Widen your digital front door

How to increase patient portal engagement

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For years, healthcare providers invested heavily in digital front-door strategies to acquire, engage and retain customers. Despite these efforts, adoption of patient portals was low. Then, COVID-19 kicked open the digital front door and sent telehealth to the top of the priority list.

Patients came with expectations. They wanted a more complete view of their medical journey, and they wanted an easy, simple way to view it, like they view digital-first consumer sites on their personal devices. They wanted to avoid time spent in waiting rooms, filling out forms, picking up medical image CDs from an office or waiting for a postal carrier to deliver them. They wanted more information to make better decisions and the ability to self-serve. But the portals weren't delivering. Functionality — or the lack of it — plays a key role in their adoption.

In fact, fewer than half of online adults had reported logging into their healthcare services' websites or apps, according to one report. Consumers pointed vaguely to a preference for phone calls, or general lack of interest and awareness.[1] But portals often lacked features to engage patients. For example, researchers found most patient portals do not support online forms (56 percent), document uploads (57 percent) or access to medical images (77 percent).[2]

Telehealth is here to stay. Even patients and providers who could not imagine a virtual experience before COVID-19 quickly turned to technology for contactless care. The patient portal can be instrumental in this effort, with benefits for providers and patients alike. That is, if your patients use it.

Improve your portal with content services

Healthcare providers can dramatically improve engagement by adding much-needed functionality to any patient portal such as Epic MyChart and Allscripts FollowMyHealth. This functionality features robust integrated content services that allow patients to connect and self-serve with important information.

### Patients submit forms and share content remotely

Content services can provide the foundation for patients to complete and sign forms remotely, taking the time they need, using almost any digital device. Patients can also upload documents and images for review in advance of a care visit. Your staff can reduce redundant steps, increase accuracy and efficiency — and you gain a complete audit trail. Best of all, you can create new forms in-house, on the same day, without the increased cost or time waiting for vendors responding to technology needs as they arise.

Share medical images with patients and support telehealth

When enhanced with content services, the patient portal can become a vital resource for diagnosis and treatment information supporting a patient's understanding of their health needs and goals. Medical images, including DICOM images or visible light pictures, can be viewed for a telehealth visit diagnosis or any time a patient wishes to track progress or share with a care team or additional provider. The patient experience improves, and you gain a more efficient, compliant means to share images.
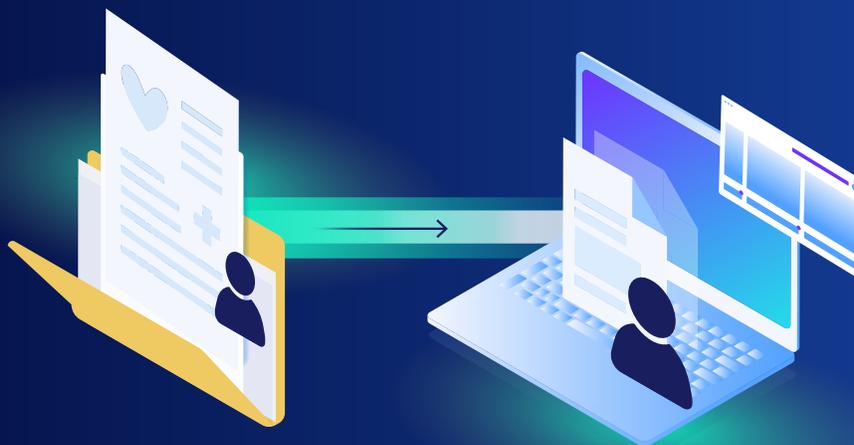
Here's what your portal can do with content services

Empower your portal and engage your patients with integrated content services.

- **Complete forms online:** Patients can fill out and sign registration and other forms online, using nearly any device.

- **Access medical images and studies:** Share medial images, radiological imaging and studies with patients through the portal.

- **Support your digital front door strategy:** Augment telehealth initiatives and gain a unified view of forms, images and documents.

Increase patient satisfaction

- Give patients more time to review, find information and complete forms

- Reduce time spent in waiting rooms and traveling to pick up images

- Deliver a better user experience

Reduce in-person infection exposure

- Spend less time in waiting rooms and in public transport

- Avoid sharing germs via pens, clipboards and paper

- Reduce in-office pickups of CDs and prints

Improve compliance

- Gain a complete audit history for patient forms

- Protect patient privacy and meet HIPAA standards

- Meet requirements for patient access to all medical records
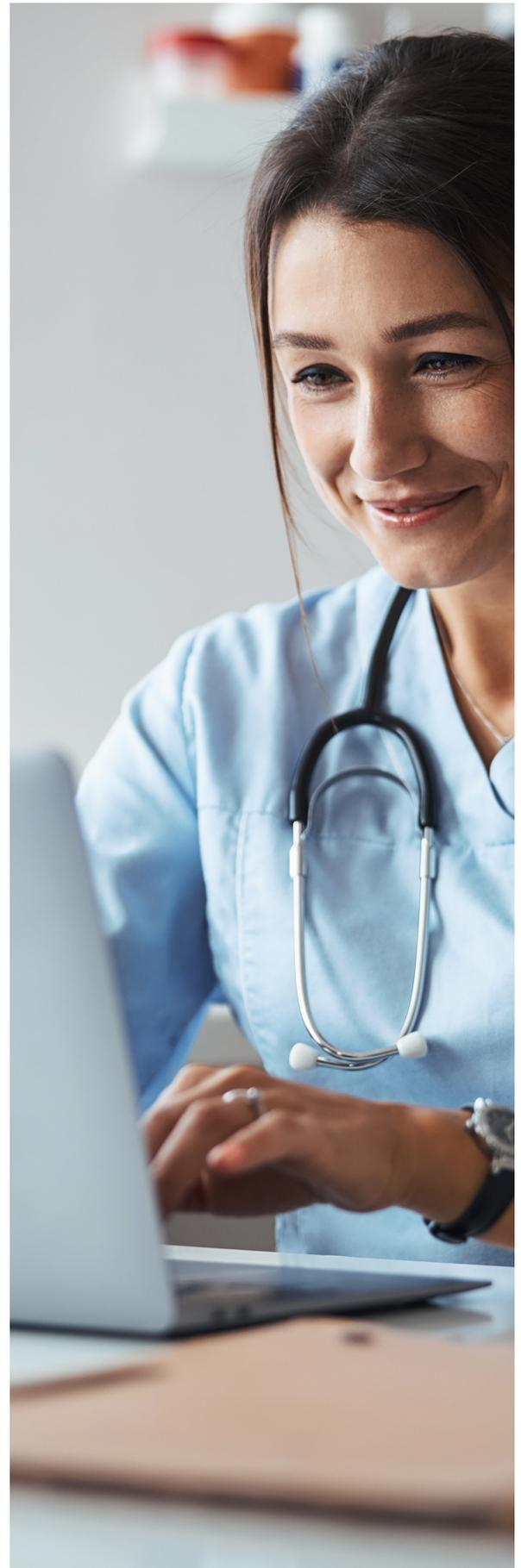
Improve efficiency and reduce costs

- Avoid burdening patients with time-consuming pickups of CDs and images
- Accelerate registration by avoiding re-keying of forms and distribution of images
- Quickly create new forms in-house

Support telehealth

- Support virtual and in-person visits with forms completion and access to patient studies within the portal
- Access from any browser, any time, on any device
- Reference medical images, instructions and records post-visit

Increase patient loyalty

- Empowered with more information, and the ability to self-serve, patients are engaged and satisfied
- Easy, mobile access to medical images lets them share with other providers, family and supporters
- Useful apps help improve health, manage conditions and automate time-consuming processes

Work with all major systems

- Receive forms, documents and images from patients that are integrated for access within your EMR
- Support viewing of images stored in every major PACS and vendor neutral archives
- Provide a unified patient view of unstructured content across DICOM and non-DICOM systems
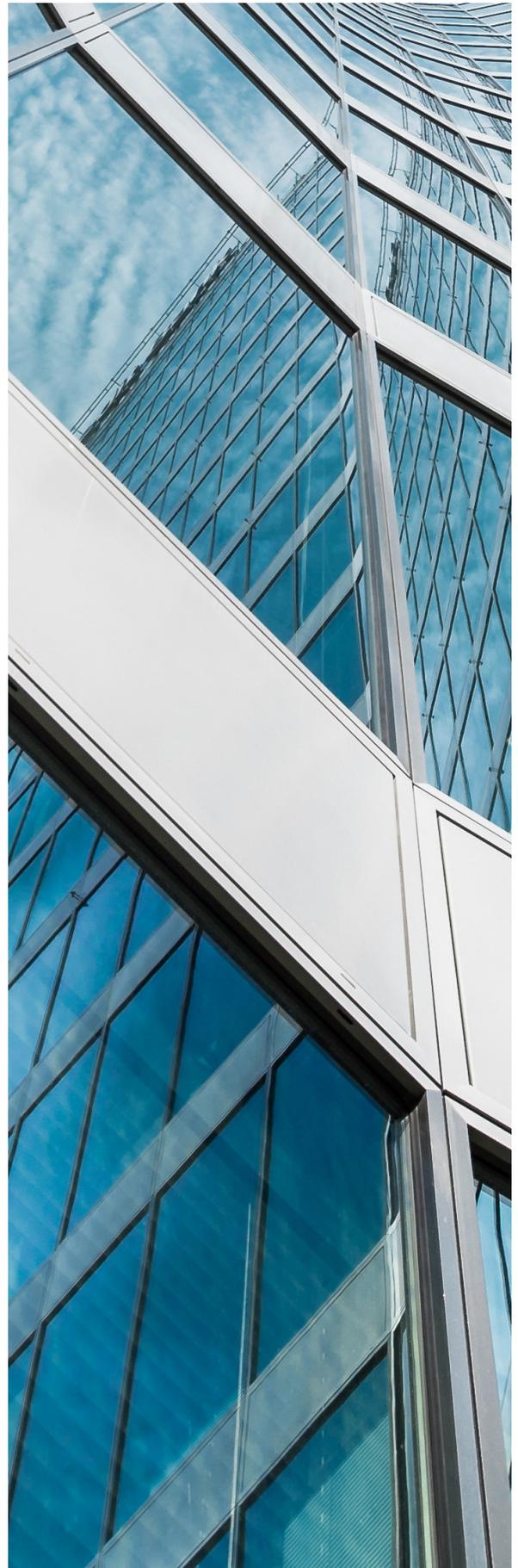
Conclusion

In this new-normal, remote-care world, patients want to access a more complete view of their medical information from the location they choose, on their personal devices. A powerful content services solution that integrates with your portal can increase patient engagement with functionality like online forms completion, access to medical images and more. Portal engagement increases as your patients gain convenience, efficiency, the ability to better self-serve and a deeper understanding of their healthcare. Now, your patient portal becomes a powerful differentiator, streamlining processes, increasing efficiency, reducing costs and improving compliance while increasing patient satisfaction and engagement for improved outcomes.

↗ Learn more about [Hyland Healthcare](#).

Sources

1 Forrester, Optimize your digital front door strategy to enhance the care journey, 2020.
2 HIMSS Analytics, 2021 State of interoperability and connected care, 2021.

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