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Best Practices for Engaging Patients in Their Digital Care Program

Healthcare organizations are increasingly evaluating and implementing digital care programs. After all, the benefits are significant—from improved patient access to care and better patient engagement to higher clinician satisfaction.¹ But providers often still have questions and challenges, including how to ensure that patients are actually participating. Below, we highlight key best practices your clinicians can use to get patients on board with their digital care program.

BEST PRACTICES FOR Introducing Patients to Digital Care

1 Discuss digital care early in the care plan.

Bringing it up early and often helps patients feel like it's a normal part of care rather than something new and intimidating.



Pro tip: Give patients a sneak peek by showing them their program on the computer or downloading the app with them on their smartphone.



2 Meet patients where they are.

Digital care offers tremendous benefits for many patients, but for others it's simply not the right fit. Take the time to understand your patients and their needs before you make the final assessment.



Pro tip: Start by asking patients simple questions such as whether they have a smartphone or use apps for banking or social media. This can help you determine how comfortable they are with technology.

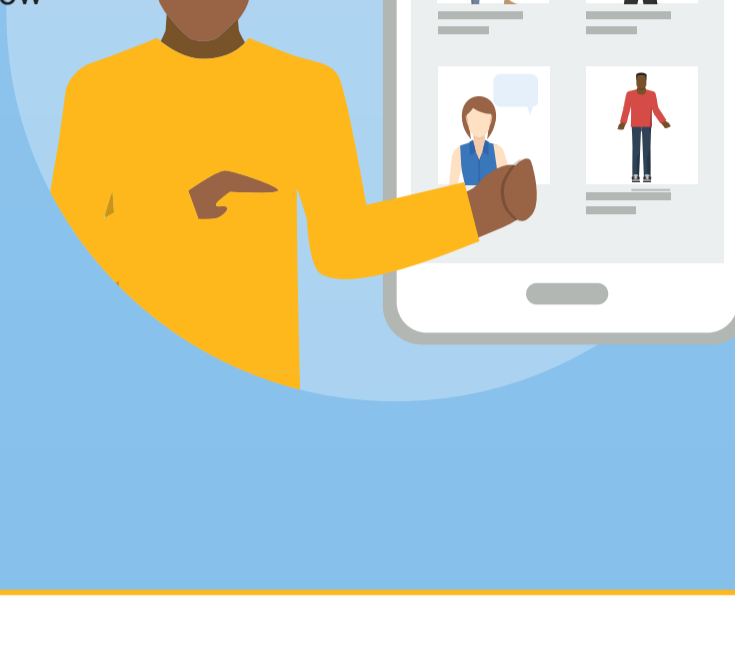


3 Focus on the benefits of digital care rather than the technology.

Instead of listing out all the features of the technology you're introducing, identify the patient's problems first and then present solutions. For example, if your patient says they're forgetful, show them how in-app reminders can help.



Pro tip: Patient-centered communication techniques like **active listening** can help uncover problems patients might face in everyday life.



Worried that older patients won't be receptive? In fact, older adults are using technology at higher rates than ever before. Today, **92% of adults over 50 use text to stay connected with others, 90% use email, 78% use social media, and 70% use video chat.**²

BEST PRACTICES During the Visit

4 Ask patients to send you a message the day after you see them.

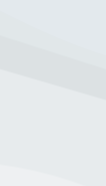
Asking patients to send a quick message to report back on how they're feeling is a great way to get them thinking about digital engagement and strengthen their connection to you.



Pro tip: Remember that anytime a patient opens their digital app to contact their provider, they may also log some exercise activity or view patient education they've been assigned.

5 Ask patients to provide updates after they meet with other providers.

While you might already be getting critical information from a patient's larger care team, this is still a great opportunity to engage your patient and learn about their experience first hand. A visit that the care team describes as routine could be disheartening for your patient.



Pro tip: Listen closely to the patient's response and look for ways to better align the plan of care with their perspective and needs.



6 Reach out to colleagues and let them know the expectations you've set with your patients.

If you're working as part of a care team and your patient isn't frequently engaging with their digital program, your colleagues can follow up as well to prompt a response from the patient.



Pro tip: Aren't hearing back from your patient? Try mixing up when and how you reach out. If you typically send messages in the afternoon, try the morning. If you're still not getting a reply, try a call or video chat.



Once patients get in sync with their digital care program, they see the value. In fact, **82% of patients indicated mobile apps had a positive impact on their ability to engage in exercise activity.**³



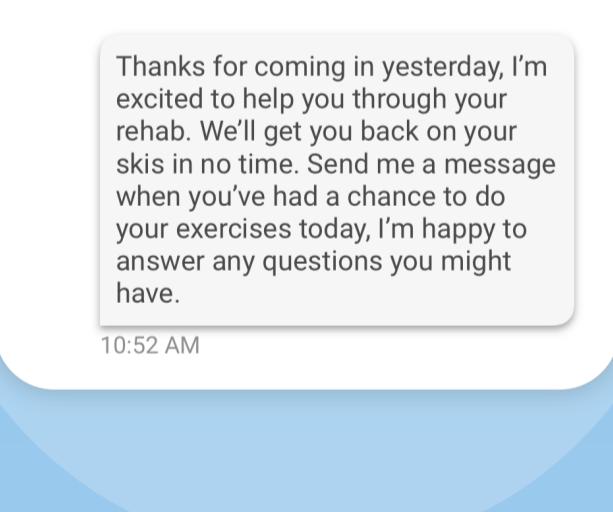
BEST PRACTICES Between Visits

7 Reach out to patients right after the initial evaluation.

By reaching out to patients after the first visit, you can help set expectations for regular program login and boost their chances for long-term success.



Pro tip: Use a positive, friendly, and accessible tone, invite feedback and questions, and be sure to respond promptly.

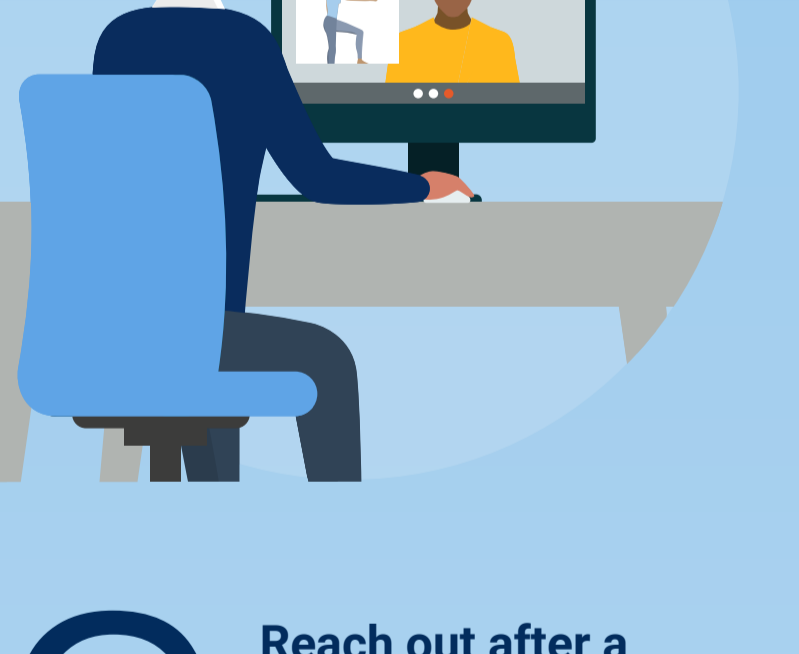


8 Send a message to patients when you update their HEP.

Another great time to send a message is right after you update a patient's home exercise program, as it gives you the opportunity to provide some explanation and further engage your patient.



Pro tip: Clearly explain why you updated the patient's HEP. When patients understand why they're being asked to do something, they're much more likely to comply.

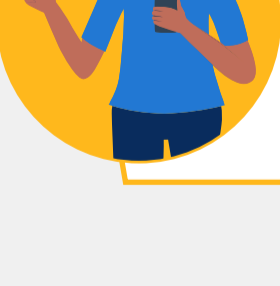


9 Reach out after a particularly tough or emotional visit.

For patients, setbacks can be discouraging, frustrating, or even scary. Sending a short message after a challenging visit can offer reassurance, support, and motivation to your patients.



Pro tip: If a patient isn't responding to messages, pick up the phone. Give them one small step they can take, such as completing one of their exercises.



Digital care is an opportunity to improve rapport with patients—and **85 percent of patients believe personalized care is important.**⁴

How MedBridge Can Help

Digital health tools work best when they're used together to create a seamless patient experience. MedBridge gives you everything you need to keep your patients engaged, activated, and adherent—with no assembly required.

Home Exercise Program (HEP) Engage patients with an easily accessible and customizable library with thousands of video exercises developed by industry professionals.

Patient Adherence Tracking Identify behavioral patterns and barriers to adherence to help boost patient satisfaction and improve clinical outcomes.

Patient Insights Capture patient insights like pain, difficulty, and perceived progress with surveys and monitoring tools to better inform your clinical decision making.

Remote Therapeutic Monitoring Start capturing new revenue and retaining more patients today with our comprehensive remote monitoring solution.

Patient Education Help patients understand their diagnosis and rehabilitation plan with engaging education to encourage them to effectively manage their care plan.

Telehealth Virtual Visits Replace or supplement in-person visits for low-risk patients with effective, user-friendly telehealth tools.

MedBridge GO Mobile App Engage patients and promote adherence by prescribing home exercises in easy daily doses designed to motivate patients to better manage their conditions.

Provider Education Provide flexible access to evidence-based online education and training covering telehealth, patient engagement, soft skills, and more.

Organizations partnering with MedBridge have experienced:

- ✓ 47% reduced costs per episode of care
- ✓ 1,100% increased patient engagement
- ✓ 12% increased FOTO effectiveness
- ✓ 15% fewer no-shows and cancellations
- ✓ Faster access to care by 2.5 days for first appointments
- ✓ Increased referrals from health systems and payers
- ✓ Higher patient satisfaction, adherence, and loyalty

About MedBridge

Combining powerful digital patient care tools with the highest quality education, MedBridge is committed to making healthcare better for both providers and patients. Organizations across the care continuum use MedBridge to provide an enriched, digitally enabled experience that engages patients while streamlining and simplifying care. Designed with over a decade of insight from more than 300,000 clinicians and 25 million patients, MedBridge has helped thousands of organizations realize better patient outcomes. [Learn more.](#)

See how MedBridge can help your organization. [Contact us to request a demo.](#)



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1. American Physical Therapy Association: Digital Health in Practice.
2. AARP Research: Older Adults Embrace Tech for Entertainment and Day-to-Day Living. December, 2021.
3. Scott, C. M., Manning, J. L., Davidson, T. J., & de Oliveira, A. S. (2020). Self-efficacy in patients with chronic musculoskeletal conditions discharged from physical therapy service: A cross-sectional study. *Musculoskeletal Care, 18*(3), 365-371.
4. CVS Health: Health Care Insights Study 2022.