



# Increasing Rehab Patient Engagement Through Technology

The patient's experience, along with a hospital's reputation, is vital for long-term success. Studies indicate strong patient and family engagement in clinical care positively contributes to a favorable experience, as well as improved health outcomes and reduced costs.<sup>1</sup>

Reputation, whether good or bad, plays a large part in attracting patients, employees, physicians and partner healthcare institutions – and patient and family engagement are vital drivers of a hospital's reputation. This white paper contains strategies for incorporating technology into patient engagement initiatives. By understanding these strategies and their key benefits, providers can better position themselves to overcome the challenges of today's healthcare environment.

## New Opportunities in Patient Engagement and Empowerment

As the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) seek to transition to value-based care that highlights patient-centered healthcare, the agency has emphasized the role of patient engagement through new acute-care payment systems and new strategies.

In order to maximize the patient experience and patient throughput opportunities, many hospitals and care providers are seeking new ways to use data and technology to improve patient engagement and empowerment. Despite the clear benefits of patient-centered apps, it can be difficult to secure funds and IT resources needed to develop successful patient-centric technology solutions. By understanding the key

benefits and strategies for incorporating technology into patient engagement initiatives, providers can better position themselves to overcome these challenges.

## The Benefits of Technology in Patient Engagement

Evidence is pointing toward the fact that individuals who are engaged in their health are more likely to achieve better outcomes. Given the increase in use of digital platforms in healthcare, technology will be a significant contributor to improved patient outcomes.

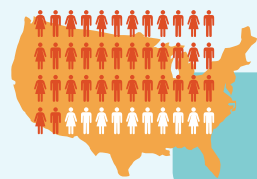
### Three benefits of patient engagement:

- 1. Improved outcomes:** Providing a means for easily tracking and reporting patient progress can improve outcomes.
- 2. Enhanced communication:** With interactive technology platforms, providers, patients and caregivers can better communicate with one another, providing updates on the patients' condition.
- 3. Increased patient satisfaction:** Informed, engaged patients are likely to be more confident regarding their condition and more likely to be satisfied with their overall experience and outcomes.

# Increasing Prevalence of Technology Provides More Access and Opportunity for Patient Engagement

The prevalence of smart phone technology is enabling health providers to **engage, motivate and connect** patients and families to their care like never before.

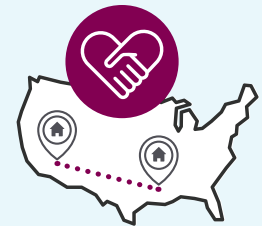
Recent data<sup>2</sup> shows more than three-quarters of U.S. adults report they own a smartphone, up from 35% in 2011, making the devices one of the most quickly-adopted consumer technologies in recent history. Further, adoption rates have risen rapidly among older and lower-income Americans in recent years. For instance, from 2013-2016 alone, the share of adults 65 and older who reported owning a smartphone rose 24 percentage points. This trend is likely to increase over the coming years, with the result of providing digital access to nearly all patients and their families, including the five to seven million (about 15%) who are long-distance caregivers – a number that is projected to double by 2020<sup>3</sup>.



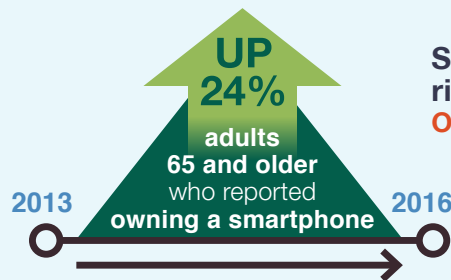
IN THE U.S. MORE THAN 3/4 OF ADULTS OWN A SMARTPHONE

Smartphones are one of the **MOST QUICKLY-ADOPTED CONSUMER TECHNOLOGIES** in recent history

SMARTPHONE OWNERSHIP **UP 35%** IN ADULTS SINCE 2011



In the U.S., about 15% of all caregivers, **approximately 5-7 million, are long-distance caregivers. This number is projected to double by 2020.**



Smartphone adoption rates have risen rapidly in recent years among **OLDER** and **LOWER-INCOME** Americans



## CMS Supports Tools to Foster Patient Engagement

The most commonly-held definition of patient engagement focuses on care providers working with patients to encourage involvement in their own healthcare in order to strengthen their influence on healthcare decisions.

**Research underscores the growing value of a positive patient experience and demonstrates that hospitals that deliver a better patient experience perform better financially.**

While increased patient participation and engagement is well-recognized as a core component of high-quality care,<sup>4</sup> patient engagement is also central to achieving high-quality

person-centered care<sup>5,6</sup> and has been found to be associated with improved self-care,<sup>7,8</sup> better physical functioning<sup>9,10</sup> and satisfaction with care.<sup>11,12,13,14</sup> Fortunately, many new technologies are available to providers and they hold the potential to better motivate and engage patients in their recovery – and much of that technology is, literally, in the patients' hands.

In rehabilitation care, patients take a uniquely active and ongoing role in their treatment and recovery – and leveraging technology to engage these patients can be particularly beneficial. Specific to rehabilitation, research supports a patient's health technology experience that clearly identifies goals, rules and a feedback system. Ideal systems provide patients with a sense of purpose, engage them in their own goal achievement and provide the feedback to motivate them to keep trying.<sup>15</sup>

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# Strategies to Create Patient-Centric Tools

With new technology, change brings challenges. When designing, evaluating and implementing patient-facing technologies, providers should be prepared to overcome obstacles, including different communication preferences, ease of use and the ability to integrate collected data into the patient record.

To ensure that patients and their caregivers derive the most benefit from interactive technology, designers must consider issues of computer literacy, access and trust. However, a challenge particular to healthcare is that many designers of these digital innovations are typically not high utilizers of healthcare or the technology associated with that care.

Importantly, the design of patient-interactive technology and applications must be grounded in medical experience and expertise. To ensure patients are optimally engaged, personalized technologies must be easy to navigate and understand, while providing valuable information based on the patient's unique condition and treatments – thereby increasing the receptivity, use and utility of the digital offering. Given the complexity of rehabilitative care, digital platforms should consist of input from experts in rehab services, ensuring that patients understand their own rehab plan and receive the necessary feedback to motivate them toward their goals throughout the digital interaction.

## RehabTracker – A Solution Designed With Your Rehab Patients in Mind

A key benefit of partnering with experts in rehab services is gaining access to innovative tools without the heavy lift and burden of creation from the ground up. A key patient engagement offering from Kindred Hospital Rehabilitation Services, the RehabTracker app, allows patients to set goals with their therapists, track their own progress, share their

results with invited family and friends and even receive messages of support – all at the touch of a button.

In the short period the app has been in pilot phase, an overwhelming majority of pilot sites utilizing the app have experienced improvements in FIM gain and discharge to community. “Our patients are medically complex; their conditions are challenging, so it helps them focus on their goals,” explains Muhammad Khan, physical therapist and program director at St. Catherine Hospital, where the device was first piloted for the hospitals of Community Healthcare System. “Motivating them every day is a big challenge and we have seen improvement in our functional gain scores since January. We do believe that motivation by any means, whether it is sharing stories or information, helps with a patient’s recovery.”

This rehab-centric application is invaluable in improving patient engagement scores for host hospitals of rehabilitation units, and helps prepare post-acute facilities for the future of value-based payment models. The RehabTracker app ensures that the patient, clinical team and family are all on the same page. It supports shared goal-setting and recognizing and

celebrating rehab milestones throughout the patient’s recovery. It also engages and involves long-distance friends and family in daily patient progress. RehabTracker can be used by patients and families during bedside shift report, interdisciplinary rounds and physician visits to document important information and the care plan for the day.

The app is HIPAA-compliant and available for patients and invited family and friends using Apple as well as Android devices.

Kindred Hospital Rehabilitation Services is dedicated to treating the needs of highly acute patients in a compliant environment, staffed by expert therapists who focus on meeting patient goals, leading to recovery and successful discharge. It is driven by a culture of patient advocacy and access, developing and implementing technology solutions aimed at improving outcomes, increasing patient engagement and family communication, and improving operational efficiency.

**An overwhelming majority of pilot sites utilizing the RehabTracker app have experienced improvements in FIM gain and discharge to community.**



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# How We Can Help

To learn more about KHRS and how RehabTracker can help your patients, and their families and friends, easily receive, monitor and share important milestones on the path to recovery, **visit [kindredrehab.com](http://kindredrehab.com)**.

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