

PHYSICIAN PERSPECTIVES

# The Engagement Technology Doctors Want

PatientPoint 

Now more than ever, healthcare providers understand the value of patient engagement technology, which is

defined as solutions used to inform, educate and engage patients online, in the office or via remote care. Consumerism, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to shine a light on the impact tech-enabled engagement solutions can have on meeting consumer expectations about their healthcare. Today, this technology is helping revolutionize the industry, becoming a must-have for providers wanting to connect with patients across the entire care continuum and deliver highly relevant, personalized health experiences.

We asked leading physicians to share how they use patient engagement technology to cater to patients' demands and what they look for in patient engagement technology solutions.

## Featured Experts

**Dr. Lyle Berkowitz**, FACP, FHIMSS



Primary care physician, healthcare innovator, futurist, digital health expert and serial entrepreneur with a passion for creating real-world solutions that improve the quality and efficiency of the healthcare system for both patients and physicians.

**Dr. Kashyap Patel**, CEO, Carolina Blood and Cancer Care Associates



As a medical oncologist, Vice President of COA and board member of ION, Dr. Patel has a wealth of knowledge about patient-centered care, alternative payment models and healthcare policy.

**Dr. Tom Scott**, MD, MBA, Director of Medical Informatics, Penn State Health



Drawing from his experience in the healthcare industry, Dr. Scott provides great insights into healthcare data and opportunities within the primary care space.

**Dr. Martin Fogle**, Chief Medical Officer, Prima CARE, P.C.



With over 30 years of experience managing vascular disease, Dr. Fogle is dedicated to providing patients with top-notch, cost-effective care.

**Dr. Steve Samudrala**, Medical Director and Founder, America's Family Doctors



Dr. Samudrala has been in practice since 2002, caring for patients of all ages and helping them lead healthier lifestyles.

**Dr. Adnaan Sheriff**, D.O., Amherst Medical Associates



As a family medicine specialist, Dr. Sheriff has firsthand knowledge of the goals of primary care practices not affiliated with a health system.

**Karla Smith**, MHA, BSRT, CPXP, Director of Human Resources, Mid Dakota Clinic



Karla Smith has valuable insights into how to help patients and providers have a worthwhile experience in the office.

# Q Do patients expect a tech-driven experience in your practice?

Consumers are used to the convenience and personalization today's technology offers them in their everyday lives, and they now expect that same kind of experience when it comes to their healthcare. Says **Dr. Sheriff**:

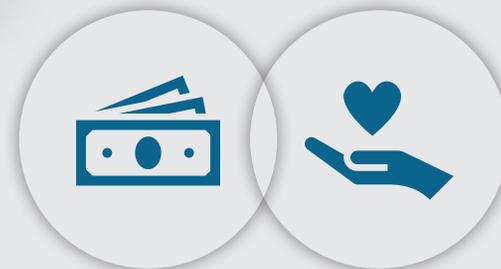
*"I think patients who are very tech-savvy do expect me to understand certain tools and how they work, whereas patients who are 80 and 90 and have been used to a more traditional method of practicing healthcare may not expect that at all ... We see a whole spectrum in primary care, but I think **as the years go on, there may be more and more expectation to at least understand what's being offered** to patients in a larger market."*

In **Dr. Scott's** experience, he has found that, due to COVID-19, the older population is more adept at using technology than ever.

*"There's been a big change in this 70 and over, or even 60 and over, crowd in their acceptance of tech. I mean, these were the same people that didn't know how to turn on their cell phones a couple years ago, and **now they know how to get onto their patient portal and send messages** while they're walking through town."*

According to **Dr. Berkowitz**, technology is and will continue to be valuable in creating personalized care experiences.

*"I do think that with technology we can start figuring out better ways to communicate and understand. You can't just have the same message for everybody nor have it delivered the same way ... **Technology can help personalize the messages—the content, the format, how you present them—making them more important and useful**; just like we've seen with social media and everything else, we can start personalizing messages to people so it fits into what they're expecting, and wanting, and that they'll respond to best."*



## Fee-for-Service vs. Value-based Care: Tech's Value to Both

“The nice thing about engagement technology is that it supports both fee-for-service and value-based care models. In a fee-for-service world, it helps ensure people follow up to appointments and get the tests and procedures they need. In a value-based care world, it helps ensure people get their preventive screenings, do home monitoring and increase compliance with their medicines, which can all result in decreasing total overall costs while increasing loyalty to the system.”

— **Dr. Lyle Berkowitz**

# Q In what ways does patient engagement tech improve patient care?

Dr. Patel has noticed many benefits from using patient engagement technology.

*“Robust patient engagement technology has definitely allowed us to improve not only communication, not only caregiver burden, but also has allowed us to **improve the quality of care that we deliver.**”*

According to Dr. Fogle,

*“Engagement technology is taking away the fear, educating the patient, what to expect and what to do next. **A participant in healthcare is much more effective** than someone who passively received the message from the doctor or the nurse.”*

Karla Smith has seen how tech can positively impact a patient’s health. A patient told a physician at her practice,

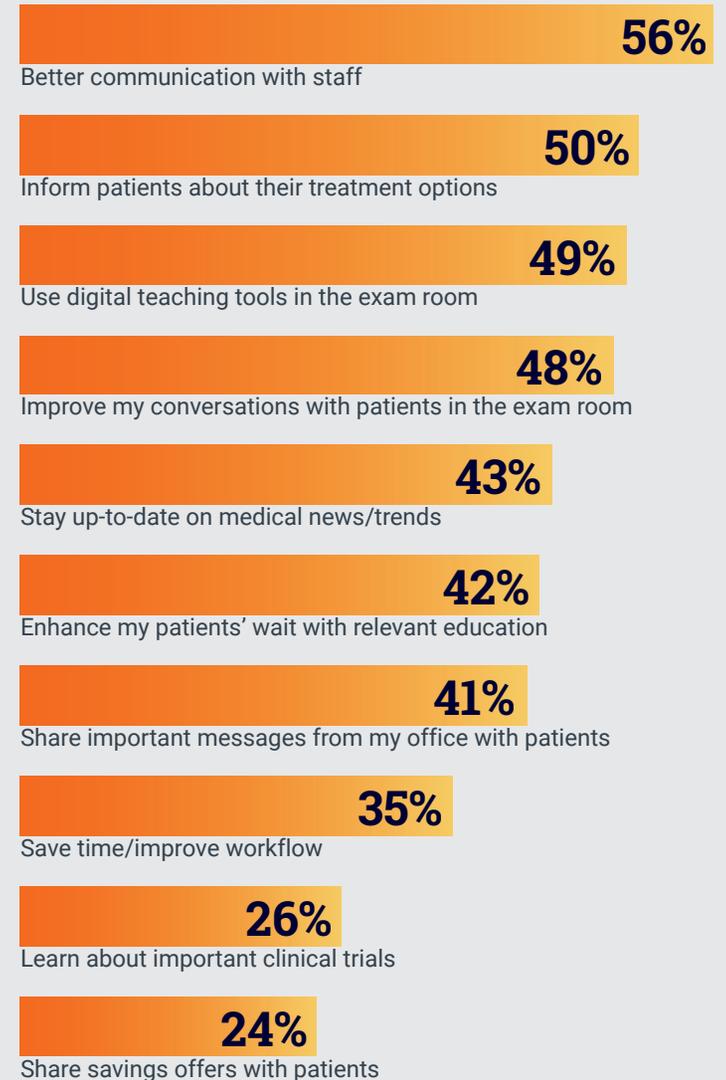
*“You know doctor, I was **watching the screen out in the waiting room**, and they were speaking about pre-diabetes and signs and symptoms. I think that’s me. Can I make an appointment so we can talk about that?”*



PatientPoint® has found that digital health content can lead to a **21% increase in vaccinations.**

*Independent Study by SOURCE Analytics (Symphony Health); pre/post test/control study, tracking patients for 3 months post exposure to physician office information*

## What do you believe are the biggest benefits from using technology in your office?



PatientPoint, Digital Health Coalition, Sermo, “Technology at the Point of Care,” 2018

# Q What do you look for in patient engagement tech?

Each provider has their own criteria that the tech must meet before it's implemented. According to **Dr. Patel**,

*"Fundamentally, patient engagement **technology should be very intuitive, very patient-friendly**, and we have to remember that patients' education level may be variable across all the segments."*

**Dr. Sheriff** thinks it should be designed with both the patient and provider in mind.

*"What really captures my eye is that it speaks in a language that is patient-centric but also **speaks in common terms that a provider would use**. This allows for less confusion in conversations and can result in better outcomes."*

Integration into the workflow is another key component for **Dr. Sheriff**.

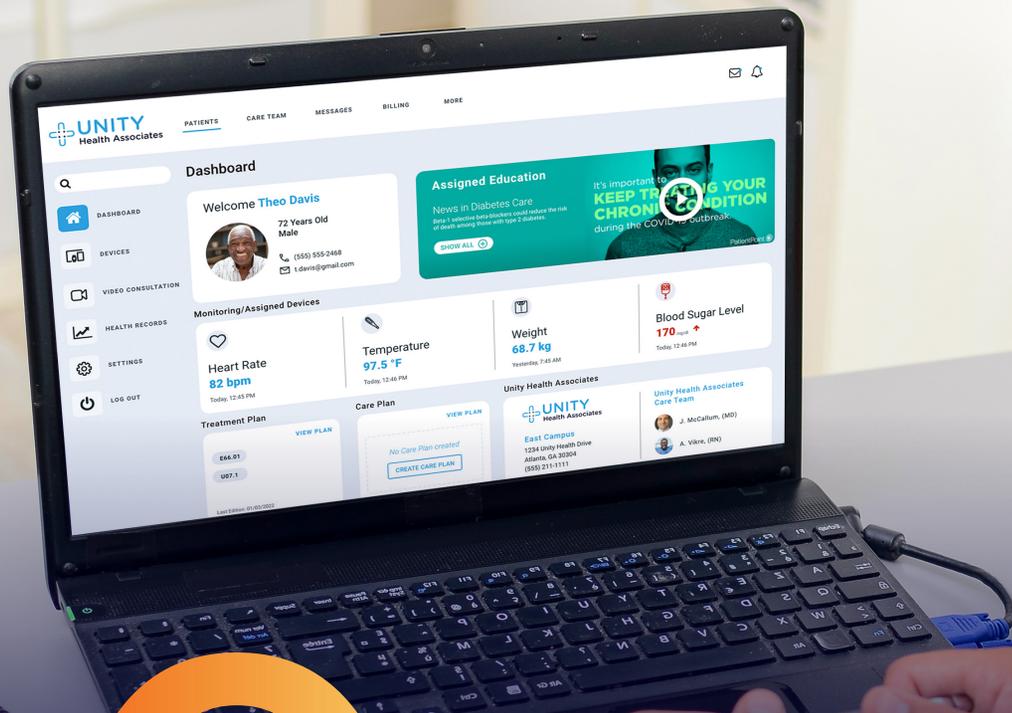
*"The hard part is integration with all these EMRs and making sure that **things work in a quick fashion** because if it's quicker for me to pull up something on my phone or do it on my laptop, chances are I will default to the quicker mechanism because our time is limited."*

**Dr. Fogle** notes that cost is a major deciding factor for his group.

*"Whether it's a cost of actual money outlay **to provide the technology, to get the technology and to maintain the technology**, are all features that play into our decisions about whether we move in a certain direction with the technology or not."*

**71%**  
**of providers agree** that it's challenging to know what digital healthcare technologies are going to be best for their patients and practice, given the rapid innovation in the space.

PatientPoint, Digital Health Coalition, Sermo, "Perspectives on Evolution of Point of Care Communication," 2021



# Q What patient engagement tech do you find helpful?

Patient engagement tech encompasses a wide range of solutions. While it once only included in-office touchpoints, it has expanded, now giving providers the ability to connect and communicate with patients at any time, no matter where they are located.

WAITING ROOM

EXAM ROOM

BREAK ROOM

REMOTE TECHNOLOGY

## WAITING ROOM

The majority of patients still spend time in the waiting room. Providers are increasingly using digital screens to enhance this experience, engaging patients with relevant education and important messages from their practice.

**Dr. Fogle** says,

*“The entire patient experience can sometimes boil down to those moments that a patient is sitting in a waiting room. One technique that we’ve tried to do is make that time in our waiting rooms **more valuable to the patient, more palatable to the patient and to use it to our advantage actually to teach patients basic health maintenance and specifically about diseases.** We use it for our own marketing of our own practice by telling patients what services we provide. In some of our offices, we’ve chosen to actually advertise that particular provider in their waiting room.”*

**Dr. Berkowitz** agrees that digital screens in the waiting room are an opportune moment to not only entertain but educate patients.

*“I’m trying not to make them wait too long, **but if they’re going to see something I’d want it to be about some type of care gap or wellness message,** or screening exam, mammograms, colonoscopy, etc., where they might talk to me about it.”*



The digital health content that PatientPoint offers has been **proven to drive an 11% increase in colonoscopies.**

*Pre/Post Test/Control measurement: Physician matching completed by Symphony Health Solutions. Test period: April 2014-March 2015*



### Average Wait Times by Specialty (min.)

Primary Care	15.2
Cardiology	20.1
Dermatology	14.2
Gastroenterology	13.4
Neurology	13.4
Rheumatology	14.1
OB/GYN	16.8
Pediatrics	11.4
Oncology	13.0

2021-2022 Nationwide Web Surveys of 4,629 respondents who visited physician offices installed with the PatientPoint® waiting room or exam room programs. Data as of 1/7/22.

## EXAM ROOM

The exam room is where some of the most important, potentially life-changing, discussions are had with patients. Visual aids, such as interactive touchscreens, are proven to help increase comprehension and understanding of the discussions that patients have with their doctors.



Dr. Fogle says,

***"A touchscreen monitor can pick up where the waiting room monitor left off. A patient waiting for the provider to come into the room has very little to do usually while they're waiting. From a patient experience standpoint, if we can contract down the appearance of that amount of time, if we can give a patient an activity that's helpful to them, that reduces stress, that enlightens them about their own disease, that's a win/win situation for everybody."***

15%

## The Value of a Comprehensive Approach

to Patient Engagement Technology:  
A Case Study

Dr. Sheriff had a goal to increase patient portal registrations. As part of his strategy, he leveraged multiple engagement technologies to remind patients to register for the patient portal. *"Patients were encouraged to sign in for the portal when they checked in to the office at our kiosk ... The [exam room] screen had that message as well, so it was a 360° approach to the patient from all angles to help with that."*

After adding screens in the waiting room, exam room and break room, Amherst Medical Associates experienced a 15% increase in patient portal registrations.

Dr. Samudrala agrees:

*“Sometimes patients will have to wait in the exam room, but if they’re engaged then they’re like, ‘Oh, no problem, Dr. Sam. I’m learning a lot here. Take your time. I’ll be here,’ so that’s music to our ears. Because at least they’re not sitting there and playing solitaire. **And this way they’re doing something that’s more beneficial for their health too.**”*



**66% of providers agree that digital teaching tools** (e.g., digital whiteboards, 3D anatomicals, videos) **help enhance their conversations with patients** in the exam room.

PatientPoint, Digital Health Coalition, Sermo, “Perspectives on Evolution of Point of Care Communication,” 2021

*“**Once the provider enters the room that same piece of technology can be used to educate a patient**, either with electronic diagrams that can be very passive and used just for demonstration purposes, or it can be actively used to draw circles around the painful area,”*

adds Dr. Fogle.

Dr. Patel says,

*“I can pull up the 3D images of the anatomy, **I can actually have them understand the impact of radiation, I can help them understand side effects of chemotherapy.**”*

## Don't Forget About the Break Room

Patients aren't the only ones who benefit from engagement technology in the office. Digital break room screens for healthcare professionals and clinical staff can provide valuable information from the practice as well as the latest medical information and educational opportunities.

These screens have caught the eyes of providers at **Dr. Samudrala's** practice. *“The back-office program always gets their attention. I wouldn't call it clickbait because we're not clicking on it, but it's definitely grabbing their attention. So, whether there's a new outbreak of some kind of infection from lettuce or if there's some new research on vitamin D ... there's always going to be something out there that's interesting, that gets their attention.”*



## REMOTE TECHNOLOGY

The COVID-19 pandemic has made remote care technology a critical part of the care journey, and this technology is likely to remain even after the pandemic ends.

Dr. Scott says,

***"The reality is most people want to be seen in person. So, the other interactions, either email or a phone visit or something like that, I think they'll continue to be supplements to the in-person visit."***

While there's a wealth of remote care tech options available, Dr. Sheriff says the best ones offer the opportunity for integration.

***"The iterations where we really see it as providers being helpful is, say we're not sure if a patient is hypertensive or not, we want to try to monitor the blood pressure at home. Having some sort of platform to do that, that integrates with our EMR, is helpful."***

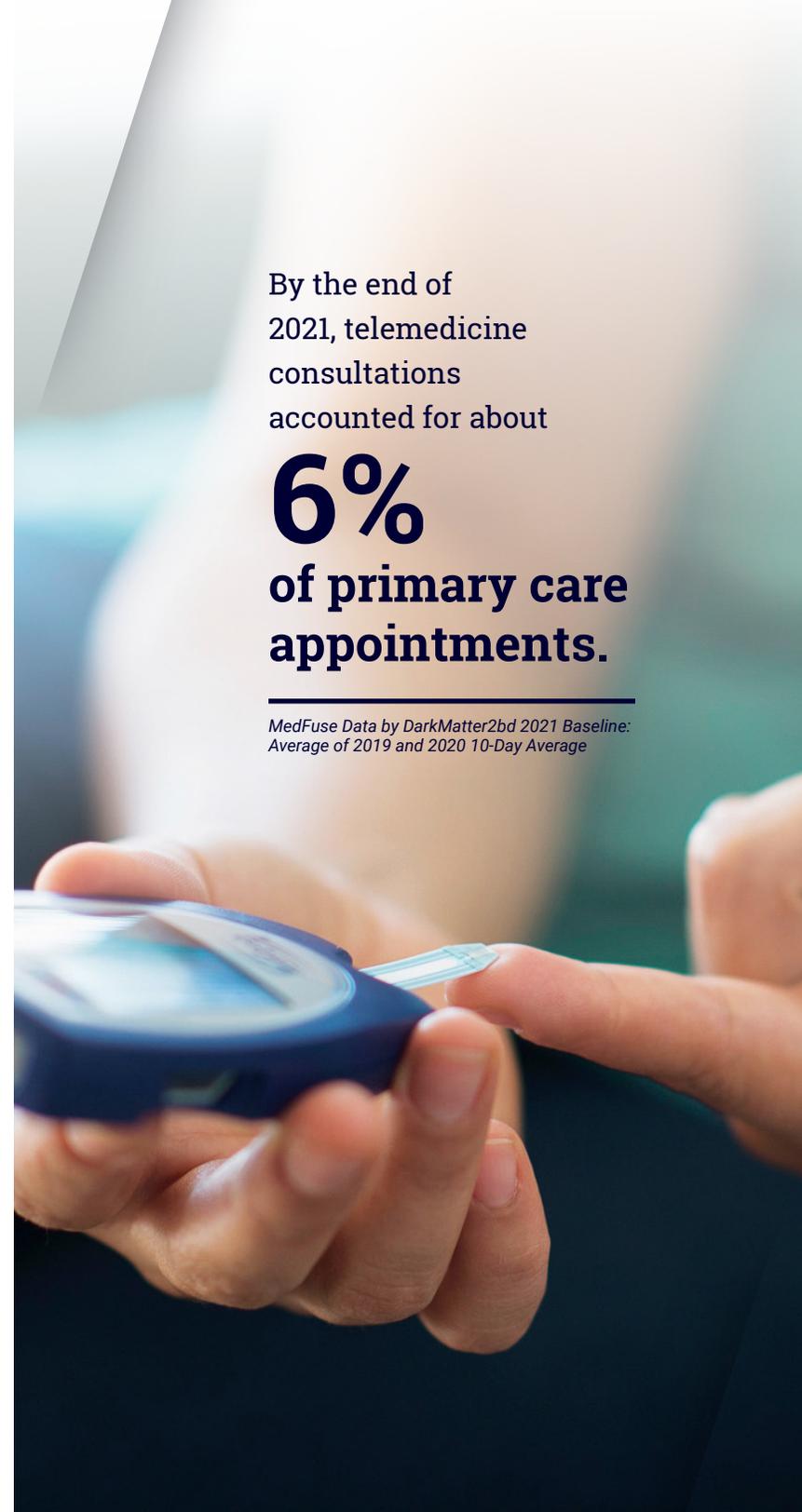
As with any new solution, however, it takes time and trial to figure out how it can best fit into a practice's workflow. With telehealth now becoming an expected offering, many providers are challenged to figure out how to handle both in-office and virtual visits. According to Dr. Berkowitz, there are solutions that can help telehealth work well for a practice.

***"In a typical day, a primary care doctor can see 20-25 patients, so they need to be very efficient. If they are alternating between office and virtual care, they are often less efficient due to the different workflows and cognitive dissonance caused. To help combat this issue, what we've seen is physicians will block out sections of time just for virtual care. So, they'll say, 'Look, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons will be my virtual care afternoons, so my patients know they can schedule virtual visits during those hours, and I might work from the office or from home during those times.' Meanwhile, the health system may set up a dedicated virtualist team to handle urgent care issues 24/7."***

By the end of 2021, telemedicine consultations accounted for about

**6%**  
of primary care appointments.

MedFuse Data by DarkMatter2bd 2021 Baseline: Average of 2019 and 2020 10-Day Average



# Q With new tech rolling out frequently, where do providers turn to learn about the newest innovations?

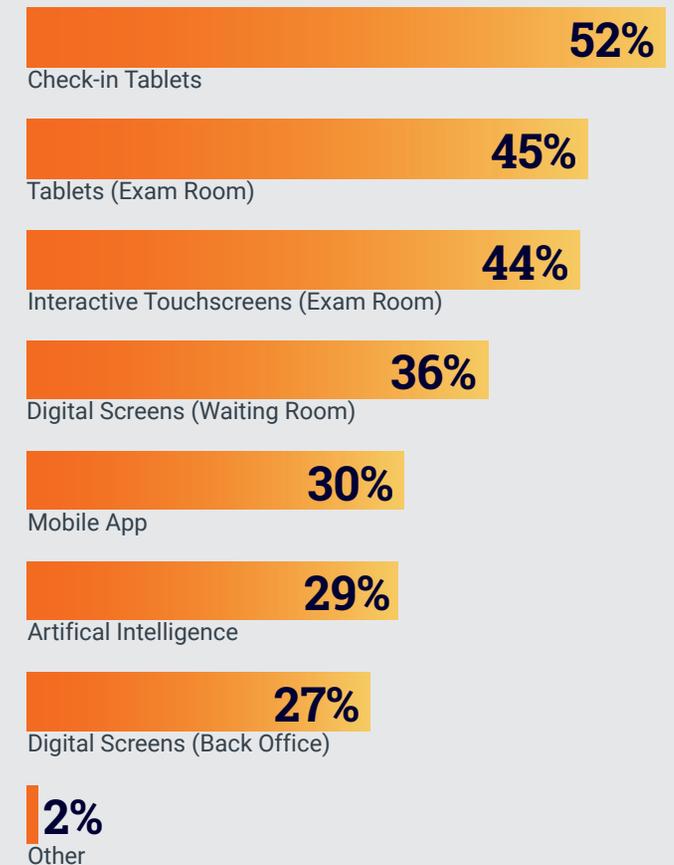
Dr. Sheriff pays attention to advertisements on LinkedIn and Instagram.

*"Marketing, from a social media standpoint, has become very fine-tuned ... Instagram, for example, really has taken off with their advertising campaigns."*

Dr. Berkowitz takes an active approach, reading about and listening for new technology innovations.

*"I'm just keeping my eyes open, seeing if there's anything interesting out there that makes sense. And so, category number one is what I can read online, number two are the conferences where I can listen to speakers as well as look at all the exhibitors ... Doctors absolutely love new technology, as long as they make life easier in some ways for us."*

## What type(s) of technology are you interested in using in your office in the future?



PatientPoint, Digital Health Coalition, Sermo, "Technology at the Point of Care," 2018



Interested in adding engagement technology to your practice, hospital or health system? PatientPoint has you covered. We offer innovative solutions that can help you build relationships with patients in and out of the office and increase practice efficiencies.

Learn more at

**[PatientPoint.com](https://PatientPoint.com)**

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