Microsoft

Five actions to take now to boost your healthcare delivery

Contents

Introduction

What is care coordination?

This e-book focuses on care coordination—how your care teams streamline complex patient care activities to better engage payors, providers, and the patient in healthcare delivery. Through collaborative and coordinated care, teams are better able to synchronize the exchange of a patient's healthcare information among multiple providers and specialists while further improving the team's efficiency and care outcomes.

As healthcare organizations continue to transform, they face escalating pressures of time and cost, workforce scarcities, disconnected business processes and systems, and increased patient needs. Many pointed solutions and tools exist in healthcare; clinicians and administrators expect these tools to work in a way that helps them cut through the clutter of this fragmented world. But handoffs are tricky because bumpy communication reduces clinicians' patient time in favor of clerical work and results in poor quality of care, higher readmission rates, and higher physician burnout rates.

How do modern care teams collaborate to navigate complexities like these within a constantly changing industry? How do you empower your clinicians and other team members to spend more quality time with patients? How do you enable your team to use technology to provide the best patient care? New models and solutions for care coordination and delivery are emerging to help boost outcomes for your clinicians, administrators, patients, and business—enhancing communication, workflows, and decision making across your organization and beyond.

Staying ahead of emerging issues in healthcare

New models for care

The healthcare industry faces a growing, aging population and increasing demands. Healthcare worker shortages and the need for cost savings create both challenges and opportunities when it comes to improving patient care experiences and business outcomes. As medical care becomes significantly more complex, the tools clinicians use to collaborate often lag. Most collaboration tools are disconnected systems that impede interoperability of patient data across multiple platforms. With the existing tools, most overburdened healthcare teams spend too much time on administrative tasks and not enough with patients, resulting in the rising complexity and costs that are now driving the move toward more collaboration and technology adoption.

Reimagining your care strategies— more collaboration, more care

Your healthcare organization needs to empower teams with the right tools to provide patients with the best care possible, while also focusing on putting people's privacy and security at the center. To reach this goal, you need to ensure that every action your team performs adds value to the care process. Teams need to access the right information and coordinate with the right people—and they expect a single solution designed to help them make fast decisions based on the massive amount of information available in various clinical decision support systems. They need flexible and better-integrated tools that serve the way they work, rather than disjointed tools that require them to compromise their workflow in unnatural ways.
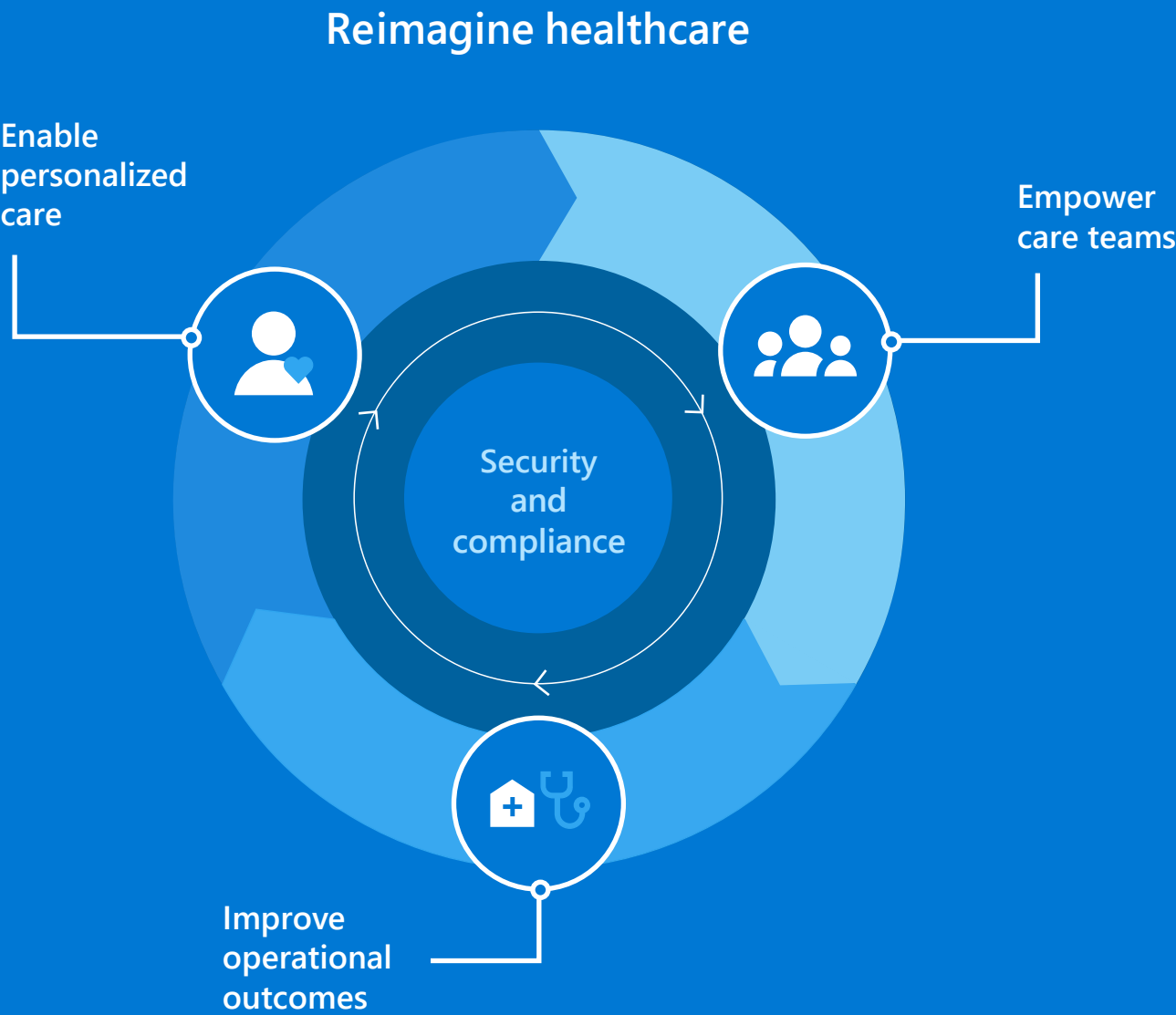
Healthcare organizations like yours need to improve the exchange of healthcare information and close the gaps in care coordination through technology. Toward this goal, technology partners can help facilitate a platform that encourages better coordination among care teams, clinicians, administrators, and patients while increasing their process efficiencies. Technology solutions can help streamline communication and collaboration, make information more accessible to find and share, and ease the burden of time-consuming tasks—all without compromising security, privacy, and compliance.

To achieve modern-day digital collaboration and communication practices, your healthcare organization predominately needs to restructure processes and deliver capabilities. As new technologies like cloud- and mobile-first solutions, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) begin to transform the healthcare industry, you'll need to consider all opportunities to connect data and surface important insights at precisely the right time while keeping compliance, privacy, and security at the core of everything you do. Providing teams with integrated collaboration tools enables them to be part of a solution—making them more responsive, data driven, and customer centric. A better-connected and coordinated healthcare system provides care teams with more complete profiles and real-time details of their patients, and lets individuals take ownership of their health by providing more information.

As a clinician, I feel my IT solutions that promised to make our jobs easier actually make them harder. I always find myself wrangling a multitude of incompatible apps and systems to record, find, and share necessary information, and that eats up my valuable time. How do I cut through the clutter so I can spend more quality time with my patients?

Reimagine healthcare

Enable personalized care

Empower care teams

Security and compliance

Improve operational outcomes

Technology bridge—coordinating people and processes

To optimize care coordination and delivery, health organizations need to improve collaboration and bring together information, people, and processes across the health ecosystem (see Figure 2). This connection is key to solving many of today's most pressing healthcare challenges. Health organizations need to bridge the information gap and facilitate secure knowledge sharing across care teams and between all parties, including care providers, payors, facilities, patients, and their families.

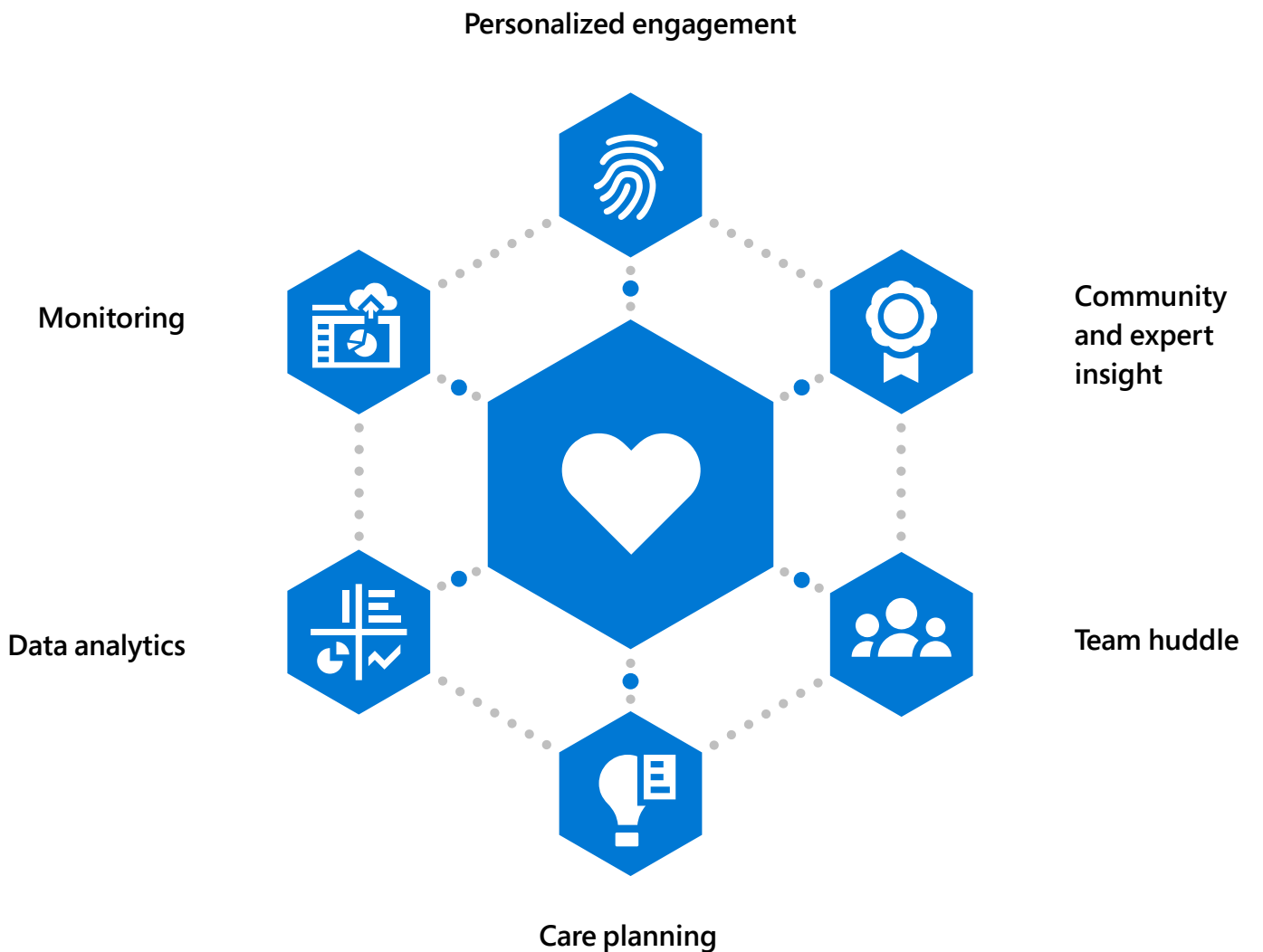# 93 percent of patients

Source: Transcend Insights

say the ability of care providers to easily share and receive important information about their medical history—wherever they need treatment—is among the most important factors in receiving personalized care.

Creating a secure place by integrating data, clinical systems, apps, and electronic health records (EHRs) can help your teams stay synchronized and ensures they are capable of providing personalized, proactive care. To help better coordinate care and reduce duplicate efforts, you can bring information from EHRs into the contextual workflow and to dispersed team members. Improve information flow by involving care teams, patients, and their families more closely in care decisions while engaging the right care resources at the right time with minimal delays.

Care teams can easily track, capture, and communicate about medical histories, screenings, tests, appointments, and patient relationships across the care continuum. Familiar tools automate routine tasks and can be used from anywhere, increasing staff efficiency to manage expanding caseloads. You can take advantage of the specialization of multidisciplinary teams and the surfacing of relevant insights to coordinate activities of clinical personnel to deliver patient-centric care. This model also demands a highly secure, compliant platform for instant messaging, voice and video conference, and social tools that can help sync care teams on patient cases—all without interrupting workflow. Healthcare personnel can continuously monitor a patient's condition by gathering data from remote devices to provide timely alerts, interventions, and personalized treatment plans. This reduces readmissions and helps to manage post-discharge appointment scheduling, care plan check-ins, and coordinated handoffs.

Personalized engagement

Monitoring

Community and expert insight

Data analytics

Team huddle

Care planning

(Figure 2) New models for coordinated, patient-centered care

With easy access to risk assessments and recommendations, providers and administrators can anticipate patient care needs and optimize staffing and medical supply orders to reduce costs. AI and advanced analytics apps can accelerate care provider decision making. You can enable your organization's care teams to work ahead of patient needs by predicting them before they even occur. All of this empowers your healthcare organization and clinicians to do their best, and in doing so, live up to their promise to give patients the best care possible— all from a secure platform.

Microsoft commissioned the global research and consulting firm Frost & Sullivan to complete an evaluation of Microsoft 365 for healthcare organizations, concluding that Microsoft Teams directly addresses the top challenges facing healthcare providers with a modern, chat-based communication tool that doesn't require compromising on security and compliance.

"Based on our research, Microsoft Teams directly address the top challenges facing healthcare providers in electronic messaging in hospitals and health systems."

—Greg Caressi, Frost & Sullivan

Source: Read the full commissioned study conducted by Frost & Sullivan, sponsored by Microsoft, "Clinical Communication in a Digital Era."

Streamlining care delivery with strategic solutions

While most healthcare organizations invest regularly in the latest medical technologies, productivity tools frequently remain outdated. As care becomes more complex, it is predominately crucial for clinicians and specialists to access the right information and coordinate with the right people. Fragmented solutions add unnecessary complications as clinicians are asked to switch between different point solutions; they might go to one tool for electronic medical records, another tool for scheduling, and yet another tool to look up information on the drugs clinicians are prescribing. Teams facing real-time care decisions too often rely on unsecured workarounds to communicate with other providers. When clinicians use unsecured, consumer-based apps, patient privacy is jeopardized, and hospitals are at higher risk of compliance violations. Thus, healthcare workers often end up spending much of their time on administrative tasks. Clinicians badge in and out of EHR systems an average of 50 times a day, leaving less time for actual patient care.

With ineffective communication, clinicians and patients frequently do not understand the goals of treatment or potential side effects, resulting in costly mistakes. Poorly coordinated care plans waste time and frustrate everyone involved, and sometimes result in more acute episodes that require costly hospital stays and ER visits. Patients want transparency and easy access to medical information during their care, but these challenges increase provider dissatisfaction and obstruct patient care. Dissatisfaction with care hampers future medical interactions, prevents sharing of information, and detracts from building trust.
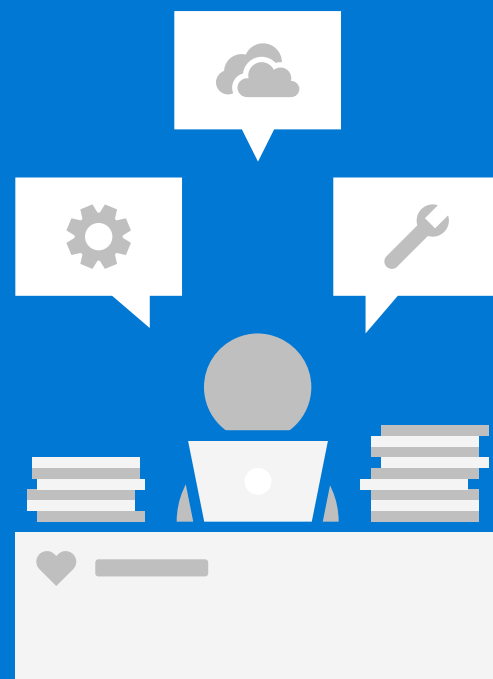
In this section, see how healthcare organizations like yours are connecting people, processes, and data with secure digital tools.

The below **pain points** are paired with a use case highlighting a **technology solution** that has been effectively implemented by a healthcare organization.

How to better connect and engage teams and patients

Help providers engage teams and patients through a powerful solution

How to securely and quickly share information

Empower care teams with a secure platform for real-time communication

How to streamline business processes to deliver care on tight budgets

Drive down healthcare costs with effective care delivery

How to flag performance concerns across teams

Improve care outcomes with coordination and virtual team huddles

How to meet individual and population needs more effectively

Achieve population health goals by targeting care with advanced analytics

How to better connect and engage teams and patients

Help providers engage teams and patients through a powerful solution

Start with these questions:

- ✓ Do you rely on disparate systems that make it difficult to consolidate patient data before you can analyze patient health?

- ✓ Do you feel that your care teams are unable to engage patients in a timely way in their care decisions?

- ✓ Does your existing clinical system limit patients' ability to access, secure, and control personalized information?

Develop a plan

You need to empower individuals and healthcare professionals by combining information from patients, devices, and apps with existing clinical data and EHRs for a complete view of patients' health. Enable new modes of collaboration and communication to engage teams and patients and allow them to actively access the latest health information.

Execute your strategy

Coordinate care across multiple patients, use technology that integrates with EHRs, and enable care providers to communicate about patient care in real time with built-in security. Using this real-time communication platform across teams and using centralized data with advanced analytics can help you determine best practices and tailor patient care. You can increase communication and collaboration between patients and care teams on both sides. By gathering data from remote devices in real time, you can continuously monitor a patient's conditions to provide timely alerts, interventions, and personalized treatment plans, and with remote access to their care team, patients can reach out with questions and concerns without having to schedule in-person consultations.

For more information on how effective care coordination enhances patient engagement, read our Patient Engagement e-book.

Key benefits and outcomes

Increase your organization's level of patient engagement
and enhance patient outcomes.

Improve the transparency of patient care.

Stay connected to patients through remotely managed care plans.

Deliver real-time, continuous interaction
among patients and caregivers.

Case study

Northwell Health streamlines patient care through new technologies

Northwell Health has given their employees the power of a 360-degree view of each patient with the help of tools like Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Microsoft PowerApps.

Using Dynamics 365 and PowerApps provides a consistent view of data across the organization and lets Northwell Health focus on employee needs instead of data models or scalability.

Moving the hospital's processes and information to the digital realm through a rounding app built using PowerApps has helped Northwell Health's employees store, access, and communicate information efficiently and transparently to save time and money and provide better patient care—all while maintaining data privacy and ensuring HIPAA compliance.

"With business applications built on Microsoft PowerApps and Dynamics 365, we've lowered the barrier for bringing innovative solutions to our employees quickly."

Vishwanath Anatraman
Chief Innovation Architect
Northwell Health

Read full story ›
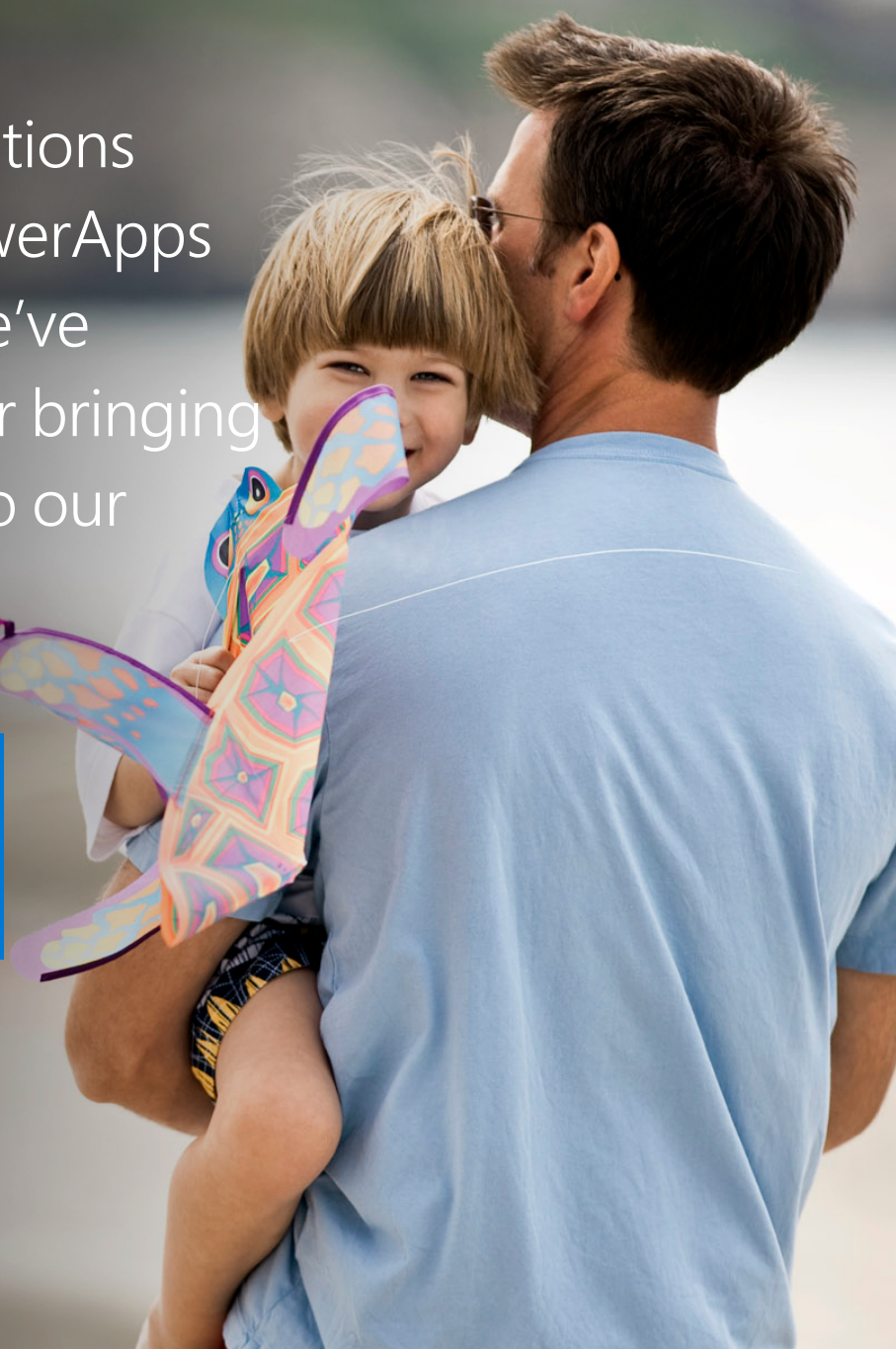
How to securely and quickly share information

Empower care teams with a secure platform for real-time communication

Start with these questions:

- ✓ Are you using fragmented communication tools that waste time and hinder care?

- ✓ Do your teams deal with urgent messages that require real-time responses?

- ✓ Do you have a system in place that can integrate data, clinical systems, apps, and electronic health records in a single place?

- ✓ Does your organization lack security protocols for consumer apps and personal devices?

Develop a plan

Give your teams a secure way to connect and share information quickly with messaging capabilities designed to meet the enhanced security and compliance requirements of the health industry. Your employees can communicate quickly and securely through voice, video, chat, files, and more to share information among clinicians. Quickly send essential, urgent messages and get real-time responses without comprising security.

Execute your strategy

Establish an integrated and comprehensive messaging platform that can bring together messages, files, voice and video calling, and meetings into one hub for teamwork, while also giving access to patient information and apps. In one place, your team can easily ask questions, make notes, search for relevant content, and keep the team updated in a reliable, integrated, and secure manner. Teams can remain up to date with real-time information and manage various hospital operations like shift scheduling, safety processes, supplies, bed capacity, length of stay, and other critical operations. Also available are advanced messaging features designed primarily for healthcare organizations like priority notifications and message delegation in your messaging platform. Priority notifications are for urgent messages; clinicians get repeated notices about critical information that needs to be treated differently from other messages. With message delegation, clinicians and staff can assign another recipient to receive their messages when they're not available.

Key benefits and outcomes

Communicate with industry compliance (HIPAA, GDPR, etc.) and security to stay compliant.

Access secure portals and mobile tools for better care transparency and faster service.

Support clinicians in sending questions and images to each other in a secure environment.

Enable administrators to set policies that prevent images from being stored on a mobile device or local drive.

Case study

Adventist Health System adopts a new care delivery model for fast, secure information access from anywhere.

Adventist Health System is transforming into a more consumer-centric organization— one that meets the needs of patients and families at every stage of health. More than

80,000 employees are embracing this new care delivery model. Since employees are frequently on the go, they need secure, quick access to information from anywhere.

Clinical staff members now use Microsoft Skype for Business Online to improve information flow and connect physicians with remote patients. Everything is in one place: SharePoint Online sites, files, chats, meetings, and Microsoft Planner.

With Teams, the care team can keep persistent conversations, documents, and other resources about a topic in one place, which helps groups focus and move faster. The highly secure environment helps Adventist stay compliant with the HIPAA and other healthcare regulations.

"Our clinicians and outpatient teams use Microsoft Teams to improve patient flow, using secure IM and presence to locate one another and make handoffs without leaving patients."

Tony Qualls
Director of Enterprise Technical Services
Adventist Health System

Read full story >
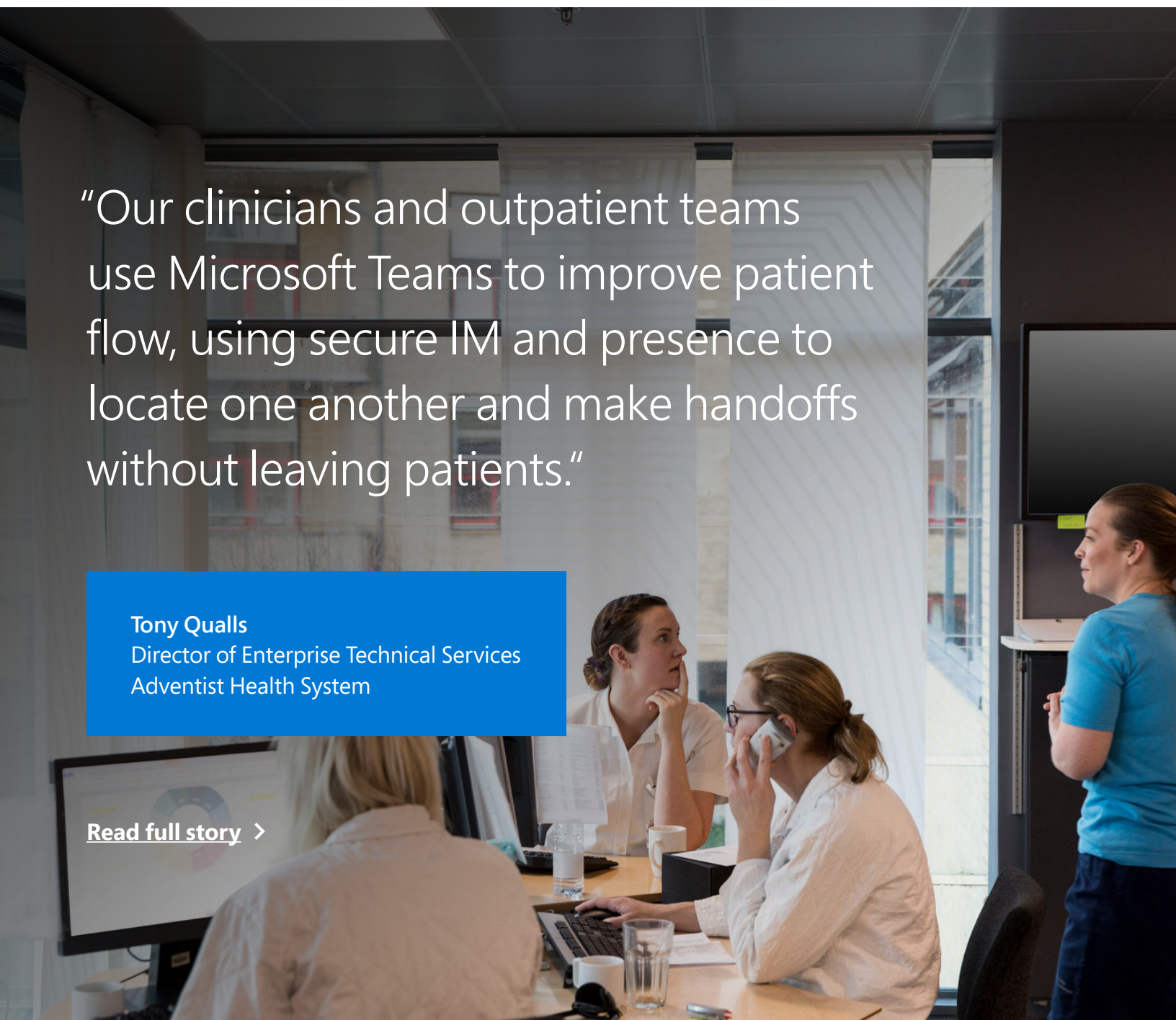
How to streamline business processes to deliver care on tight budgets

Drive down healthcare costs with effective care delivery

Start with these questions:

- ✓ Do you think that patient and operational information are challenging to collect and increase the cost of care?

- ✓ Do your care team members feel disconnected or disempowered, resulting in frustration and reduced business productivity?

- ✓ Do you think best practices are not easily shared across your organization, accelerating the time to care?

Develop a plan

You need to modernize the workplace to help clinical and non-clinical teams spend more of their time more meaningfully—interacting with patients and making informed decisions that improve care at reduced cost. By using one platform instead of disparate point solutions, you can save both time and money. Care teams can reduce time spent on administrative tasks, eliminating redundant tests and procedures and increasing time dedicated to higher-value care delivery.

Execute your strategy

Establish a platform that creates meaningful connections with all existing—and potential—healthcare processes. Capture data from every process, integrate this data with predictive insights, and deliver it with role-based workflows to improve processes and inform future care delivery. Using this approach, you can create proactive treatment and wellness plans while ensuring compliance and confidentiality. By reducing the time to retrieve and share clinical information with providers, you can enable faster diagnosis, which can also lead to a lower cost of care—for both the patient and provider.

Key benefits and outcomes

Embrace value-based reimbursement models.

Achieve higher-quality patient care at lower costs.

Increase operational efficiency.

Reduce process latency by creating proactive treatment and wellness plans.

Case study

United Kingdom public health system improving patient experience and clinician collaboration with Teams

The National Health Service (NHS) is the United Kingdom's public health system, providing healthcare to more than 65 million residents across the 4 constituent countries of the United Kingdom. Capacity planning is a big challenge for the NHS. To improve the flow of information and decision making, South London and Maudsley (SLaM) introduced Teams—the hub for teamwork in Microsoft 365—and brought the different groups together on a single platform.

With this implementation of Teams, Microsoft Power BI, and Microsoft 365, NHS SLaM has narrowed down the number of beds and thoroughly optimized its planning efforts. As a result, the monthly cost was reduced, and trust was increased among team members. Teams enables a richer exchange of information, communication, and effective collaboration. By using the right tools to analyze and understand data, NHS SLaM empowers its clinicians to provide a better patient experience and outcome as well as a reduced IT cost.

"The platform is so easy and enables a lot more collaboration and information sharing taking place. Microsoft gives us the right tools, and we use them for customer inclination and to better serve them."

Stephen Docherty
CIO of NHS SLaM and Chair of London CIO Council

Read full story ›

How to flag performance concerns across teams

Improve care outcomes with coordination and virtual team huddles

Start with these questions:

- ✓ Is there a designated process or tool for critical communications within your organization's care continuum?

- ✓ Are your clinicians spending time chasing information and contacts?

- ✓ Can you take advantage of multidisciplinary teams and surface relevant insights?

- ✓ Do you think in-person care coordination meetings currently burn too much clinical time?

Develop a plan

Healthcare teams regularly sync on statuses, track issues and metrics, and build plans in meetings that are referred to as huddles. Digitizing the huddle creates a single virtual location to interact as a team, helping providers stay in tune with their patients and improve the quality of care. You can deliver patient-centric care by managing all the activities of clinical personnel from a single virtual space for collaboration.

Execute your strategy

You can provide a canvas to efficiently design a virtual workspace where team members can collaborate using a variety of tools in a single platform. Enable health professionals to participate in huddles from anywhere and at any time, in a scheduled or impromptu manner, to communicate about patients in real time. Deploy best practices using this virtual huddle across the organization, identify patient care issues and potential causes, and share ideas across the health team using natural conversations to better structure collaboration around quality, safety, and process improvement. The team can see notes or watch recordings to share ideas and drive the continuous improvement of care. Healthcare providers and care teams can coordinate quick reviews to check in with each other and share information, and teams can have frequent but short briefings so that they can stay informed, review work, make plans, and move ahead rapidly.

Key benefits and outcomes

Effectively relay information and tackle management issues to improve quality, safety, and patient care.

Share and manage knowledge and ideas securely across health teams using one central hub.

Scale healthcare best practices across your organization.

Improve privacy, security, and compliance in and across networks and systems.

Case study

Advocate Aurora Health helps patients live well with the coordinated care solution from Microsoft

Advocate Aurora Health, one of the largest not-for-profit healthcare networks in the United States, approaches care by treating patients holistically and proactively. The organization worked with longtime partner Slalom Consulting to help its interdisciplinary health teams (IDTs) adopt best practices across the organization.

The result? The IDTs now deliver innovative, patient-centered care—collaborating to ensure that each patient receives the right care, at the right place, at the right time. Members rely on the solution to communicate in real time and easily access information to enhance patient care.

Advocate Aurora Health handles large amounts of protected health information (PHI), prioritizing data security in all its technology solutions to meet regulatory compliance requirements and reduce increasingly sophisticated cyber attacks.

Advocate Aurora Health confirmed that all the apps in Microsoft 365 are covered under its business associate agreement (BAA), and that it complies with HIPAA. To further safeguard the network, Advocate Aurora Health uses the Microsoft 365 Security and Compliance Center to monitor its Microsoft Secure Score, which is based on the organization's security settings and regular activities within Microsoft 365. With the Microsoft Secure Score acting as an initial checkpoint, Advocate Aurora Health can monitor and maintain a highly secure environment.

"By using the care coordination solution, we easily sync with anyone involved in a patient's care and maintain better insight into each patient … When we see this communication becomes seamless, and in real time, it's a great victory for our teams."

Dr. Divyang Joshi
Medical Director and Doctor of Internal Medicine
Advocate Aurora Health

Read full story ›

How to meet individual and population needs more effectively

Achieve population health goals by targeting care with advanced analytics

Start with these questions:

- ✓ What system do you use to collect data from care teams across the health network?

- ✓ Do you have a tool that can help you determine optimal treatments and verify research results?

- ✓ Is there a system in place to identify internal and external factors that influence patient outcomes?

Develop a plan

Maximize your positive healthcare outcomes through early interventions. Influence the delivery of care to a group of individuals who have similar healthcare needs, as opposed to evaluating and treating medical conditions one patient at a time.

Execute your strategy

Get access to your case files, valuable population-level data, claim data, and comprehensive records of patient interactions all in one centralized location. Using AI and advanced analytics capabilities on your data can help you proactively identify at-risk segments of the population and reach out to potential treatment candidates. Detect discrepancies in the data patterns and quality of care delivered in different healthcare settings and identify populations at higher risk for sub-optimal care. These analysis results can be used to optimize care management systems and focus clinical resources on patients with more urgent needs. Understanding the communities you serve through population health analysis and reporting can help your healthcare organization transition from fee-for-service payments to value-based care while reducing costs and providing better care.

Key benefits and outcomes

Manage population health to expand the new care model.

Identify and measure your effectiveness of care across all settings.

Increase patient engagement.

Reduce your cost per service.

Case study

AiR Healthcare uses cloud-based population health management to expand care model

AiR (Assistance in Recovery) Healthcare is taking advantage of a care coordination solution to understand the organization's behavioral health patients better—and to build and deliver care plans uniquely tailored to each.

AiRCare algorithms process personal and population data collected in Health360 to identify individuals who may have behavioral health needs.

Care professionals use AiRCare to coordinate outreach, enrollments, and clinical care plans. The approach can be personalized over time based on data from insurers, EHRs, and other sources. AiRCare queries and analyzes information within populations to generate insights—ultimately helping anticipate patient behavior, increase engagement, reduce recidivism, and improve outcomes.

"By supporting population health management with Health360, Dynamics 365, and the Azure global footprint, we can impact behavioral health care on a scale that can't be ignored."

Andrew Wainwright
Chief Development Officer
AiR Healthcare Solutions

Watch video ▶

Summary

As innovations in healthcare quickly advance, care has become more intricate and specialized. Healthcare providers strive to deliver the best possible care to patients, but the tools teams use for coordinating patient care are often disjointed and can impede the collaborative workflows required in a complex care environment. Cohesive, connected, and collaborative healthcare is becoming the new norm for care delivery. Healthcare organizations need technologies that can connect information, people, and processes across the health ecosystem while strengthening privacy, security, and compliance.

Healthcare organizations can improve care outcomes by implementing a single unified platform for all health teams to communicate and collaborate seamlessly. The platform can empower health teams to work together to share ideas securely, enhance decision making, and streamline workflows for clinical and operational processes to help create a better patient outcome and the best care possible.

Visit Microsoft Health