Reducing No Show Rates Through The Use Of eReferral

eHealth CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Automated email notifications through Ocean eReferral solution is enhancing clinic efficiencies by decreasing the time spent notifying patients about their booked appointment, and reducing the number of missed appointments

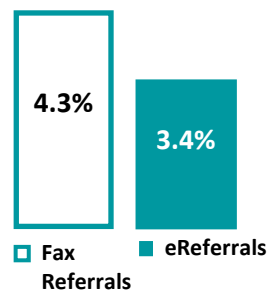## Average Time Spent Notifying Patients per Referral

Faxed Referrals (48 Patients)
82 minutes total
Average of 1 minute and 42 seconds per referral

1 minute and 34 seconds saved per referral

eReferrals (89 Patients)
12 minutes total
Average of 8 seconds per eReferral

Percentage of No Shows

4.3%

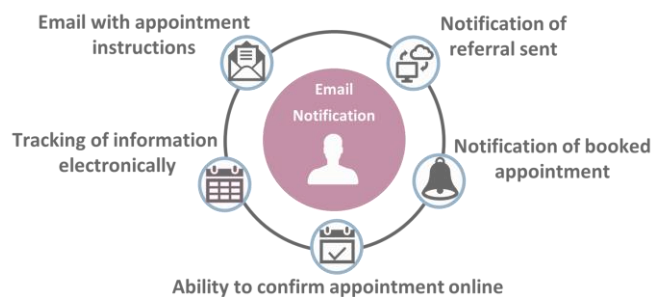**3.4%**

☐ **Fax Referrals**   ■ **eReferrals**

0.9% Less likely to miss appointment when using eReferral

Benefits

- eReferrals from MyHealth, South Western Ontario, since Ocean eReferral Go-Live:

- 71% of the patients have a booked appointment

- 14 clinicians have adopted and sent referrals electronically to MyHealth

- Average wait time to access care is 19 days

- 72% of patients consented to and received email notification of their referral

The following observations were recorded at MyHealth in South Western Ontario based on **315 eReferrals** to MyHealth:

- **Less Time Spent Notifying Patients of their Appointments** - In February, MyHealth tracked a time savings of **70 minutes** as most patients referred electronically received automated email notifications and therefore did not require calls. If all patients received emails through the eReferral solution, there is a potential **time savings** of **more than 3.5 hours per month**

- **Fewer No Shows -** Tracked no shows from December 2019 to February 2020 illustrate that those referred through eReferral were **0.9% less likely to miss their appointment**

Email with appointment instructions

Notification of referral sent

Email Notification

Tracking of information electronically

Notification of booked appointment

Ability to confirm appointment online

"Electronic referrals are shaping the future of the healthcare industry and streamlining referral intakes. Ocean's user-friendly platform allows for easy communication with both our referring community and the patients themselves. We appreciate this feature as it gives us the ability to provide further quality patient care.

MyHealth Centre is committed to innovation, and integrity and Ocean E-Referrals is offering great assistance with this. We look forward to growing our electronic referrals with Ocean!"

Megan Jany, Physician Relations Representative MyHealth, South Western Ontario

www.ehealthce.ca

Background

Missed appointments (no-shows) are a significant issue in primary care settings,[1,2] with many medical care clinics reporting no-show rates as high as 23-34%.[2] Failure of patients to show up for their scheduled appointments is a misuse of providers' time, and inadequate utilization of clinic resources.[1, 2,3,4] Young age, type of visit, long wait time to access care, forgetting the appointment time and miscommunication of information are among the reported causes of no-shows.[1,3]

Digital health tools are valuable resources that can support a streamlined workflow within clinics. The Ocean eReferral network (eReferral) is an electronic solution that has been deployed across seven subregions in Ontario to support patient care. To date, over **100,000 referrals have been processed by over 1000 clinicians** using the eReferral solution. Ocean eReferral generates automated email notifications throughout the referral process for patients to track their referrals and support administrative staff on notifying patients of their appointments.

Patients who receive email notifications regarding their referral are able to confirm their appointment online and have an email record of their referral and appointment instructions. A reduction in miscommunications and appointment no-shows is anticipated.

MyHealth Centre, an independent diagnostic health facility in Ontario, went live with eReferral at their four South Western (SW) clinics in November 2019 . A Physician Relations Representative (PRR), at one of the clinics, manually tracked appointment no-show rates among patients who were referred through Ocean eReferral and received an email notification, as well as those referred by the traditional method with no automated email notification. The PRR also recorded the amount of time spent by staff notifying patients who did not receive automated email notifications regarding their scheduled appointments. Data was tracked from December 1, 2019 to February 29, 2020.

Acknowledgements

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