Incendant

Automating Patient Reminders and Education for Endoscopy

Reducing No-shows and Increasing Revenue
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Introduction

Parkview Medical Center (PMC) Endoscopy Lab had a monthly no-show rate of 14 – 19% in spite of significant effort by staff to contact and educate patients about their endoscopy. With the facility completing ~600 endoscopies/month, the no-shows were not just an inconvenience, they were a significant loss of revenue. Additionally, owing to the large fixed costs associated with the procedure, the no-shows were a significant expense.

| Pre-study no-shows average cost | $1,224,000/yr |
| Study no-shows average cost    | $360,000/yr   |

PMC implemented a program that automatically delivered three video/emails over a 10-day period to patients scheduled for endoscopy. The video/emails reminded and educated patients about their procedure. During a 6-month study the no-show rate dropped dramatically to an average of 5% with a projected increased yearly revenue of ~$1 million.

Background

In one study of patients referred for colonoscopy only 50% had the procedure completed (1). No-show rates for outpatient endoscopy have been reported to range from 12%–24%, even when patients are scheduled (2-6). Because completing an endoscopy requires a gastroenterologist, nurse and an anesthetist, the overhead is high and a no-show means lost revenue as well as lost time for costly personnel. Many factors have been identified as contributing to no-shows including fear of pain and the bowel preparation, concerns about modesty and logistic obstacles like cost and scheduling.

Patients scheduled for screening endoscopy are generally not sick and so they often don’t see or feel a need for the procedure. Primary care physicians refer patients appropriately for screening, but often don’t have the time to educate patients about the procedure or its value. Endoscopy centers may not even see the patient prior to the procedure. In many cases, paper handouts are used to educate patients. Phone calls are frequently employed – often repeatedly – by staff to further educate and remind patients of the upcoming procedure. Patients, uninformed and unaware of the true nature and benefits of the procedure, often cancel at the last minute or just don’t show up for the scheduled procedure.
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Solution

People send and receive over 196 billion emails and view 4 billion YouTube videos per day (7, 8)! Patients – even boomers – actually prefer emails over phone calls (9). Videos are a superior solution for educating people (10). Emails also make it far more efficient to reach patients with a single effort. Emails can be sent at any time and viewed by patients at their convenience. Paper instructions are frequently misunderstood or never read. YouTube usage is so high because people prefer visual to verbal engagement.

Parkview Endoscopy Lab deployed the Incendant 360 Engage program to provide patients with video education via automated email delivery. Patients’ fears about the procedure, preparation and anesthesia were each addressed in separate videos delivered in the days leading up to a scheduled procedure. The videos/emails served as a reminder of the pending procedure and provided a one-click method for patients to notify the facility of plans to reschedule or cancel. Additionally, the email contact provided a more convenient way for patients to raise questions and concerns with staff.

Utilizing videos to educate patients in preparation for endoscopy:

1. Helps patients learn at their level and pace
2. Frees up staff from phone calls and education responsibilities
3. Provides a consistent message and a legal record as part of informed consent

Patient Perspective

“The videos explained things in a way that was easy to understand. I think it’s so important that things are communicated clearly and that people don’t assume you know about this stuff. Sometimes healthcare workers think you already know these things.”
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Incendant Technology & Videos

Parkview’s choice of Incendant’s 360 Engage made the process of contacting and educating endoscopy patients both effective and efficient. The 360 Engage software automatically delivered branded videos/emails simplifying the processes previously requiring excessive staff time. It also reminded and educated patients better than phone calls and paper.

Measuring and reporting each patient’s degree of engagement with the videos and emails allowed Engage 360 to accurately predict which patients would not attend their procedure. It also made phone contacts more efficient as staff needed to call only patients not engaged in the process.

The videos were professionally produced with actors, animations, and images. The content was evidence based and vetted by medical experts and educators to put the right information at the right literacy level for patients. Emails, SMS, and videos made every interaction simpler for staff and better understood by patients.
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Conclusion

Taking advantage of Incendant’s 360 Engage program to automatically contact, educate and monitor patients in preparation for endoscopy at Parkview Medical Center resulted in:

- More patients had successful procedures: 22% fewer failed scopes
- Less staff time wasted on phone calls: 44% fewer phone calls
- Increased revenue: 71% fewer no-shows

Sources


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