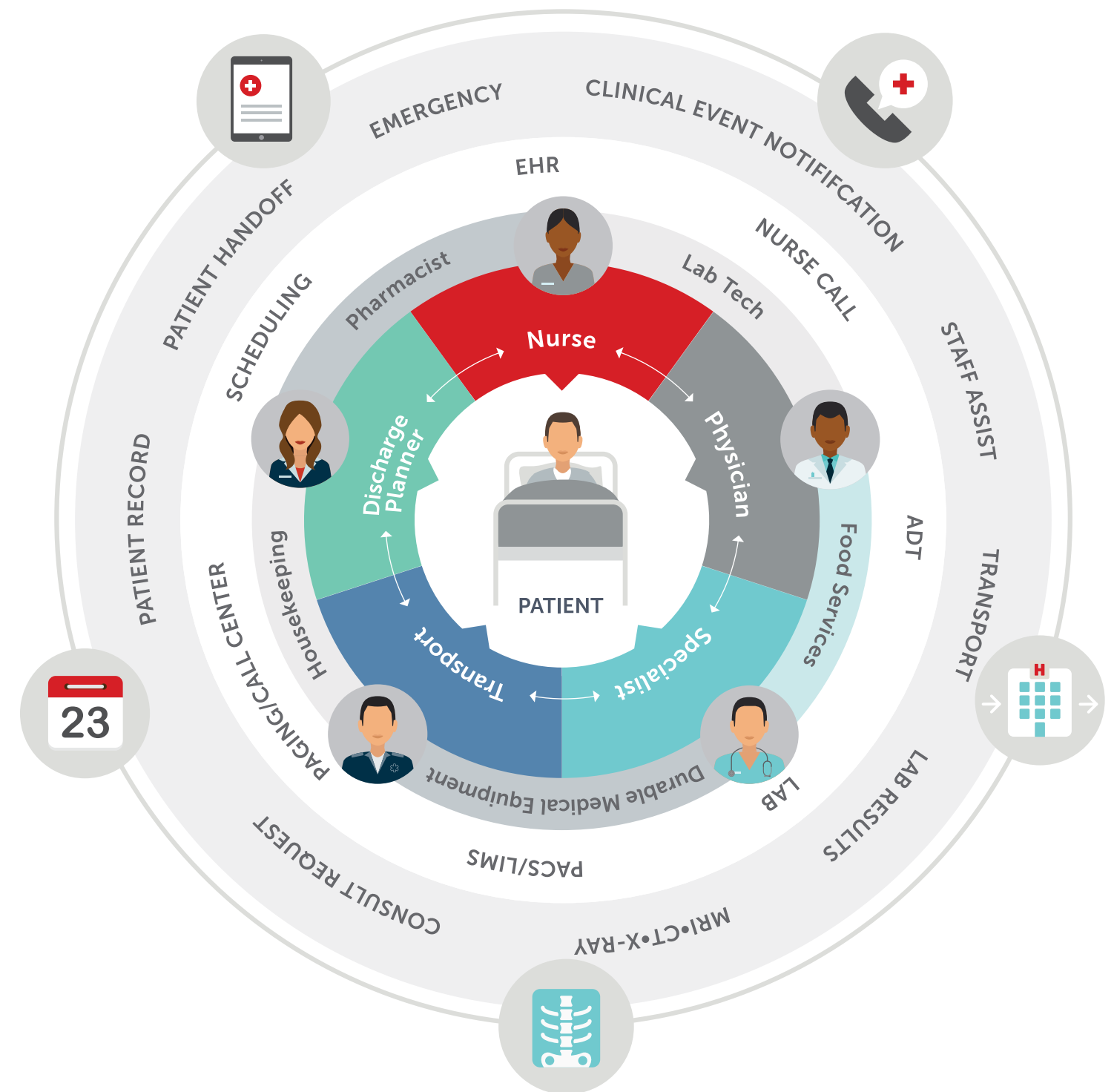
Improving transitions of care

It's in everyone's best interest to help patients return home as soon as they're cleared for discharge. Exhausted patients are eager to leave; a new patient is waiting for the room; and the hospital faces lost revenue for unused bed days. And yet, communication breakdowns create unnecessary bottlenecks that can delay the discharge process for hours. Discharge orders may go unnoticed in the EHR, prescriptions need to be tracked down and medical equipment may need to be ordered. The long wait that follows can overshadow any positive impressions the patient may have of his or her hospital stay.

It can also result in a financial loss for the hospital. Medicare's 72-hour rule states that a hospital may not receive reimbursement for procedures that occur after a patient's hospital stay exceeds 72 hours, so it's imperative that care transitions are tightly coordinated to avoid delays that could push a patient past this costly window.

Optimizing communications between physicians, nurses, techs and other staff is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to effect meaningful, measurable change across the organization and can result in shorter hospital stays, higher reimbursements and an overall reduction in bed days.

A centralized communication tool that alerts all care team members when discharge orders are placed empowers discharge planners, unit secretaries, nurses, and others to stay aligned while moving patients through the discharge process. Ideally, the tool will integrate with the organization's scheduling system to ensure that pertinent patient information gets to the right physician securely and easily. It should enable nurses to quickly and securely share patient data with the patient's, Primary Care Physician (PCP), home health agency and outpatient physical therapist, even if they don't use the same platform.



Engaging family, caregivers and primary care doctors



Hospitals can be fined up to 3% for patients that are readmitted within 30 days of discharge.

Care providers understand that a hospital's responsibility to the patient doesn't end after discharge. Hospitals can face penalties up to 3% for readmitting patients within 30 days of discharge. Worse yet, these hospitals must now eat the cost of that patient's care. With readmission rates averaging 18.4%, those penalties can quickly add up.

Studies have shown that patients are generally less likely to be readmitted within this 30-day window if they follow up with their PCP. Family members and caregivers also play a key role in the speed and quality of a patient's recovery, so it's essential that they understand the post-discharge plan fully. Giving nurses a way to engage with family members after their loved one is discharged can be the difference between a readmission and a healthy recovery.

Clinicians must have the ability to securely share care plans with PCPs, family members, physical therapists, and others outside the hospital network, and to be able to instantly reach out to the PCP or caregiver to verify those followup appointments are scheduled and aftercare plans are followed.

TigerConnect lets clinicians know what's being done as it's being done. By investing in a secure messaging solution, healthcare organizations can dramatically improve care coordination, providing a better experience for patients while also reducing operational costs and physician burnout. The equation is simple: better communication results in better care.

Clinical Communication Platform from TigerConnect

Technology solutions can sometimes present unintentional barriers to accessing real-time, actionable information at the point of care. Integrating TigerFlow with other hospital systems such as nurse call systems, scheduling services, EHR alerting and notifications, and PACS/imaging can dramatically improve clinical communication engagement while also extracting additional value from these systems.

TigerFlow's latest clinical communication and collaboration features include:

Role-based scheduling automation

Staff can easily identify and communicate with on-call specialists and other individuals without referencing a computer, whiteboard, or work schedule. In fact, they don't even have to know the person's name. Organizations can assign staff members to specific roles or functions, such as "on-call cardiologist" or "unit secretary – 4th Floor," making it easy to identify and message the correct specialist or tech.

Calendaring

Staff has instant visibility into future shifts for more effective planning.

Care teams

Users can create care teams around individual patients or rooms to make handoffs easier. New team members have immediate access to previous discussions between other members of the care team, ensuring no important information is missed.

Click-to-Call

Users can initiate phone calls to colleagues with a single tap from a message thread or user profile, saving valuable time when trying to reach specialists, primary care providers (PCPs), nurse supervisors, pharmacists or others. Click-to-Call also shields phone numbers for privacy, respecting a common preference among physicians.

Amazon Alexa functionality

Through a strategic partnership with Aiva, a new voice assistant platform that interprets verbal bedside requests, TigerConnect can now leverage the power and convenience of Amazon Alexa to fulfill patient requests from the bedside. Aiva works with TigerFlow's "Roles" functionality and Amazon Echo to create an out-of-the box voice-activated nurse-call solution.

