



HOME HEALTH AGENCIES

How to Encourage Clinician Buy-In and Success with Digital Care

By MedBridge

Overview

Integrating digital patient care into existing care programs is proving to be a highly valuable strategy for home health organizations as a way to improve patient engagement and quality of care while optimizing costs.

At the same time, the home health industry is also facing widespread staff burnout. Often, staff are so overwhelmed already that adding another new process or task—even something that will ultimately save them time—is met with resistance. Incorporating new elements into clinician workflows without a clear communication strategy in place can create a pattern that quickly spirals: As staff burnout rises, so do attrition rates, increasing the burden on the remaining employees—and fueling their burnout in turn.

The truth is that digital care can ease staff burnout once clinicians get past the adoption hump. To facilitate this process, you can improve buy-in by helping your providers understand how digital care will benefit them—and everyone.

This eBook will dive into:

- 1 The value of digital care to your agency, patients, and clinicians.
- 2 Best practices for communicating that value to your clinicians.
- 3 Convenient guidelines for addressing common clinician blockers.

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Understand How Digital Care Benefits Everyone

First, understand the ways in which digital care tools can help everyone—your agency, patients, and clinicians. Here are the key benefits of some of the most common digital care tools: telehealth, online home exercise programs, online patient education, and patient mobile apps.

Benefits of common digital care tools

Telehealth

Telehealth and virtual visits offer many benefits for home health agencies, allowing providers to check in with patients between home visits and even reduce the frequency of home visits in some cases. Key benefits include:

- Better access to care for patients.
- Improved patient engagement, outcomes, and satisfaction when organizations combine telehealth with in-person visits.
- Easier patient management with virtual triaging.
- The ability to stay better connected with patients, improving rapport and quality of care.

Tip to improve clinician buy-in: Find a telehealth provider that also provides high-quality online training for clinicians on how to engage patients via virtual visits.

The Rise of Telehealth and Digital Care

The level of telehealth visits in Oct 2021 remained more than **1,300% higher** than before the pandemic.¹

In 2021, **76% of consumers** surveyed stated that they are interested in using telehealth going forward, up from only 11% prior to COVID-19.²

The global telehealth market is projected to grow from **\$90.74 billion** in 2021 to **\$636.38 billion** in 2028.³

“The rapid and dramatic shift of patient volume into the fragmented HHA market will likely necessitate the adoption of digital technologies to enable care delivery.”

— [*“It’s Time for Health Care CEOs to Rethink Their Home Health Strategy,”*](#)
Ernst & Young

Understand How Digital Care Benefits Everyone

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Online home exercise programs

Home exercise programs (HEPs) are a key component of high-quality therapy, providing important care continuity for patients while reducing the cost and time commitment of supervised therapy sessions for providers.

Research shows that when patients adhere to their plan of care and participate in their home exercise program they have better outcomes, reduced pain, and increased physical function.⁴

Key benefits include:

- Time savings for clinicians by allowing them to quickly and easily assign online exercise programs to patients.
- Improved patient engagement through interactive exercise demonstrations.
- Better patient outcomes due to higher levels of engagement, follow-through, and buy-in.

When clinicians can use online HEPs, they do. We've seen significantly enhanced clinician engagement, with 110 percent more online programs assigned to patients.⁵

Tip to improve clinician buy-in: Talk with clinicians about the ability of online home exercise programs to boost engagement and keep patients activated by allowing them to access their programs from anywhere.

Online patient education

Targeted online educational resources can empower patients to actively participate in their care. These resources might include instructional videos, other educational materials, and interactive tools that teach patients how to prevent disease progression and maintain physical function. By gaining knowledge and adopting self-management practices, patients can take proactive steps to optimize their physical well-being.

A review of 37 randomized controlled trials found that providing patients with targeted education materials led to greater satisfaction with care.⁶

Key benefits include better patient self management, engagement, adherence, satisfaction, and outcomes.

Tip to improve clinician buy-in: High-quality patient education empowers patients to make better informed decisions about their own care, including continuing with their care program when they otherwise would have stopped sooner. Providing clinicians with engaging, easy-to-access online education can help patients with chronic conditions like COPD, heart failure, and diabetes better manage those conditions, stay as healthy as possible, and avoid potential ED or acute care visits.

Understand How Digital Care Benefits Everyone

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Patient mobile apps

Patient mobile apps help patients more easily access their care plans, view their progress, receive automated exercise prompts, and communicate with their providers between visits.

Key benefits include:

- Improved patient engagement through gamification, reminders, push notifications, and two-way messaging.
- Better communication between patients and clinicians, resulting in a stronger therapeutic alliance.
- The ability for clinicians to gather powerful patient activity insights.

Tip to improve clinician buy-in: Implementing a patient mobile app with two-way messaging helps clinicians better address patient questions and concerns between appointments.

Older Adults Are Using Technology at Higher Rates Than Ever Before

The percentage of older adults who use smartphones has increased dramatically in recent years—to 96 percent for those aged 50 to 65, and to 75 percent for those 65+.⁸



82%

82% of patients indicated mobile apps had a positive impact on their ability to engage in exercise activity.⁷



Take a Page from the Change Management Playbook

No matter what new change you want to encourage your team to adopt, change management is proven to help. Change management theory notes that there are both organizational and individual barriers to change, either of which can derail your quality improvement efforts and prevent you from making a change that will positively impact patients. This approach is based on using an accountable leadership style and communication skills that help encourage collaboration, trust, and buy-in.

Start by determining how ready your organization is to make a change and adjust goals and strategies from there. Important change management best practices include:

- **Ask rapport-building questions.** Asking open and curious questions drives change, builds connection, and improves outcomes.
- **Practice active listening.** Being a successful leader comes down to being able to listen to your team effectively and demonstrate that you're listening.
- **Set intentions.** Your intention sets the framework for everything you do as a leader. For change to have a chance, your team will need to know where they are heading and how they are going to get there. Without a roadmap, it will be difficult for those engaged in the changes to understand the need for change and what the change will result in.
- **Use accountable language.** Modeling accountability by setting clear expectations and using clear communication helps create a team dynamic that supports organizational change.



Discussion Guide for Encouraging Clinician Buy-In

Along with practicing active listening, here are some ways to address common concerns you might hear from your clinicians.

■ Is digital care really worth it?

When done right, digital patient care benefits everyone. For home health agencies tasked with minimizing costs while improving care quality, a comprehensive digital care program offers many benefits. It empowers patients to actively participate in their own care, facilitates personalized exercise routines, improves clinician workflows, and enables ongoing monitoring and support from clinicians by giving them the ability to reach out to patients who are struggling, answer their questions, and check in via phone or telehealth. By doing so, digital care helps agencies better manage high-risk patients, reduce ED and acute care visits, improve overall patient satisfaction and outcomes, and optimize costs and reimbursements.

■ Digital care will take too much of my time to use.

A single digital care platform with everything that's needed for home exercise program assignment, between-visit communication, and professional development helps clinicians use their time with patients more efficiently by improving workflows.

■ Will digital care really benefit my patients?

Patient engagement is a constant challenge for home health agencies, and digital patient care is shown to improve engagement and activation, resulting in better reimbursement and better clinical outcomes. In fact, patients enrolled in a digital engagement platform after hip and knee surgeries demonstrated a 45.4 percent reduction in 90-day hospital readmissions and a 54.4 percent reduction in 90-day complications, significantly reducing costs.⁹

■ My older patients won't want to or know how to use digital care.

Older adults are far more tech-savvy than they are given credit for! Per the AARP, 86 percent of adults ages 50 and up own a smartphone, 94 percent text, 88 percent use email, and 67 percent use video chat. The right digital care solution should offer features that promote accessibility and are easy to use for patients of all ages.¹⁰



Quick Guide: How to Engage Older Adults in Digital Care

Learn why it's so important to engage older adults in online care and how to do so successfully.



How MedBridge Can Help

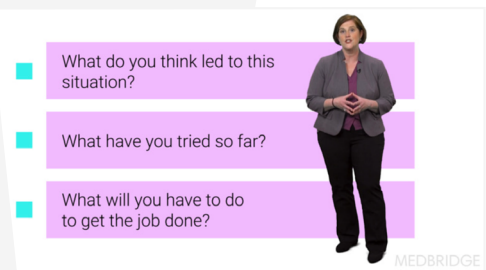
MedBridge Digital Care Platform

Digital health tools work best when they're used together. MedBridge gives you everything you need to engage patients, improve outcomes, and minimize costs—with no assembly required. Our digital care platform includes:

- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Patient Education**
Help patients understand their diagnosis and rehabilitation plan with interactive education that encourages them to effectively manage their care plan.
- ✓ **Home Exercise Program (HEP)**
Engage patients with an easily accessible and customizable library with thousands of video exercises developed by industry professionals.
- ✓ **Provider Education**
Provide evidence-based online education and training covering telehealth, patient engagement, soft skills, and more.
- ✓ **Remote Therapeutic Monitoring**
Activate patients, build a powerful therapeutic alliance, and achieve better outcomes with robust engagement and patient monitoring tools and powerful analytics and reporting.

Learn more with Change Management Course Series

Through practical tips and strategies as well as scenarios specific to home health, leaders and supervisors will learn applicable skills to help them connect organizational change to team success. These short, actionable change management courses support leaders in managing for accountability through setting and communicating clear expectations and reinforcing day-to-day operational efficiencies that promote improved collaboration and team dynamics.



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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.](#)