

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Optimizes Slot Utilization with Expanse Patient Connect, Powered by Artera



Challenge

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital largely relied on a manual process to remind families of upcoming appointments for their children. The organization's reception team was tasked with making reminder calls exclusively for physician-led clinic appointments, while allied health clinicians managed follow-ups independently.

While the hospital attempted to ease staff workload by implementing a non-MEDITECH third-party vendor phone system for appointment reminders, the results fell short: "We didn't achieve much success with the voice-calling system," explained Raheema Visram Neely, Applications Specialist at Holland Bloorview. "Very few people answer their phones these days, and even fewer check their voicemails."

Key challenges included:

- No texting capability: The team relied solely on phone calls to families (both manual calling and from the voice-calling system), which limited accessibility for families preferring other forms of communication (texting, email, etc.)
- Staff burnout: The reception team was stretched thin with manual calls, consuming time needed for patient-facing responsibilities.
- Missed appointments: Lack of accessible communication led to no-shows and gaps in clinic schedules, affecting continuity of care and resource allocation.

Overall, the system required an overhaul to facilitate efficient communication, enhance appointment attendance, and free up valuable staff time.

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, based in Toronto, ON, is Canada's premier children's rehabilitation hospital. Specializing in providing outpatient and inpatient services for children with disabilities, it caters to over 9,500 clients annually. Its multidisciplinary programs serve a diverse group of patients, many of whom require tailored care due to complex diagnoses. With 50 outpatient programs, including therapy appointments and specialty clinics, managing appointments efficiently is critical for maintaining high-quality care.

Founded in 1899
3 Inpatient Units
67 Funded Beds
EHR: MEDITECH Expanse

Solution

To tackle these challenges, Holland Bloorview implemented Expanse Patient Connect, powered by Artera, to streamline appointment outreach using each family's preferred communication method. Whether through text (SMS), phone, or email, reminders are tailored to individual preferences and seamlessly integrated with the hospital's existing EHR, MEDITECH Expanse.

"Ensuring accessible care is at the heart of our operational strategy, which is why adopting a texting system became a top priority for us. Expanse Patient Connect stood out for its user-friendly design, offering accessible appointment reminders and seamless two-way texting. These features enable families to easily confirm appointments and communicate with us, resulting in a more efficient and convenient process," said Visram Neely. "By implementing this platform, we saw a valuable opportunity to reduce no-show rates while strengthening our connection with the families we serve."

"Clinicians value the clarity of having confirmed appointments seamlessly integrated into their schedules, while our reception and appointment services team benefits from the platform's ability to eliminate repetitive phone calls to families."

Raheema Visram Neely
Applications Specialist, Holland Bloorview

Implementation

Pediatric care comes with unique complexities, particularly the need to communicate effectively with parents and families, in addition to the young clients themselves. At Holland Bloorview, new technologies and operational changes are introduced with careful consideration and empathy to address these nuances.

When implementing Expanse Patient Connect, the team adopted a thoughtful, phased rollout strategy to ensure a smooth transition.

Phase 1 (April 2024):

- Implemented Patient Connect in five initial clinics (on one practice line)
- Attached all appointment types for appropriate automations
- Set up keyword criteria, practice settings, and end user access

Phase 2 (September 2024):

- Expanded automations to additional clinics and different scheduling teams
- Maintained consistency in workflow and messaging

Phase 3 (March 2025):

- Scaled into a new practice for a more specialized program
- Different schedulers and scheduling processes, in addition to different appointment types
- Tailored new messaging and automations at the practice level

Automated reminders included booking confirmations, 7-day reminders, 2-day notifications for unconfirmed appointments, and 1-day reminders for confirmed bookings.





Results

Since implementing Expanse Patient Connect, Holland Bloorview has been able to streamline communication with families and free staff from manual tasks.

83% Appointment Reach:

Automated reminders significantly improved the hospital's ability to reach more families compared to phone calls.

Enhanced Staff Productivity:

Time-intensive phone calls were replaced with automation, allowing staff to focus on other critical tasks.

Greater Slot Utilization:

Improved attendance helped optimize clinic schedules, reducing unfilled slots and ensuring effective resource allocation.

What's Next for Holland Bloorview and Patient Connect

Holland Bloorview plans to build upon this success by introducing other Expanse Patient Connect features, such as scaling conversational, two-way texting; broadcast messaging, multilingual reminders to enhance accessibility; and much more.

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Raheema Visram Neely
Applications Specialist, Holland Bloorview