

8 Must-Ask Questions When Evaluating a Clinical Communication Solution



Introduction

Every stakeholder in the healthcare industry, from patients to staff and insurers, is placing new demands on healthcare organizations. Improve care. Cut costs. Reduce staff burnout. To achieve all these imperatives, investments in new healthcare communication technologies need to offer more than simple text messaging. They must enable healthcare organizations to transform collaboration and improve patient outcomes.

A clinical communication and collaboration (CC&C) solution enables healthcare organizations to securely communicate by rich messaging, voice, and video. Advanced CC&C solutions can dramatically curb costs and streamline clinical workflows. These newer solutions are far more robust than the text-based systems many providers may be familiar with, such as those embedded in the electronic health record (EHR). Solutions such as TigerConnect offer integrated scheduling, patient engagement, alarm management, event notification and the ability to interface with other hospital systems such as EHRs.

For those evaluating advanced communication solutions, there are more criteria to understand versus texting only tools. How do you evaluate these technologies and the providers offering them?

This eBook highlights eight areas to explore when considering clinical communication and collaboration solutions. By considering these eight areas, you will be better equipped to provide value to your organization and see tangible benefits of investing in a CC&C solution.





Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center Reduced Stroke Workflow by 50%

Baylor St. Luke's adopted the TigerConnect Clinical Collaboration Platform and integrated it with Decisio, a clinical decision support tool, to enable real-time stroke alerts and address their treatment time challenges, resulting in:

- 50% reduction in door-to-needle time
- 75 lives saved annually
- \$600k in reduced readmission costs

[Learn More >](#)

1. ROI

Does the solution significantly reduce costs and improve workflows?

Many solutions deliver some measure of value, but can that value be quantified against key operational metrics such as reduction in length of stay, reduced reimbursements, and improved Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores? Vendors should be able to share how they provided ROI to organizations like yours.

ROI-centric case studies should outline in detail how the customer significantly improved operations and the explicit role the CC&C solution played, like in the following TigerConnect customer stories. Read the summary or click "Learn More" to get the full story.

In addition to reading ROI studies, seek references from other healthcare organizations. Most organizations are sympathetic to the complex task of selecting new solutions and will gladly provide a reference if you contact them.





Sharp Memorial Hospital Sped ED and Inpatient Admission Consults by 72%

Sharp modernized its ED and inpatient transfers with automated workflows using TigerConnect, leading to better patient experiences and improved outcomes. As a result, Sharp was able to mitigate emergency department (ED) bottlenecks, reduce ED crowding, and optimize hospital operations.

[Learn More >](#)





Innovation Care Partners Reduced Patient Readmission Rates by 50%

Innovation Care Partners (ICP) uses TigerConnect to coordinate discharge and transition of care workflows to enable faster care coordination.

By streamlining communication with TigerConnect, ICP has successfully reduced readmissions by 50% – leading ICP to save \$19.5 million in shared federal savings.

[Learn More >](#)



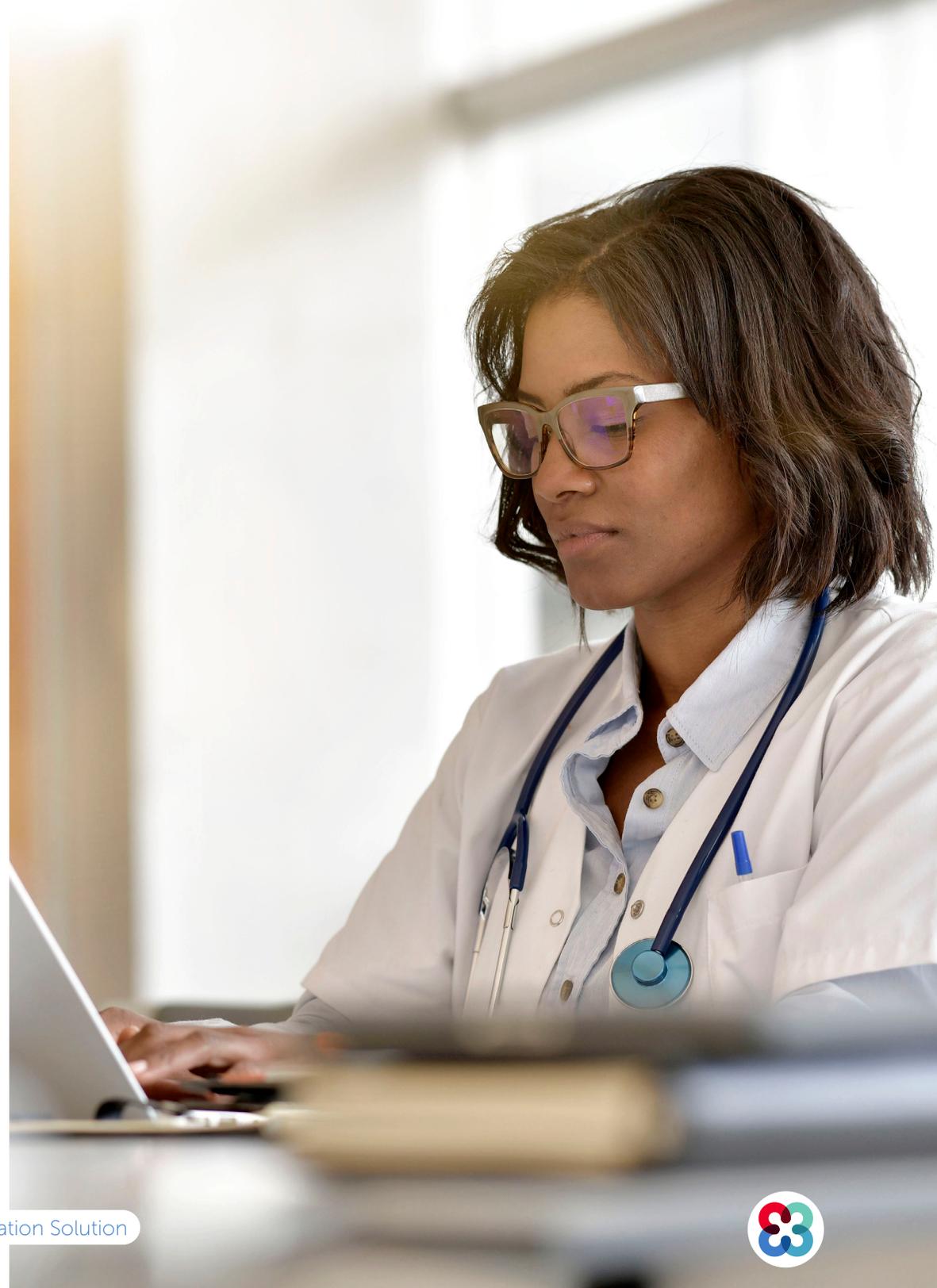
2. Integration

Can the CC&C solution easily integrate with other hospital systems?

A comprehensive CC&C solution is far more robust than basic text-messaging applications. CC&C solutions integrate with your hospital systems to push patient data to care teams the moment it becomes available to speed decision making. Nurse call and scheduling should be integrated into the main communication interface – which is the approach taken by TigerConnect – eliminating the need for multiple high-traffic apps on staff devices.

After integrating TigerConnect with their EHR to send out automated code blue notifications, the [University of Maryland Medical System \(UMMS\)](#) saved 78 seconds from the time the code button is pressed to the time of team notification and increased the chance of patient survival to discharge by 8%. A sophisticated solution should integrate with the EHR in many ways, starting with real-time, alert-based messages that can be routed to a physician or nurse's smartphone. A more advanced integration could surface patient information within the messaging app to allow select messages to be added to the patient record, saving steps, and reducing medical errors.

Need a neurology consult at 3 a.m. but don't know who's on-call? Integrating a CC&C with [clinician and staff schedules](#) makes it possible to message by Role. Users can be assigned to custom Roles based on their job function, such as "Neurology On-Call", allowing other users to find and contact them in seconds by simply searching for their Role.





To make patient data accessible and actionable, developer-friendly APIs are a must. The vendor also needs a stellar professional services team to integrate all your systems – such as physiological monitors, answering services, alerting systems, and SAML/single sign on – into a seamless solution. It should not be left up to you to find a third party to tie the CC&C solution to systems across the organization.

The realities of integrating information drawn from different systems and multiple vendors can be complex and capital-intensive. To simplify the implementation process, it's beneficial if the vendor offers its own integrated features such as nurse call or scheduling. If not, the CC&C solution should integrate with established offerings via a sophisticated user experience that makes it easy to adopt these services.

Tackling these integrations requires deep technical expertise, a developer-friendly API, and strategic partnerships with middleware providers. Ensuring your CC&C vendor has the aptitude and resources in such key areas will improve your odds of a successful implementation and future-proof your organization for the coming wave of centralized communication.



3. Security and Compliance

Is the solution secure, HIPAA compliant, and HITRUST certified?

With HIPAA-related fines increasing in both cost and frequency, your clinical communications provider shouldn't expose you to further risk. While most secure messaging vendors list supporting your ability to be HIPAA-compliant in their marketing materials, barring an independent review, this self-anointed claim remains just a claim. Because the Joint Commission is not an enforcement agency, it relies on the vendors themselves to self-adhere to the guidelines.

Identifying vendors with valid 3rd-party security certifications such as HITRUST can help mitigate organizational risk if the vendor has a security flaw. Another best practice is to secure assurance from the vendor that they will assume the fines if their product results in a HIPAA violation for your organization. For instance, TigerConnect comes with a guarantee of supporting HIPAA compliance. It employs end-to-end encryption to protect patient information.

Focusing on communications-centric vendors is another way to mitigate security issues. Several companies offer messaging products that serve as an adjunct to existing offerings that form the core of their businesses. That means fewer engineering, infrastructure, and support resources are allocated to the communications products potentially compromising ongoing vigilance on security and HIPAA compliance.





4. Training and Support

What types of training and support are offered?

High adoption starts with a well-designed, easy-to-use product. A clean, user-friendly design will ensure users embrace the solution and incorporate it into their daily routines, helping achieve meaningful ROI for the organization. For example, TigerConnect makes it easy for new users to see who is on the schedule and message them quickly, driving adoption by alleviating a common staff problem.

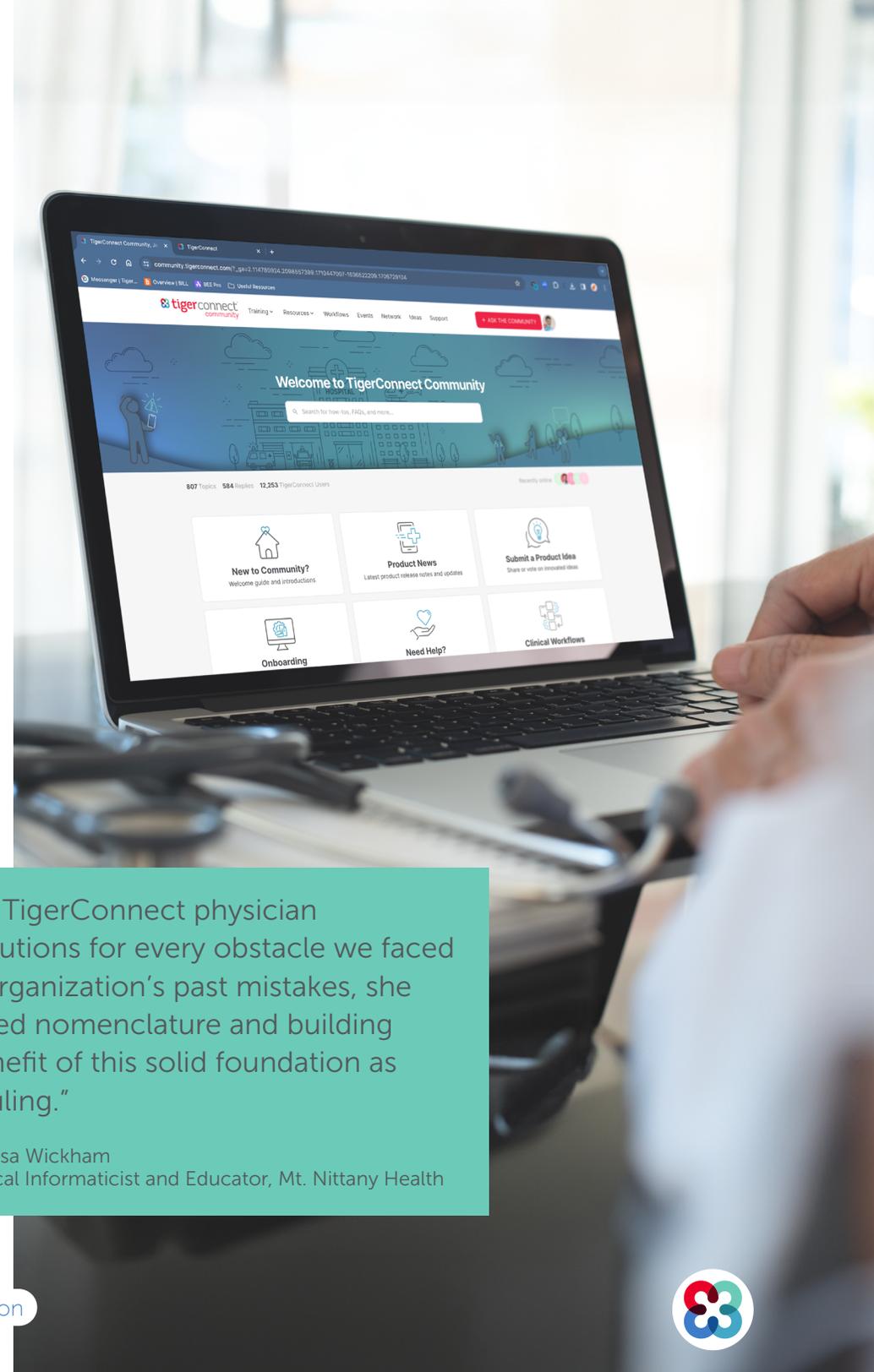
And just as the user interface needs to be functional and friendly, so should the administration console. Admins should be able to quickly on-board large numbers of users, set or update security policies, and maintain control over the system's users. LDAP and Active Directory, Single Sign-On, and SAML support as well as customizable welcome emails and preset training materials will help ensure users get up and running without any issues.

From that foundation, end-user training is required to ensure successful adoption across departments. Employees' grasp of technology varies widely across an organization, so it's important that your vendor provides sufficient training and support – either onsite or virtually – for both onboarding and product education.



It's also worth considering if the vendor offers implementation services. TigerConnect can train your teams quickly and offer multiple forms of ongoing support. TigerConnect's implementation team partners closely with hospitals to tailor the solution to your unique needs. TigerConnect takes a consultative approach through custom implementations with a team of specialists, comprehensive trainings, and onsite training sessions. TigerConnect's commitment continues with ongoing education and best-practice support around specific workflows. Once your key objectives are identified, the best practices gleaned from the industry's top organizations will be applied and leveraged to raise performance.

TigerConnect users also have access to the TigerConnect Community, a unique self-service and knowledge sharing site for users everywhere. It provides a single place of information for TigerConnect to share helpful resources, and other users to share their best practices for improving patient outcomes and operational workflows at their organizations.



“Denise Mason, a manager of professional services and our TigerConnect physician scheduling guru was instrumental in providing different solutions for every obstacle we faced with each schedule. Not only did she help us correct our organization’s past mistakes, she also set us up for future success by establishing standardized nomenclature and building standards for each schedule. We have already seen the benefit of this solid foundation as we’ve expanded our use of TigerConnect physician scheduling.”

Marissa Wickham
Clinical Informaticist and Educator, Mt. Nittany Health





5. Reliability and Availability

Does the solution have a reliable uptime of 99.99% or greater?

In the case of EHR downtime, cyberattack, or a power outage, communication within healthcare systems must keep flowing to ensure continuity and prevent risks to patient safety. Given the mission-critical nature of healthcare, the potential impact of a communications service outage on patient outcomes means that anything less than four 9's in uptime reliability is cause for concern.

Healthcare buyers should demand vendor transparency, ensuring they provide verifiable data that supports their uptime claim and 24/7 access to a real-time web reporting page indicating any service interruptions.

TigerConnect has demonstrated 99.995% uptime. Additionally, you are backed by HITRUST Certification, so you can have peace of mind that you'll never be without a means to communicate, and PHI is safe and secure.



6. Communicate with Anyone

Can the solution enable communication outside the four walls of the hospital?

Because communication takes place in various disconnected systems inside and outside the hospital, vendors should be able to support communication with external providers, facilities, and patients.

Many EHRs have integrated chat features into their systems. While this is convenient, many organizations find that these features fall short. EHR communication tools often restrict messaging to people within their own EHR instances, which makes it difficult to reach individuals outside the walls of the hospital. This can lead to significant time wasted when trying to coordinate admissions, transfers, and more.

TigerConnect resolves this issue by allowing you to configure your network to include providers outside of your organization, such as affiliated physicians, referring organizations, or EMS providers. This ensures proper care coordination, timely transfers, and, ultimately, the best possible patient outcomes.

For example, TigerConnect enables skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) to easily communicate with a patient's entire care team. When transferring a patient from inpatient care to a skilled nursing facility, the SNF can quickly review, gather, and reconcile important patient information. Coordinating discharge and transitions of care via secure text, voice, and video enables faster care coordination and reduces readmissions.



7. Data and Analytics

What types of usage data and reporting does the solution track?

Common types of data that your clinical communications solution should track include usage trends by organization, department, and individuals, as well as transactional data. For reporting, the solution should capture real-time data around specific activities, including the metadata related to every message that is sent within your organization, and aggregate it into dashboard and table views. Collectively, these data types will provide a window into your organization's communication effectiveness.

TigerConnect delivers a range of in-app analytics on usage, call volumes and overall engagement, so you not only know who is using the tools and how they're using them, you can also set alerts when call volumes are rising. This data can be used to identify problem areas and share strategies for raising adoption by re-training teams on underutilized features or implementing certain types of integrations.



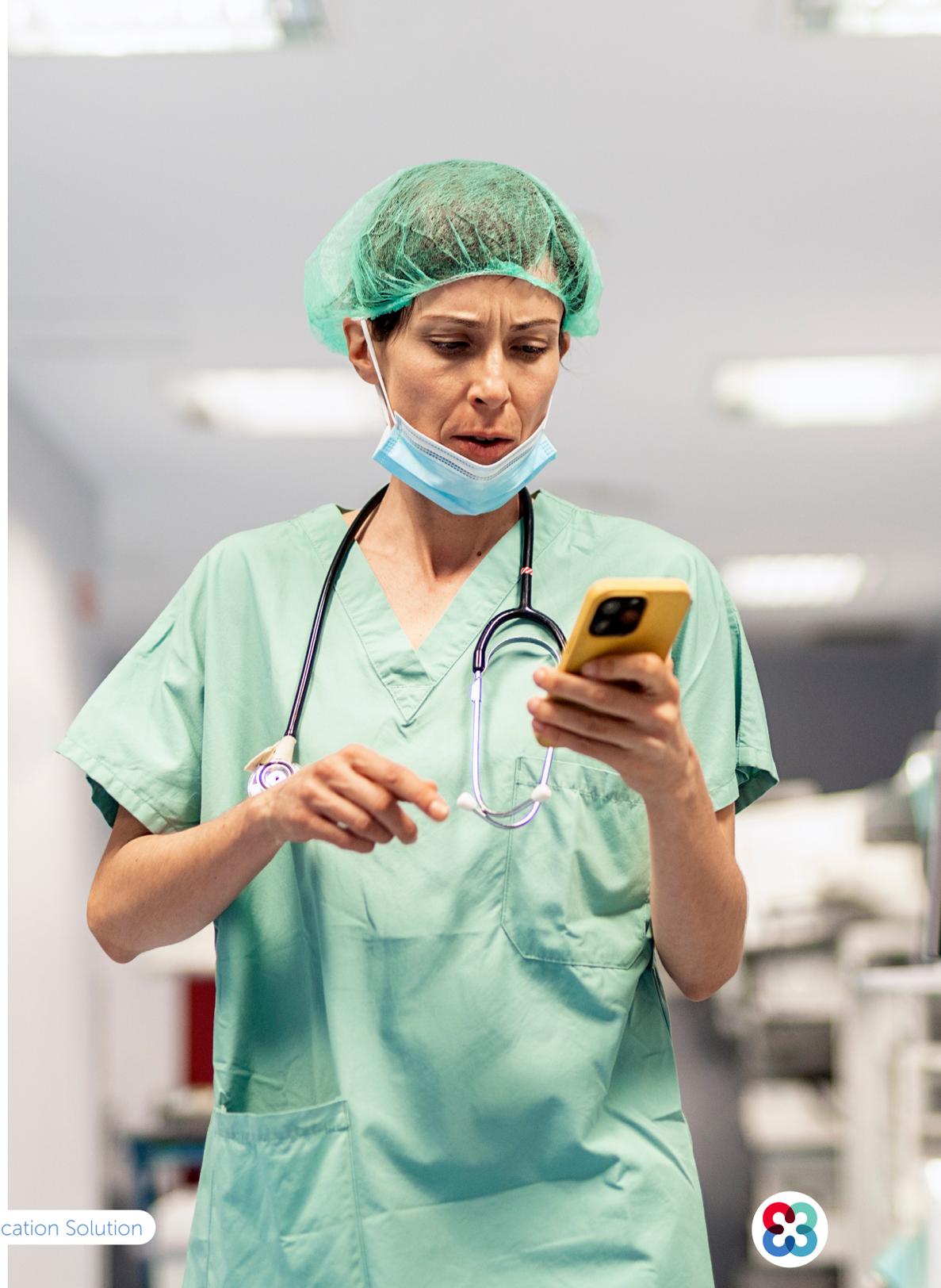
8. Productivity

Will the solution improve care team efficiency?

Not all CC&C solutions are created equal when it comes to improving clinician productivity. Consider how a CC&C solution speeds care coordination by reducing inefficiencies in how you interact with care teams and your systems.

A vendor should be able to demonstrate how the solution will reduce inefficiencies in your clinical workflows, such as eliminating time spent searching for the right people or reducing interruptions from non-actionable alerts and notifications. An effective CC&C solution should demonstrate measurable improvements in clinician productivity through metrics like average length of stay, left without being seen rates, and team performance in critical response scenarios like sepsis or code blue.

While exploring different options, consider how each solution improves clinician productivity, connects everyone in the care continuum, and makes patient data actionable. By carefully evaluating these aspects, you can select a CC&C solution that genuinely enhances care team efficiency, leading to improved patient outcomes and overall satisfaction.





Ready to See More?

Evaluating a clinical communication solution requires you to look beyond mere messaging capabilities. The right CC&C solution should be a catalyst for transformative change, driving improved patient care, reduced costs, and enhanced overall operational efficiency.

We've explored crucial considerations spanning ROI, integration capabilities, training and support, data and analytics, security and compliance, reliability, productivity, and the ability to communicate beyond the hospital walls. Each of these aspects plays a pivotal role in determining the success of a CC&C solution in a healthcare setting.

Are you ready to revolutionize your clinical communication? Take the next step by requesting a demo of TigerConnect. Experience firsthand how our comprehensive solution can elevate your healthcare organization to new heights, delivering on the promise of enhanced care, streamlined workflows, and tangible cost savings.

[Get a Demo](#)



About TigerConnect

TigerConnect transforms healthcare with the industry's most widely adopted clinical collaboration platform – uniquely modernizing how doctors, nurses, care teams, patients, and data connect. With solutions spanning care communication, patient engagement, scheduling, alarm notifications, nurse call, and more, TigerConnect accelerates productivity, reduces costs, and improves patient outcomes, safely and securely. Trusted by more than 7,000 healthcare entities for user-friendly yet enterprise-ready solutions, TigerConnect delivers 99.995% verifiable uptime for more than 10 million messages each day.



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