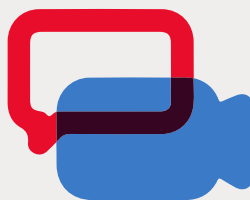




How Modern Communication Technology Solves 3 Key Challenges

Clinical Communication and Collaboration for Home Health



How Modern Communication Technology Solves 3 Key Challenges

Clinical Communication and Collaboration for Home Health

In today's health care landscape, home-based care providers are looking for ways to improve the quality of patient care while reducing costs and avoiding fines.

One way to meet these challenges is to adopt modern communication technologies that are not only HIPAA-compliant but can also help improve care team communication and patient care quality while reducing medical errors and alleviating staff burnout.

The right technology provides three key solutions to industry challenges by:



**Bridging physical
distances**



**Ensuring HIPAA
compliance**



**Enhancing
patient care**

This white paper provides an overview of how clinical communication and collaboration (CC&C) tools can impact home health organizations, enabling providers to make more informed decisions about how to best invest in technology.



Key term: CC&C

Clinical Communication & Collaboration (CC&C) solutions are secure messaging tools that improve communication for physicians, nurses and other care team members.

From desktop or smartphone, CC&C uses HIPAA-compliant:

- Voice
- Video
- Texting

Seeing the Future with CC&C

How New Technology Helps Home Health Solve 3 Key Challenges

Home health and hospice providers are seeing higher consumer demand today, driven by a number of factors. The most obvious is population age. By 2040, according to the Administration for Community Living, about 81 million people in the United States will be older than 65, up from just 54 million people in 2019. This demographic shift means that the number of people needing care services will continue to increase.

On top of that, seniors increasingly wish to stay out of care facilities. According to a recent Cross Country Workforce Solutions Group survey, 70% of seniors prefer to receive care in their homes as they age. This increases the consumer desire for modern communication technology, thus increasing the industry's need to make investments that will allow organizations to navigate this new home-based care landscape.

New clinical communication and collaboration platforms have become essential, putting information, data and alerts in the hands of care teams. CC&C tools are helping home health and hospice providers in three key ways: bridging physical distances, ensuring HIPAA-compliance and enhancing patient care.



How CC&C improves hospital discharge

When patients are discharged from the hospital, they often have complex medical needs. As a result, home health and hospice agencies need to invest in effective communication systems to ensure that patients receive safe and high-quality care across the care continuum.

"Home health and hospice have a different type of payment system than your inpatient units, and you have to be cognizant of your resources," says Cheryl McKay, nurse executive at TigerConnect. "The ability to create that value — for instance the ability for a patient or patient's family to call in to a nurse and have a video conference — is beneficial for everyone."





CC&C solution #1

Bridging physical distances

In home health and hospice care, communication is critical. Poor communication can lead to medical errors and staff burnout, impacting an organization's bottom line.

Driving these errors in communication is the physical separation between the patient and the provider. Home health and hospice staff are often spread out across multiple locations or work outside a facility, making home visits. This can make it difficult to stay connected.

Real-time, secure and HIPAA-compliant communication tools, like the TigerConnect Clinical Collaboration platform, can help bridge the gap, allowing staff to quickly and easily connect with each other, reducing stress and burnout by providing a more efficient way to coordinate patient care. This includes everything from voice, video and text, to sharing documents and photos. CC&C technology also helps staff avoid making unnecessary trips between offices, pharmacies and patient homes.

"I worked with a group in Northern California, and the providers in the home health arena saved 20% of their time traveling," says Cheryl McKay, nurse executive at TigerConnect. "They didn't have to travel as much because they weren't sent out when they didn't need to be. They could effectively triage care."

When agencies have real-time communication with care teams in the field, they can:



Improve home visit coordination



Instantly reach physicians to share changes in a patient's condition



Eliminate phone tag



Clarify orders



Reduce errors



Request medications



Minimize delays in patient care

"It's much easier for the case manager to get a hold of the home health or hospice liaison and start having that communication," McKay says. "The ability to provide shared documents and photos right within the application itself makes having disparate electronic health records easier to manage."

Integrating with the EHR and securely sharing file attachments means caregivers can reduce both their administrative tasks and travel time between patient homes and the office.



CC&C solution #2

Ensuring compliance with HIPAA

Home health and hospice providers often deal with private and sensitive patient information, making HIPAA compliance central when considering any technology tool. HIPAA-compliant CC&C solutions include security features such as end-to-end encryption, message life-span and archiving.

"Every patient wants to know that their physical attributes, tests, etc., are being kept secure, especially if it's during a time of sickness, so there's the patient privacy perspective, and then there is the regulatory burden," McKay says. "If a provider isn't compliant with HIPAA, they can receive very costly fines as an organization."



HIPAA fines are a major setback

The financial implications of HIPAA violations are costly. Even in a scenario where a home health agency does not know they are in violation of HIPAA, the fine can be up to \$50,000.

Violation Category - Section 1176(a)(1)	Each violation	All such violations of an identical provision in a calendar year
Did Not Know	\$100-\$50,000	\$1,500,000
Reasonable Cause	\$1,000-\$50,000	\$1,500,000
Willful Neglect-Corrected	\$10,000-\$50,000	\$1,500,000
Willful Neglect-Not Corrected	\$50,000	\$1,500,000

Source: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2009-10-30/pdf/E9-26203.pdf>





CC&C solution #3 Enhancing patient care

It is essential that home health providers look for ways to continually improve patient care and engage with patients and their families. Technology can play a significant role in this, from providing updates and receiving feedback, to giving providers access to real-time data that can inform care decisions.

In addition to improving patient outcomes, this can also increase provider efficiency and productivity. Streamlined communication means that providers can respond more quickly, reducing the miscommunications that drive medical errors. Advanced CC&C solutions let caregivers stay connected with patients and family members via voice, video and text to send reminders, provide care instructions, manage medications or simply provide support.

All of this leads to a key goal: a better patient experience.

"If I have a dialysis patient who has lab results that are out of whack, this can be communicated quickly to the right provider, so that they can intervene," McKay says. "That creates an opportunity for enhanced quality of care."

Case study: Avita Home Health & Hospice

For its communications needs, Avita Home Health & Hospice, an Ohio-based nonprofit that serves eight counties in the state, turned to TigerConnect.

TigerConnect is a health care communication platform that enables clinicians to collaborate and manage workflow while staying HIPAA-compliant.

In the case of Avita Home Health & Hospice, working with TigerConnect allowed the provider to execute six key actions:

- 1 Update patient contact information
- 2 Receive updated order information
- 3 Revise billing and insurance information
- 4 Utilize document scanning
- 5 Upload patient info into the EMR
- 6 Avoid a deluge of administrative work at the end of each day

"We were actually able to reduce our time from initial assessment to final claim by over 21 days," says Catherine Sapp, executive director of Avita Home Health & Hospice. "We are not shuffling paper around, we are not losing paper. It's been very helpful in that regard."

The previous app Avita Home Health & Hospice used limited the number of people in group messaging. It also was not HIPAA-compliant and did not allow the provider to send important patient health images, such as wound photos.

In addition to a 21-day reduction in service-to-claim time, Avita Home Health & Hospice saved four hours per week of nurse time. It also allowed the provider to modernize its on-call scheduling process, as well as boost staff morale.



5 workflows that CC&C address

Clinical communication and collaboration tools can help home-based care providers manage a wide range of workflows involving staff, patients and patient families. Here is a look at how these tools help providers manage and improve five key workflows.



New patient referrals

1. Admitting nurse (RN) receives notice from acute care facility staff regarding potential referrals
2. Intake nurse assesses patient per established process and secures referral
3. Acute care facility sends all necessary health information as a secure HIPAA-compliant message attachment
4. Admitting coordinator processes all documentation and communicates with team
5. Administrator approves, and admitting coordinator notifies other care team members of new patient
6. Branch-office admin schedules first at-home appointment

Impact: Process referrals faster and increase patient satisfaction.



Enable nurse/staff & physician communication

1. Registered nurse (RN) arrives at patient's home for scheduled visit
2. Upon examination, RN determines the patient is having adverse reaction to medication
3. RN priority messages pictures of patient along with a corresponding vital signs update to an on-call physician (MD)
4. Based on images, on-call MD initiates a call with the RN to discuss treatment options
5. RN administers new treatment to the patient
6. RN remotely coordinates with care team members to manage additional care services

Impact: Faster response to patient needs. Improved staff experience.



Optimize staffing resources

1. Patient's family calls office with question/concern regarding a change in status and requests for nurse to come to the home
2. Operator asks for consent from the patient or family to start a video call to assess concern with a nurse, who then initiates video call via secure text link
3. Nurse conducts assessment to determine if onsite visit is necessary or can be handled virtually
4. Nurse determines that no onsite visit is necessary, and shares care notes with patient nurse for the next onsite visit

Impact: Reduce avoidable, unscheduled home visits. Patient and family satisfaction.



Family communication

1. Hospice nurse texts patient and family when care is initiated
2. Patient's daughter has questions about parent's breathing pattern, texts nurse with question
3. Hospice nurse sends daughter a secure link to initiate a video call
4. Daughter and hospice nurse hold video call. Nurse is able to evaluate patient over video
5. Daughter feels comforted that her parent was evaluated quickly and that her concern was addressed

Impact: Family satisfaction and faster response times.



Streamline communication within your organization

1. Branch-office admin sends a message with the day's visit schedule to all nurse and field staff
2. At mid-day, nurse contacts the office asking for coverage due to illness
3. Office updates the schedule and sends a message to all affected staff, including addresses and patient contact information
4. RN arrives at patient's home and conducts assessment. Identifies immediate need for additional DME
5. RN messages office and provider on call to get approval, and coordinates with DME team to schedule delivery time
6. Office contacts patient and family/caregiver on day of delivery to ensure it is received

Impact: Decrease appointment reschedules, and improve care coordination.

Your HIPAA-compliant communication is waiting

TigerConnect is health care's most widely adopted communication platform, uniquely modernizing care collaboration among doctors, nurses, patients and care teams. This 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 health care organizations demand.

TigerConnect accelerates productivity, reduces costs and improves patient outcomes. Trusted by more than 7,000 healthcare organizations, TigerConnect maintains 99.99% verifiable uptime and processes more than 10 million messages each day.

To learn more, visit us at:



tigerconnect.com | 800-572-0470 | sales@tigerconnect.com