

# WHY EVERY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM NEEDS A **Clinical Communication Platform**



# Introduction

With each passing year, healthcare faces increasing challenges in coordinating communication and care delivery across an ever more complex environment. These challenges come at a time of immense pressure on organizations to improve financial performance and workflow efficiencies in the face of declining reimbursements and rising costs. Since every advantage will be needed, more organizations than ever are adopting a holistic approach to communication as a way to streamline operations, improve care delivery, and provide relief to overworked staff.

In this eBook, we build the case for purchasing and implementing an enterprise-grade healthcare communication platform through a combination of industry research from organizations like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as well as real-world insights from this fast-evolving space.



# Why a Collaboration Platform is Essential

## QUICK VIEW

We start by looking at the rationale for improving the way care teams communicate today, and the broad impact that a better communications platform can bring. We look at [findings from the NIH](#) that document the benefits mobile devices and apps can bring to healthcare professionals and healthcare delivery. We also shine a light on how outdated communication tools and protocols create drag on a healthcare staff's productivity.

### KEY POINTS INCLUDE:

- Why the NIH concluded that texting is a more efficient means of communication than telephone conversations or in-person meetings.
- The many ways that better communication reduces the risk of medical errors. [The Joint Commission](#) has identified delays in communication as significant contributors to adverse events, and has made communication between healthcare workers a patient safety goal in an effort to reduce medical errors.
- How asynchronous communication brings efficiency to communications across healthcare, reducing delays and enabling the sharing of data across jointly-used apps.

# WHY A CARE TEAM COLLABORATION PLATFORM IS ESSENTIAL

The case for creating the communication and collaboration platform of tomorrow – with technology already in hand – is well-documented in a National Institutes of Health study [“Mobile Devices and Apps for Health Care Professionals: Uses and Benefits.”](#)

## NIH on Why Better Clinical Communication is Needed

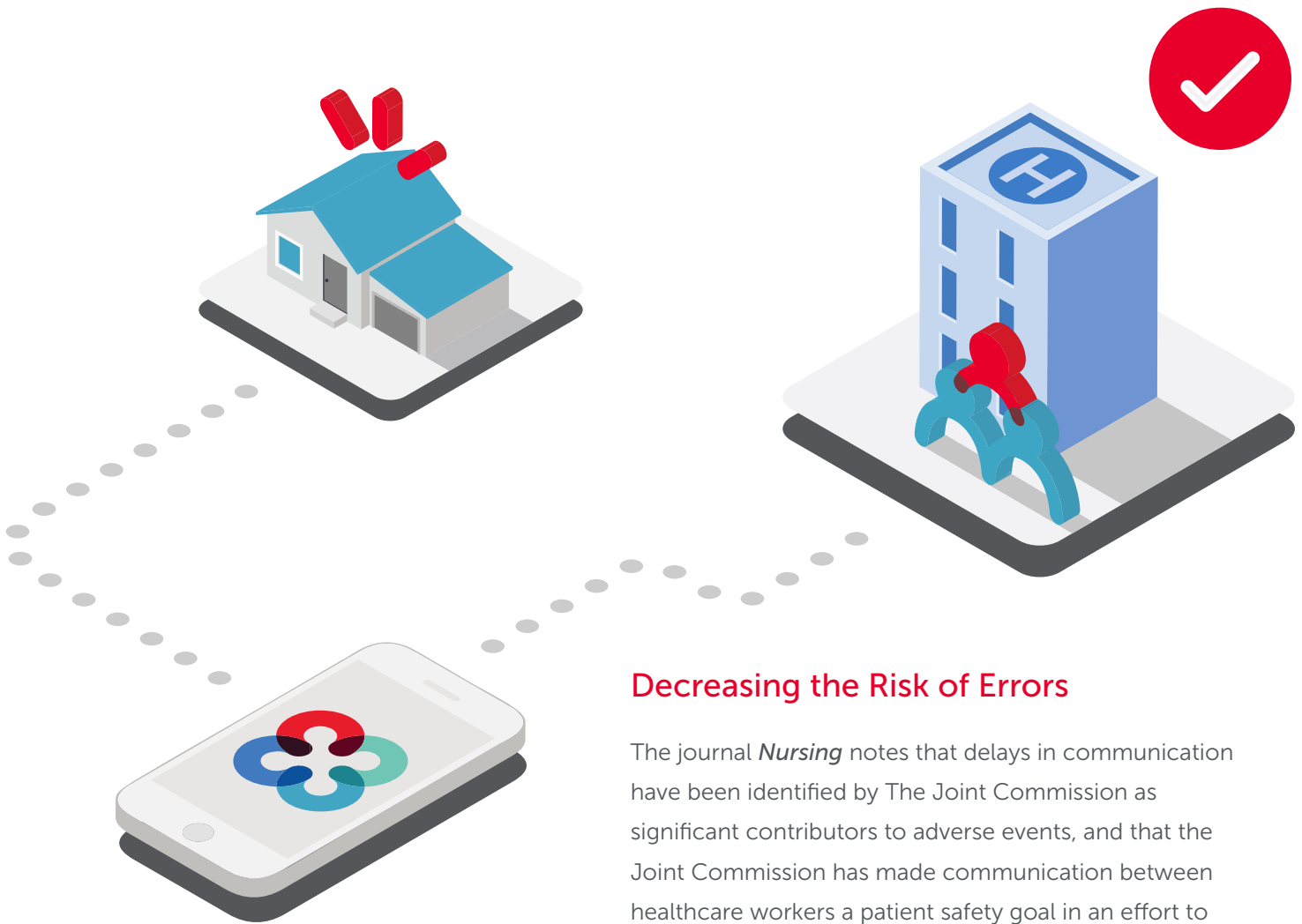
The study first describes why a better clinical communication platform is needed:

“Health care systems are often highly dispersed, encompassing multiple locations such as clinics, inpatient wards, outpatient services, emergency departments, operating theaters, intensive care units, and labs. Consequently, HCPs [healthcare professionals] not only need to be mobile themselves, they also need to be able to communicate and collaborate with people in different locations.”

## NIH on Why Mobile Solutions are Effective

The study then looks at why mobile devices are so useful:

“In a survey of medical school HCPs and students, more than 80% of respondents described using mobile devices to communicate with colleagues about patient care via e-mail, telephone, and text messages. They described texting as a more efficient means of communication than telephone conversations or in-person meetings. Mobile devices also allow rapid response to e-mail, allowing users to keep up with communication. Texting or calling colleagues directly on their mobile devices, rather than paging them, has also been shown to save critical time in emergency cases.”



## Decreasing the Risk of Errors

The journal *Nursing* notes that delays in communication have been identified by The Joint Commission as significant contributors to adverse events, and that the Joint Commission has made communication between healthcare workers a patient safety goal in an effort to reduce medical errors.



“Communication in the acute care setting is a complex process that occurs quickly in a rapidly changing environment,” the journal reads. “Ineffective communication is a key factor that increases the risk of errors. The engagement of all members of the healthcare team is needed to reduce medical errors through improved communication. As frontline providers who spend substantial time in direct care of their patients, nurses are a critical component of this team.”





# The Hidden Costs of a Broken Healthcare Communication System

## QUICK VIEW

In this section we look at the hidden costs of a broken healthcare communications system. The need for bringing greater communication, and hence collaboration, to the field has been underscored by studies showing what can go wrong within healthcare delivery – much of which comes down to communication.

### KEY POINTS INCLUDE:

- How small communication delays create friction for healthcare delivery because of the number of disciplines that must come together to provide the best in patient care. With the existing system of pagers, overhead intercoms, voicemail, and white boards, small – and large – delays can combine to create substantial friction within the process for the delivery of healthcare.
- Enhancing communication helps to break down silos. *Becker's Hospital Review*, in examining ways to achieve the goals of the IHI Triple Aim, sees the breaking down of the [information silos](#) typically found in healthcare as an essential element for success.
- That while several EHR vendors offer secure chat capability, they are limited in scope and lack the more robust functionality needed to achieve the greater gains brought by a comprehensive, purpose-built, healthcare communications system.
- Why pagers, voice mail, and other inefficient communication methods contribute to employee burnout, according to a report released by the National Academy of Medicine.



# THE HIDDEN COSTS OF A BROKEN HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Healthcare has long recognized that tightly integrated and effective communication is at the heart of patient care – especially within the complex environment of modern medicine in which several disciplines – from hospitalists, to internal specialists, to surgeons, to radiologists, imaging technicians, transport teams, lab technicians, primary care physicians, and a whole lot more need to work together to enhance outcomes, while improving operational efficiencies.



Calls for tighter communication include:

**“Patient safety experts agree that communication and teamwork skills are essential for providing quality health care.”**

—American Hospital Association (AHA)

The need for bringing greater communication, and hence collaboration, to the field has been underscored by studies showing what can go wrong within healthcare delivery, much of which comes down to communication.

Headlines include:

**“Study Suggests Medical Errors Now Third Leading Cause of Death in the U.S.”**

—Johns Hopkins Study

**“Your Health Care May Kill You: Medical Errors.”**

—Purdue University Study

While patient safety is paramount, poor communication also hits operational costs:

**“A 500-bed hospital loses over \$4 million annually as a result of communication inefficiencies.”**

—Journal of Healthcare Management



## Communication is Foundational to Reducing Medical Errors

Improved communication and collaboration are a constant through virtually all studies of enhancing healthcare delivery, outcomes, and operational efficiencies.



### Johns Hopkins Study

A 2016 [Johns Hopkins study](#) that found that medical errors were the third leading cause of death – following the number one and two killers, heart disease and cancer, and ahead of the number four killer, respiratory disease – didn’t blame doctors, but processes.

“The researchers caution that most medical errors aren’t due to inherently bad doctors, and that reporting these errors shouldn’t be addressed by punishment or legal action,” a Johns Hopkins release about the study noted. “Rather, they say, most errors represent systemic problems, including poorly coordinated care, fragmented insurance networks, the absence or underuse of safety nets, and other protocols, in addition to unwarranted variation in physician practice patterns that lack accountability.”

### Purdue University Study

Acknowledging the web of care within modern medicine, the Purdue researchers noted: “The likelihood of errors increased with the number of physicians involved in the patient care.” In fact, [the study](#) found: “Medical mistakes, medication errors or laboratory errors increased in the U.S. from 22% to 48% if four or more doctors were involved in patient care.”

Underscoring the critical role of communication, the Purdue study states: “An important first step in preventing medical errors is a standard reporting system combined with information sharing among providers.”

## SMS Increases Liability and Patient Risk

With the massive popularity of standard texting, it's easy to understand why so many health professionals carry this habit over into their day jobs. Unfortunately, unsecured texting like standard SMS, iMessage, and WhatsApp bring unnecessary risks to patients while jeopardizing the reputation and trust of the healthcare organization. Cryptic attempts to discuss patients over SMS can lead to crossed signals or incomplete information, not to mention HIPAA-related fines up to \$50,000 per incident, if flagged. Furthermore, unsecured texting is outside the purview of IT, complicating policy enforcement and legal discovery.

## Nobody Loves Pagers

While most industries got rid of their pagers decades ago, many healthcare organizations held onto these unpopular devices out of habits that were deeply ingrained during the early years of cell phones when the first networking protocols (2G and 3G cell phones) had the potential to disrupt medical devices, and when reception within hospitals was often poor. Similarly, overhead chimes and public address speakers still make up the classic background sound of most healthcare facilities.

While some healthcare professionals are saddled with two or more pagers, they remain unpopular with just about all involved for a

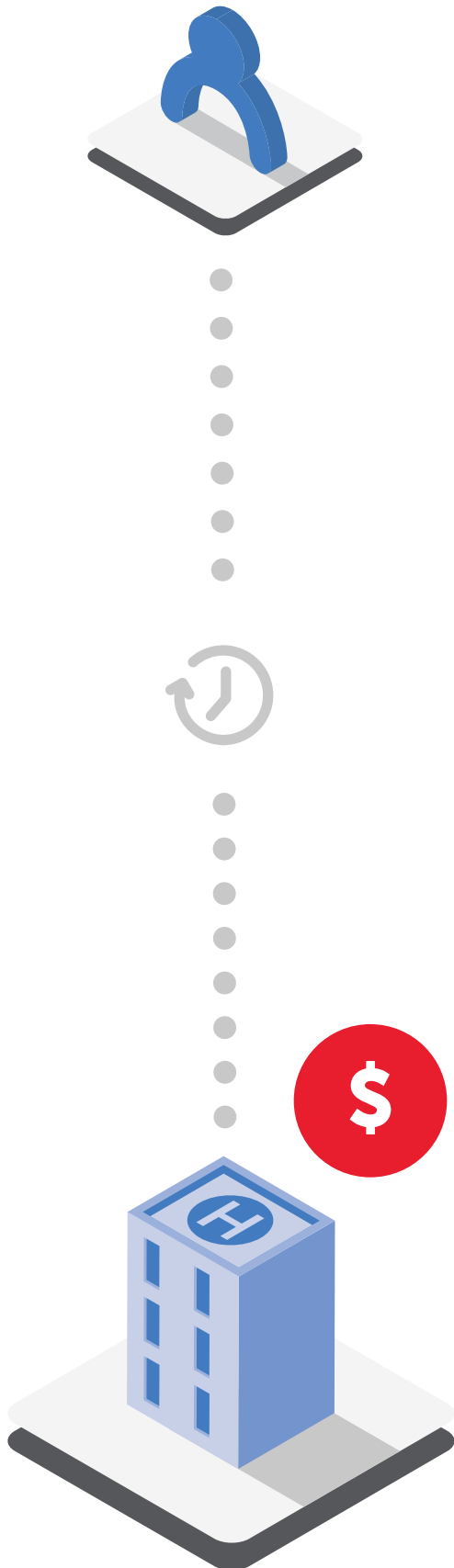
number of reasons, including the time delays inherent in using one-way communication devices. And don't forget the cost. According to a [HIMSS Analytics study](#), pagers cost an average of \$9.19 per month.

## EHRs Weren't Built for Communication

EHRs fulfill a vital role in storing patient information in a centralized place. It's what they do best. And though most EHR systems have added some form of communication capabilities, these tend to be limited in scope and lack the sophistication and flexibility needed to solve for complex communication workflows.

A central challenge is that EHR systems are designed to be patient-focused not team-focused. They also typically require users to be part of the system, and logged into the system. This creates a communications silo that can eliminate consulting physicians and other healthcare facilities that are not part of the EHR, are part of a facility using a different EHR, or who simply aren't logged in.





## At \$100 Per Hour, 15-Minute Delays Add Up

In 2019, the average hourly pay for physicians in the U.S. is roughly \$100 per hour. A rounding physician might be delayed as much as 15 minutes waiting for a much lower paid translator to arrive so the physician can communicate with a non-English speaking patient. That 15-minute delay costs the hospital \$25. If similar delays – say tracking down a consulting physician’s phone number or waiting for a room to be prepared – happen multiple times per day across hundreds of physicians, the cost is substantial.

And delays don’t just have to be around physician’s time. Patients who fail to be discharged by the Medicare cutoff time due to poor communication may be required to remain in the hospital an extra night, consuming unnecessary services and frustrating the patient and their family members, many of who have taken time off work to be with their loved one.

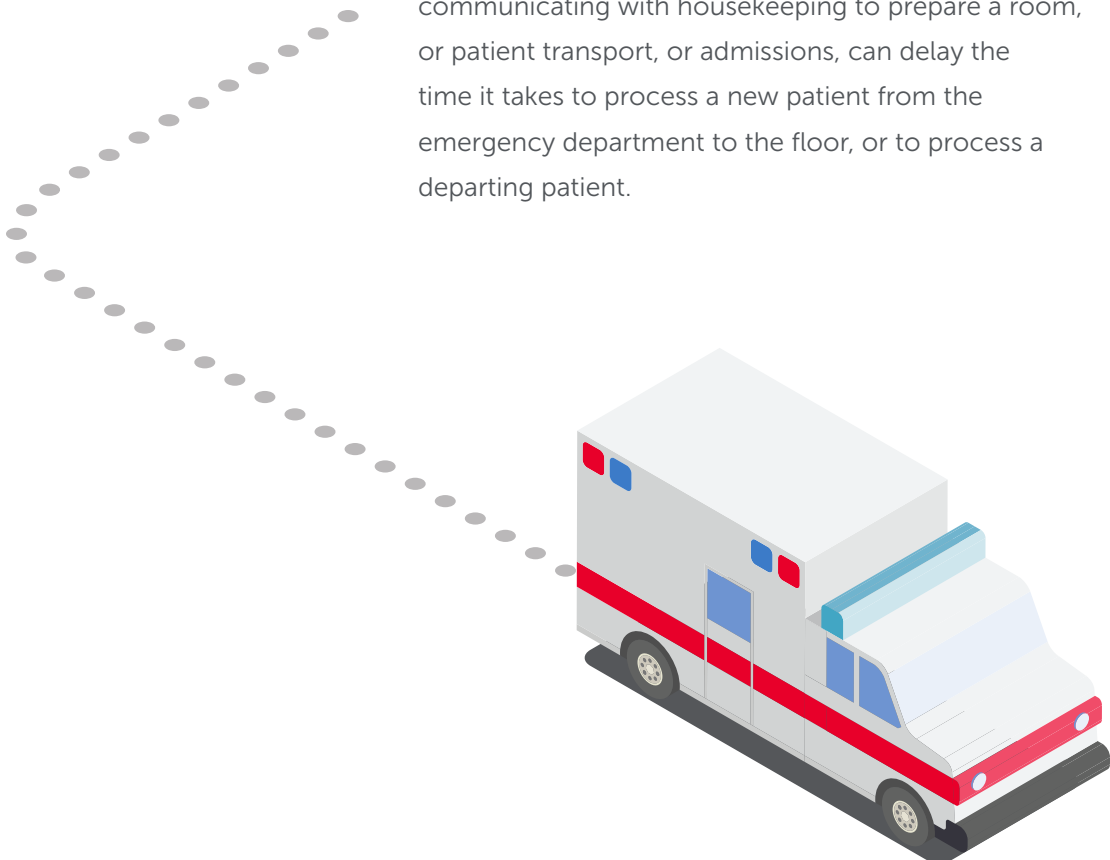
Healthcare Innovation recently published reports of a study that found during a 12-hour shift, a group of nurses was able to save 2.5 hours by reducing the need to run around coordinating with other care team members after the hospital replaced pagers with smartphone communication.

## The Harvard Business Review Agrees

An article in the [Harvard Business Review](#) puts it this way:

“Busy emergency departments depend on fast-paced communication among a constantly shifting mix of physicians, nurses, and other caregivers. Communication is essential for triaging, treating, and discharging patients who arrive in an unpredictable stream and with diverse needs. Status differences, such as those that exist between physicians and nurses and between attending physicians and residents, contribute to misunderstanding, hesitation to speak up, errors, and long throughput times for patients.”

From an operational standpoint, simple delays in communicating with housekeeping to prepare a room, or patient transport, or admissions, can delay the time it takes to process a new patient from the emergency department to the floor, or to process a departing patient.



## Enhancing Communication to Break Down the Silos

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), with its Triple Aim initiative, seeks to improve the patient experience of care; improve the health of populations; and reduce the per capita cost of healthcare.

Becker's Hospital Review, in examining ways to achieve the goals of Triple Aim, sees the breaking down of the information silos typically found in healthcare as an essential element of success. Breaking down silos to enable fuller communication and collaboration requires an efficient and robust clinical communication platform.



### **Beckers: "Healthcare Silos Prevent Information Exchange"**

"Communication between individuals, providers, hospitals, acute care facilities, and home-healthcare agencies must be well established and easily accessible," an article in Becker's notes. "Healthcare silos prevent information exchange and limit sharing of quality data, which constricts efforts to improve care. Optimizing the usage of EHRs and establishing health information exchanges are necessary steps to removing barriers and supporting collaborative care. Healthcare technology is integral to improve collaboration and is critical in breaking down the barriers of a silo-based system."

### **Harvard Business Review: But ... "Most Hospitals Still Organized into Silos"**

"For all the hard work to improve coordination and collaboration in health care, most hospitals are still organized into silos based on clinical specialties — and communication among them is uneven at best," Amy C. Edmondson writes in the Harvard Business Review. "Teams may function fairly well within silos, but coordination across them is often poor, which has potentially serious consequences for patients."



## Helping Relieve Professional Burnout

The National Academy of Medicine recently released a [discussion paper](#) "Burnout Among Health Care Professionals: A Call to Explore and Address This Underrecognized Threat to Safe, High-Quality Care," which reports that more than half of US physicians are experiencing substantial symptoms of burnout – twice the rate found in other fields.

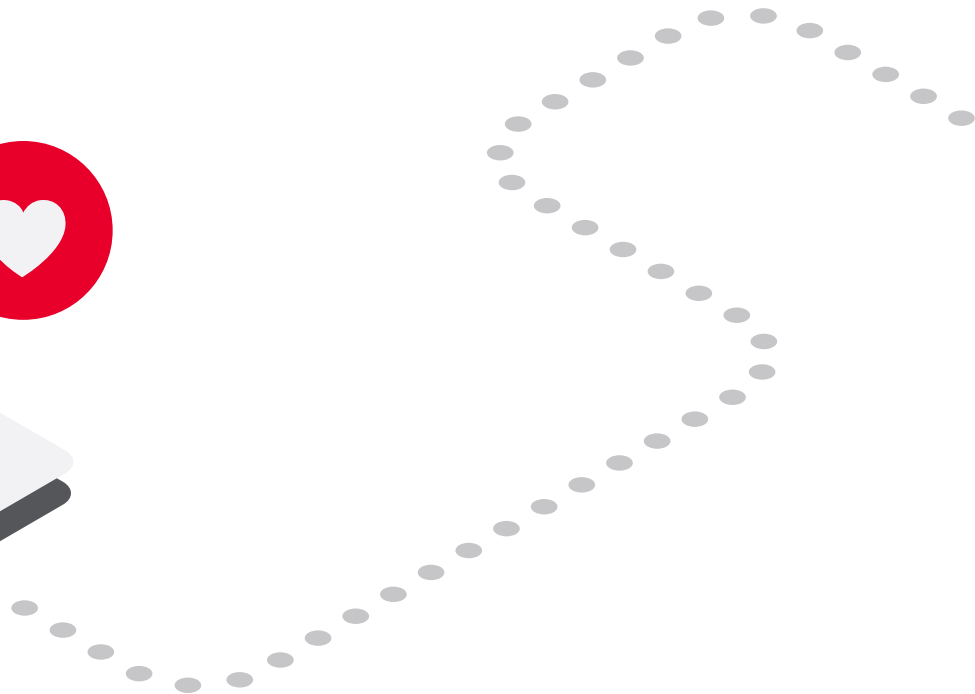
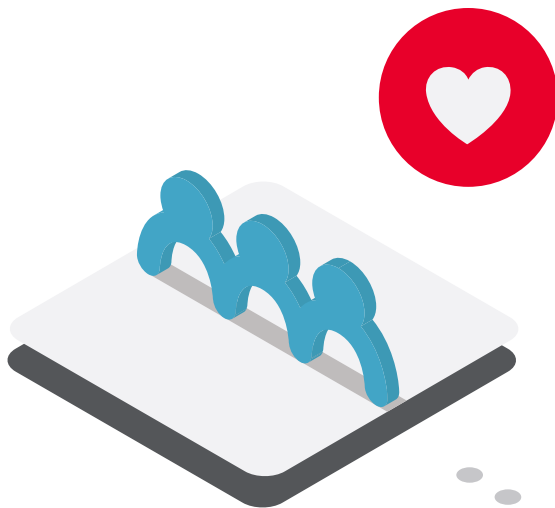
### Burnout Leads to High Turnover

The study found similar (43%) rates of burnout and depression among U.S. nurses. The study links burnout, which it defines as a syndrome with "a high degree of emotional exhaustion and high depersonalization (i.e., cynicism), and a low sense of personal accomplishment from work" with higher turnover and a reduction of work effort.

There are many reasons for burnout: personal, professional, and situational. The study notes that some is attributed to the pressures created from the introduction of "new payment and delivery approaches, electronic health records, patient portals, and publicly reported quality metrics – all of which change the landscape of how care is provided, documented, and reimbursed."

### Burnout Is Reduced with Better Communication and Collaboration

The study points to work-related stress, job dissatisfaction, and work process inefficiencies as being major contributors to burnout – elements that could certainly be improved through the enhanced communication and collaboration allowed by a well-integrated and robust clinical communication platform.





# The Power of Immediate Communication



## QUICK VIEW

In this section, we look at the power of immediate communications and alerts as a way to fast-track past the pervasive inefficiencies that quietly impede care team collaboration today. Specifically, we look at integrating staff directories and shift information so messages can be sent in real time to the person on duty, rather than having to search to see who is on call for a specific role (e.g. anesthesiologist, ED nurse, etc.)

### KEY POINTS INCLUDE:

- Understanding the difference between the patient-focused EHR and the communication-focused messaging solution, and how the latter more readily adapts to ever-changing care teams and evolving patient conditions.
- Faster, easier ways to connect with healthcare staff who are not part of a clinical team, but who are vital to the coordination of patient care – broadening the team network across departments and facilities.
- Direct communication with primary care physicians – even those outside the hospital’s CMU network – to notify them of patient admissions and discharges to help ensure continuity of care.
- Strategies for unlocking the “network effect” by enabling seamless connections across facilities and blending care team communication with critical patient data from systems like the EHR, LIMS, PACS, shift scheduling, nurse call, and more.

## THE POWER OF IMMEDIATE COMMUNICATION

Care team collaboration platforms bring the power of instant communication into the healthcare setting by leveraging a push communication model. Mobile-friendly alerts and notifications mean that a physician or nurse doesn't have to log into an EHR or other system to see whether a lab report, image, or consult report is ready as these get pushed directly to the user's smartphone or desktop.

The same goes for patient-centered care team formation. Integration with staff directories and real-time shift awareness, means that instead of tracking down who should be contacted and attempting to page this person, messages can be sent on the basis of position, not individuals. Messages will go directly to the anesthesiologist, radiologist, or transport team currently on duty. And the message will be delivered securely, directly to their smartphone. No more pager messages into the void or rounds of telephone tag.

Healthcare Innovation recently published an [article](#) “Five Benefits of Using Smartphones for Nurse Communication,” which is applicable across the healthcare environment. The benefits cited are:

### **Enhancing coordination among care providers**

Smartphones enable two-way communication, providing instant support, feedback, and team-building. Traditional methods of hospital communication like PA announcements, personal pagers, or alarms – get a person’s attention – but they don’t allow a response. Even a simple response of, “I’m on my way” from a physician, security officer, or a member of the housekeeping staff helps nurses focus on performing their unique roles as part of larger healthcare team.

#### **1. Enabling communication at the point of care**

Two-way communication provides nurses the opportunity to remain with a patient rather than tracking down a staff member who isn’t responding. Although many hospitals have adopted Computers on Wheels (COWs) to provide mobile workstations, nurses cannot realistically pull a COW behind them on every patient call, and a COW is more appropriate for recordkeeping than real-time communication. A smartphone allows communication that motivates immediate action.

### **Improving time management**

Simply removing the need to run around in an effort to coordinate with other care team members saves time. As mentioned, one study found that a group of nurses were able to save over 2.5 hours during a 12-hour shift by changing from pagers to smartphones. Time savings that are harder to measure – but no less real – come from preventing time-consuming issues that arise from a slow or non-responsive colleague.

### **Mitigating nursing burnout**

Items 1, 2, and 3 on this list alone illustrate how smartphones can reduce stress to prevent nurse burnout. Using a smartphone to foster teamwork and support, reduce physical fatigue, and forestall adverse events helps to curtail stress in the workplace. Just as important, returning more time to nurses allows them to provide a higher level of patient care, which leads to higher job satisfaction for nurses – and may lead to higher patient satisfaction.

#### **2. Integrating communication streams and devices**

Nurses are often communicating with – and carrying around – more devices than can be reasonably managed by one person. A nurse might be juggling a voice-activated badge, a pager, a Spectralink device, and a smartphone all at once, leading to a pocketful of buzzes, pings, and alarms that create confusion rather than accelerating response times. Gathering all of these functions on a single device and a single app streamlines communication and cuts the clutter.

## Empowering the Ever-Changing Patient Team

EHRs are effective for storing and centralizing critical patient information. Healthcare communication platforms take this data and make it actionable, networking together the people who are responsible for care at that moment. Direct integration with the EHR coupled with shift schedules and role-based contacts gives users instant access to the people and information needed to do their jobs faster and more effectively.

### Alerting Primary Care Physicians of Patient Admits & Discharges

Most primary care physicians have no way of knowing when a patient has been admitted to or discharged from a hospital. Even if the physician is on the EHR system, there is typically no way for direct, real-time alerting.

More advanced care team collaboration solutions can provide access to physicians, even if they are outside of the hospital network. Looping in primary care physicians, who may have been treating a patient for a decade or more, can benefit the patient as well as the hospital care team by enabling them to be seamlessly brought into the conversation. And alerting the physician about a patient's discharge can help ensure continuity of care.



## Unlocking the “Network Effect”

Communication platforms with broad enough reach can help organizations achieve a powerful “network effect” by connecting a critical mass of users across facilities and departments.

Reaching this network effect means communication is centralized, silos are broken down, and the critical mass of contributions by an ever-larger user base – including those outside the hospital such as SNFs, physician groups, or urgent care clinics – enriches patient workflows and drives efficiencies. Staff involved at every stage of a patient’s journey can reach whomever they need across departments or facilities in a seamless and natural way without frustrating communication friction and delays.

## Removing the Problems of Shift Changes

Knowing who’s on call or on duty and how to reach them is a chronic challenge. Healthcare communication platforms remove the frustrations and confusion that are often part of shift changes across the spectrum of disciplines. A user logging in from his or her smartphone at the beginning of a shift can view conversation threads from the prior role owner to gain added context into a patient’s condition. They’re also immediately connected with everyone else involved in the patient’s care.

## Enabling Safer Patient Handoffs

Shift-change and other communication lapses were highlighted in an article in Patient Safety Monitor titled “Patient Handoffs: The Gap Where Mistakes Are Made.”



“A patient handoff (also known as transitioning) is both the act of passing a patient between caregivers and the information exchanged between the sender (the provider giving away the patient) and the receiver (the provider taking the patient). This exchange is a huge weak point in healthcare; each handoff runs the risk of having key treatment information being garbled, forgotten, or not passed on.



The article quotes from the Joint Commission Sentinel Event Alert 58 on inadequate handoff communications:



“Potential for patient harm – from the minor to the severe – is introduced when the receiver gets information that is inaccurate, incomplete, not timely, misinterpreted, or otherwise not what is needed,” The Joint Commission wrote. “When hand-off communication fails, many factors are involved, such as healthcare provider training and expectations, language barriers, cultural or ethnic considerations, and inadequate, incomplete or nonexistent documentation, to name just a few.”



The article quotes Nan Tomsy, MN, RN, CPHRM, a principal consultant at Compass Clinical Consulting, as noting: “Failure to properly transfer knowledge about the patient can result in serious outcomes when the receiving caregiver is ignorant of critical information. Needed medications may be omitted, key symptoms/indications of patient changes can be missed, and patients can fall and suffer serious injuries among other outcomes.”

### And this is What the AHA Says is Needed

In summarizing findings from the American Hospital Association’s Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety work the AHA published an [article](#) stating that “When all clinical and nonclinical staff collaborate effectively, health care teams can improve patient outcomes, prevent medical errors, improve efficiency and increase patient satisfaction.”

This is exactly what a healthcare communication platform is designed to do.



## Bringing Patients into the Conversation

## QUICK VIEW

In this section we look at the benefits of inviting patients to be part of the conversation, allowing case managers and others to continue communicating with patients well after those patients have gone home. This helps ensure recovery and avoid preventable readmissions.

### KEY POINTS INCLUDE:

- How post-discharge communication is essential to a patient's full recovery, and the ways smartphone-based conversations provide an ideal medium for maintaining a communications link between the patient and the healthcare team.
- How the consumerization of healthcare now means patients increasingly expect the same kind of instant access to services and information that they have become accustomed to on their smartphones.
- Which tools healthcare organizations must implement beyond marginally-adopted patient portals and embrace tools that are both mobile-friendly and convenient for patients and care professionals to use.
- The ability to help patients heal after discharge by going beyond verbal and printed instructions, connecting instead over live video, phone, or text, to gather updates, share photos, and communicate with a broader care team.
- Why user-friendliness is essential because the saying, "so easy grandma can do it," has special relevance within the world of healthcare.



## BRINGING PATIENTS INTO THE CONVERSATION

The consumerization of healthcare has made it essential to bring the patient into their own healthcare conversation. Too often the patient is left with verbal instructions that are forgotten or written guidance that is lost or left unread or misunderstood. Engaging patients post-discharge through tools they commonly use – smartphones – is critical to ensuring recovery and avoiding preventable readmissions.

The AHA report “Focusing on Teamwork and Communication to Improve Patient Safety” speaks to the value of involving the family in ongoing conversations, noting: “A key aspect in improving teamwork and communication in health care is engaging patients and families. Increasingly, research shows a correlation between increased patient and family engagement and fewer adverse events. Determining how patients and families want to be involved in their care and then engaging them in designing their plan of care increases their understanding of tests, procedures, and anticipated care outcomes, including a successful discharge.”

## Post Discharge Communication

Post-discharge communication is essential to ensuring patients are doing all they can to assist healing and to avoid unnecessary readmissions. This can begin with a nurse texting a patient after discharge to just say: "How are things going? Are you taking your medications?" Perhaps the patient texts back, "I'm having a problem." At this point the nurse may decide to loop in the physician, or the surgeon, or perhaps a home health organization if home assistance will be needed.

A National Institutes of Health study, "Mobile Devices and Apps for Health Care Professionals: Uses and Benefits," notes that, "Mobile devices can also be used by HCPs (healthcare providers) to aid long-distance patients by allowing them to text or send pictures regarding problems or questions."

These key drivers are central to healthcare communication solutions and routinely have a major impact on recovery and outcomes.

## Adapt or Else: How the Consumerization of Healthcare is Impacting Hospitals

Convenience is at the heart of the app economy. Instant access to rides, friends, and food delivery have trained consumers

to expect more, faster. In the same way personal apps forced enterprise IT managers to adapt policies and adopt mobile application management systems, patients increasingly expect instant access to care professionals through video consults and chat. This means healthcare organizations must implement tools that are both mobile-friendly and easy for patients and care professionals to use.

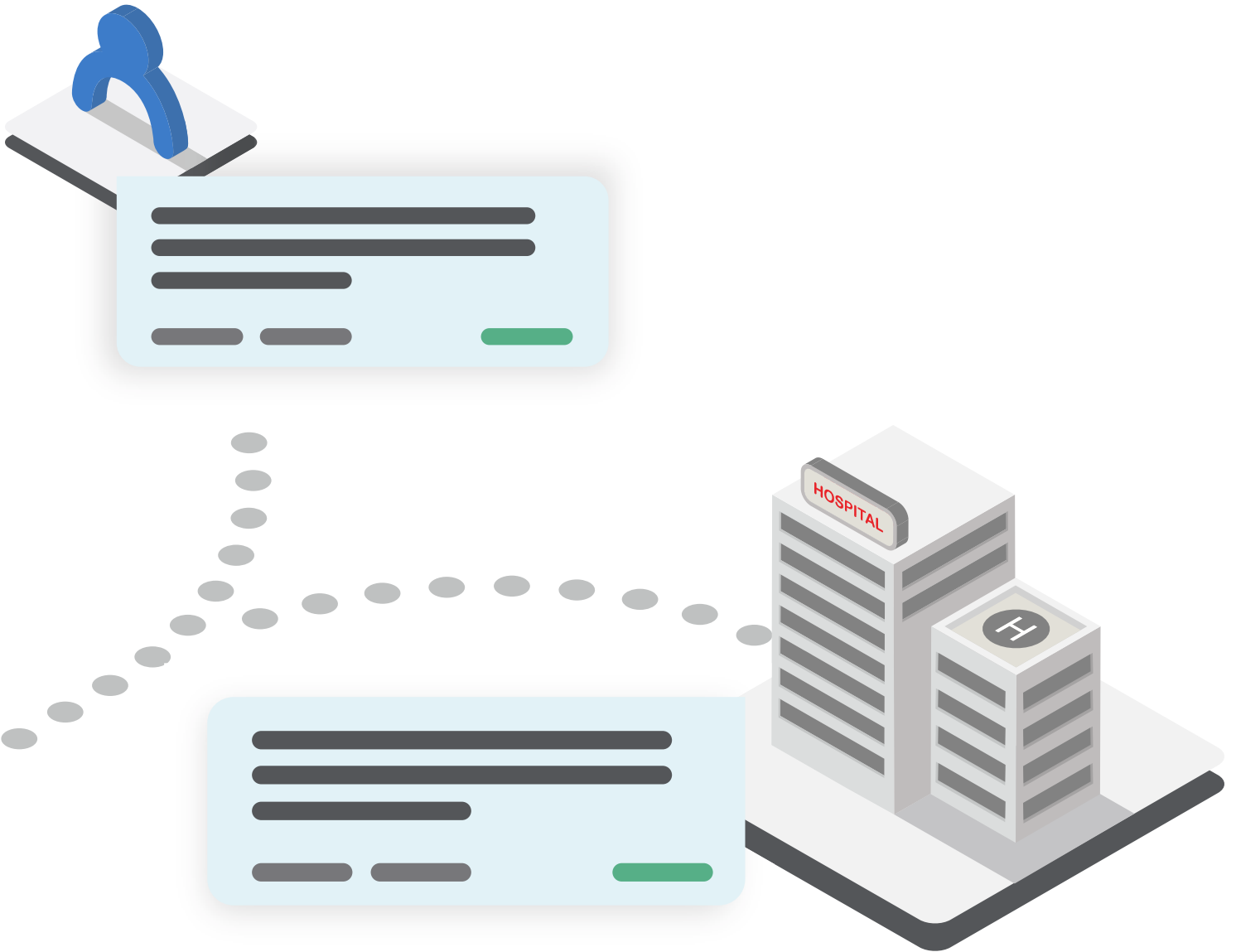
## Helping Patients Heal in Those Critical Days After the Hospital

Some of the greatest risks to a patient's healthy recovery come in the hours and days after they leave the hospital after a procedure or clinical episode. Neglected instructions or confusion about medications can put patients at risk. Through video, voice, or asynchronous text-based communication, a home health nurse, pharmacist, or physical therapist conducting an in-home visit could easily initiate a call and loop in case managers, consulting physicians, and others to ensure a patient is on the path to recovery.



## Technology So Easy, Grandma and Grandpa Can Use It

Patient portals can be daunting to some populations with URLs to remember and login credentials to manage; however, just about everyone has a smartphone these days and with it the ability to receive and send messages. This simplicity provides a welcome connection that can help ensure that treatment plans are followed, medications are taken on time, that dietary restrictions aren't forgotten, and that surgical wounds heal without unreported complications.





# Positioning Your Rollout for Success

## QUICK VIEW

In this section, we provide best practices for maximizing the success of your communication solution rollout.

### KEY POINTS INCLUDE:

- How creating a Communication Plan is an important first step for preparing an organization for a product rollout – providing information ahead of time about product features and the wealth of benefits, and identifying internal champions to promote adoption.
- How Deployment Planning helps define timelines, strategies, and preparedness across all key stakeholders.
- How Training Plans help ensure full utilization by bringing users up to speed on how to get the most value from your communication platform investment in their own work lives.
- Why preparing the Help Desk prior to deployment helps to ensure healthcare personnel can pull the greatest value from the application suite.

# POSITIONING YOUR ROLLOUT FOR SUCCESS

To get the most from your deployment, here are some best practices from organizations that have already successfully rolled out a clinical communication platform to unify their operations.

The best practices are organized into three logical areas to develop a:



Communication Plan



Deployment Plan



Training Plan



## Communication Plan

Creating a communication plan is a great way to prepare your organization about the coming deployment. Planning helps IT allocate the appropriate resources and gives the organization a systematic roadmap for rolling out the solution while setting expectations among staff.

### Pre-Activation Communication

It is recommended that extensive pre-activation communication be made to the medical staff, with communication coming from high-level executives such as the CEO, CMO, or CMIO. Communication can be in the form of emails, newsletters, or intranet sites.

Focus messaging on benefits for patients and care teams. Information should include:

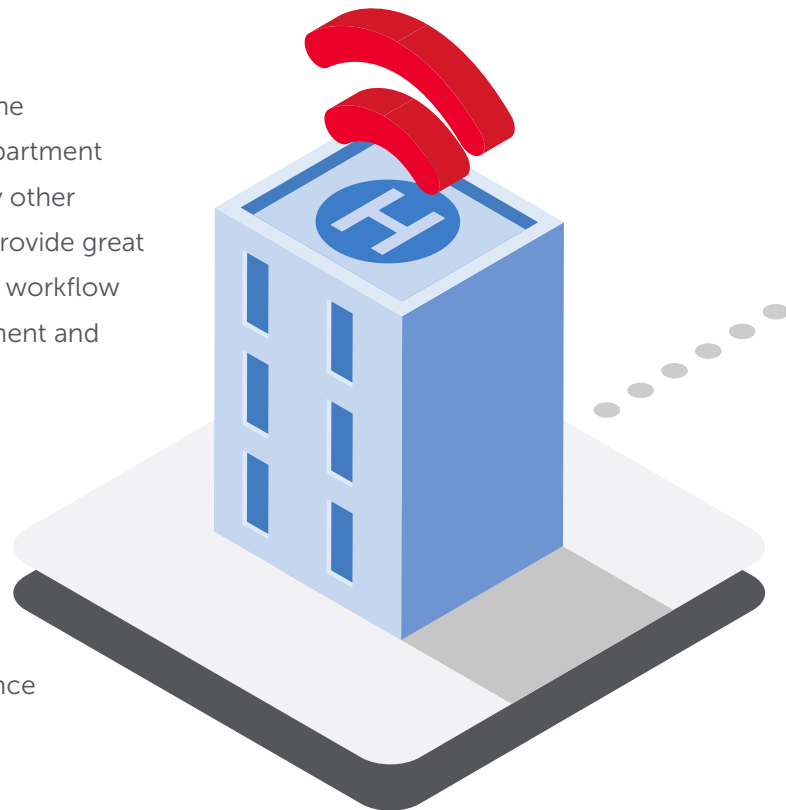
- A new healthcare communication solution is coming
- What it does and how clinicians will benefit from it
  - Roll-out date
  - User actions required (e.g. read/accept policy)
  - Helpful resources about the tool, such as video tutorial, and phone number/email for questions, concerns, and feedback.

### Over-Communicate With Staff

Make the upcoming deployment part of the conversation. Socialize the solution at department meetings, medical staff meetings, and any other times staff are gathered together. These provide great opportunities for sharing key features and workflow enhancements to build a sense of excitement and anticipation for it to go live.

### Enlist Internal Champions

Identify and train clinical champions prior to the rollout. Look for eager early adopters amongst physicians, nurses, and administrators and enlist their assistance during activation to promote the solution.



## Address Policy Questions

Identify and clearly address any high-level policy questions that might arise in regards to communication, such as HIPAA compliance and security, as well as any policies on mobile devices and guidelines related to orders and documentation.



## Deployment Plan

Your deployment plan should include a playbook in which you cover your:

- Deployment Preparedness Plan shared with all key stakeholders and support teams.
- Support and Service Level Agreements ready to execute according to schedule and locations.
- Contingency plans including Positioning Statement and Talk Track for outcomes below expectations.



## Training Plan

Training Schedule and Planning should begin 2-3 weeks post kickoff. Confirm the schedule of users and consider multiple sessions. Leverage current training modules and corporate training processes.

The clinical strategy effort for training should:

- Communicate training days and locations well in advance, using the most effective communicating methods for your organization.
- Be creative in how you distribute information based on best practices at your organization.
- Identify the training tools you want to use, including webinars, videos, onsite training, and vendor collateral.



Key training elements you can deploy include stationary “training kiosks” in high-traffic areas, such as lobbies, cafeterias, as well as near work stations. It is also helpful to have one or more mobile teams with at least one physician champion to visit key departments to provide demonstrations, answer questions, and to encourage usage.

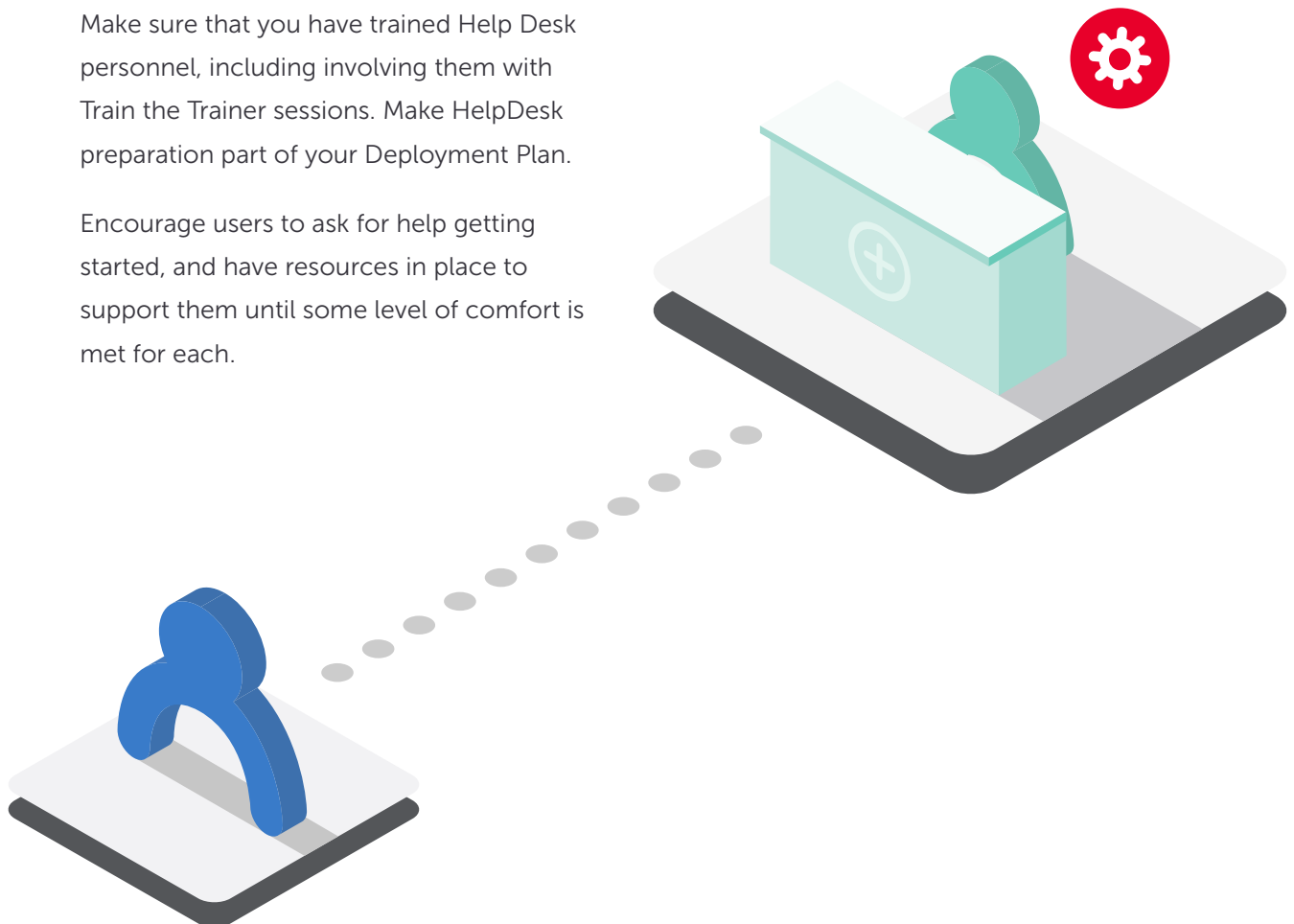
#### Other tips include:

- Creating a distribution list for all users and send out a Welcome message
- Providing all user collateral to aid with knowledge base
- Scheduling group training sessions wherever appropriate
- Scheduling online webinars during the activation period
- Training on workflows, not just the product. As part of this effort you may want to send out surveys to gather relevant use cases
- Demonstrating how the solution fits in with existing workflows and improves them

### Prepare Your Help Desk

Make sure that you have trained Help Desk personnel, including involving them with Train the Trainer sessions. Make HelpDesk preparation part of your Deployment Plan.

Encourage users to ask for help getting started, and have resources in place to support them until some level of comfort is met for each.





# Tying It All Together With TigerConnect

## Uniting Your Entire Health System on One Collaboration Platform

In this final section, we take an opportunity to provide a brief snapshot into the TigerConnect solution to lend context for what a fully-scalable, enterprise communication platform for healthcare can look like.

TigerConnect's 100% cloud-based platform provides an easy, affordable way for both clinical and non-clinical staff to communicate and coordinate care efforts on a single, secure, fully-integrated platform. Our client base consists of over 6,000 organizations of all facility types, including:

- Health Systems & IDNs
- Acute Care
- Ambulatory
- ACOs
- Home Health/Hospice
- Post-Acute Care
- Skilled Nursing Facility
- Physician Groups
- Urgent Care Centers
- Behavioral Health
- Military Hospitals

True to our name, the TigerConnect platform connects facilities across a healthcare organization, extending to affiliate physician offices and even to patients themselves.

# Why TigerConnect Leads the Industry

## Purpose-Built for Care Teams

TigerConnect is more than just a communications tool – it’s an advanced operations platform. Infinitely-scalable and agnostic to internal environments, the solution is HITRUST-certified for HIPAA-compliance and data security.

## Easy to Use, Quickly Adopted

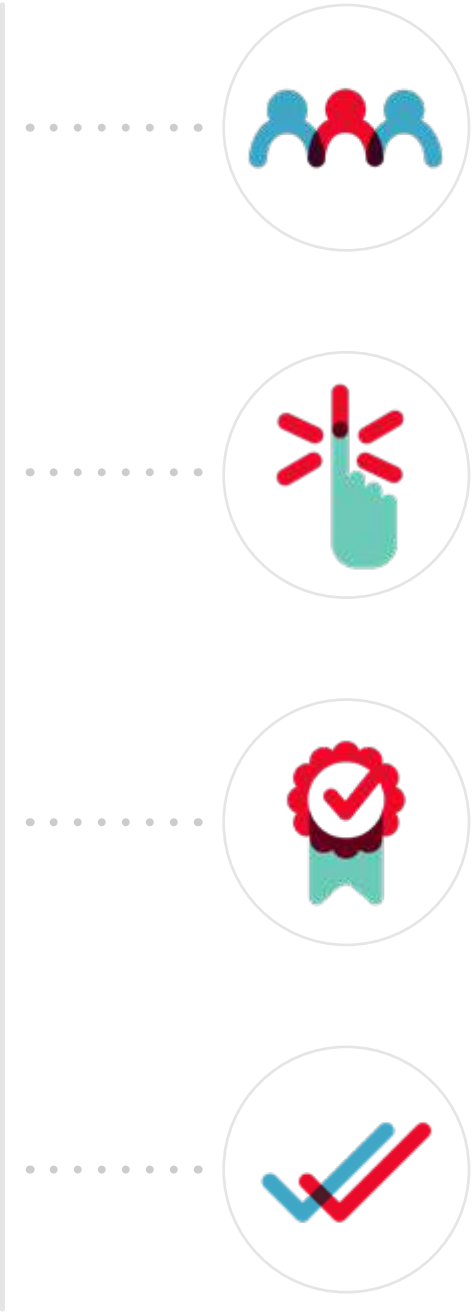
TigerConnect is the first solution that brings the usability of consumer apps to enterprise healthcare systems. In less than 60 seconds, care team members are connected, proficient, productive, and communicating securely.

## Stable & Reliable

TigerConnect is a trusted, reliable technology partner to our clients. Uptime is an industry-leading 99.99%, which we proudly publish. And continuous updates are pushed automatically with no disruptive maintenance.

## Proven

The TigerConnect install base is over 6,000 healthcare organizations strong. More than 10 million messages are sent via TigerConnect every day. And most importantly, customers enjoy quantified results and ROI.



## Options for Every Size Organization

The TigerConnect Platform provides a suite of tightly-integrated solutions with broad market appeal that can be tailored to an organization's needs, budget, and roadmap.



### TigerFlow Enterprise

Connect your entire organization with healthcare's most robust and proven platform solution. Connect staff across all facility types and by name or role, plus provide access to real-time data from the EHR, nurse call, labs, imaging, and scheduling systems.



### TigerFlow

Take your team communication to the next level with role-based messaging that integrates with your shift-scheduling software to instantly locate and message on-duty staff by role assignment



### TigerText Essentials

Our starter offering, Essentials, lets care teams communicate more efficiently and improve patient outcomes using the industry's most widely-adopted HIPAA-compliant, HITRUST-certified secure messaging app.



### TigerTouch Patient Messaging

Communicate seamlessly with patients through secure, encrypted, smartphone-based messaging. Clinical staff can easily switch between provider and patient networks. For patients, there are no apps, logins, or portals required.

For a free, customized demo, please visit us at [www.tigerconnect.com](http://www.tigerconnect.com).

## About **TigerConnect**

TigerConnect is healthcare's most widely adopted communication platform – uniquely modernizing care collaboration among doctors, nurses, patients, and care teams. TigerConnect is the only solution that combines a consumer-like user experience for text, video, and voice communication with serious security, privacy, and clinical workflow requirements that today's healthcare organizations demand. TigerConnect accelerates productivity, reduces costs, and improves patient outcomes. Trusted by more than 6,000 healthcare organizations, TigerConnect maintains 99.99% verifiable uptime and processes more than 10 million messages each day. To learn more about TigerConnect, visit [www.tigerconnect.com](http://www.tigerconnect.com).

