

Case Study: Alignment Healthcare

Remote Health Monitoring Powered by Vivify and Samsung Saves Lives and Money



Overview

Customer Need

Alignment Healthcare (AHC) needed a sophisticated remote health monitoring solution for its highest-risk patients. This would enable the team to capture daily biometric data, see and communicate with patients via video calls, access patients' health statuses 24/7 from AHC's Command Center and arrange medical intervention at the first sign of trouble.

Samsung Solution

AHC chose a solution combining software from Vivify Health, a leading remote care platform, and Samsung Galaxy tablets, which provided a seamless mobile solution for patients to track their medical conditions. Remote care patients use Bluetooth-enabled medical devices to capture biometric data on the tablets and transmit it to AHC's Command Center. Patients also answer a series of daily questions, based on their chronic diseases and unique care plans. When AHC medical teams notice troubling trends, they can immediately reach out to patients and offer support.

Alignment Healthcare

Results

AHC currently has more than 120 patients using the Vivify/Samsung solution, with an 86 percent compliance rate. Patients find the tablets easy to use and appreciate knowing someone is watching out for them. They also receive ongoing education, take more responsibility for their own health outcomes, and are far less likely to be admitted to the hospital. Along with these potentially life-saving results, both the patient and health plan save money.



Alignment Healthcare

Founded in 2013, Alignment Healthcare (AHC) is a population health management company focused on improving the healthcare of Medicare beneficiaries. By partnering with medical providers, health plans and hospitals in a single care team, AHC simplifies the complex and confusing medical process by coordinating a patient's points of care, creating a seamless, easy-to-navigate healthcare experience. This results in happier, healthier and more satisfied patients.

Along with treating patients at physical clinical care centers, AHC provides remote health monitoring services for patients with one or more chronic diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Headquartered in Orange, California, AHC has grown quickly over the past year. It now covers 20,000 Medicare lives in California and serves more than 1,800 Humana customers in Wake County, North Carolina. In 2016, AHC is expected to serve several thousand Florida Blue customers across five counties in the Jacksonville, Sarasota and Tampa Bay areas.

The Customer Need: Providing Go-To Solutions for At-Risk Patients

Most modern primary care providers (PCPs) are overwhelmed with the number of patients they must see on any given day. Many don't have time to see chronically ill patients as frequently or for as long as they need to be seen. Unable to see their PCPs, these individuals often go to hospital emergency rooms or urgent care clinics, even for minor problems. This results in higher costs for healthcare plans and readmission penalties for hospitals. It also disrupts the continuity of care for patients, who are seeing multiple doctors at multiple locations, none of whom communicate with each other.

"Within the Medicare population, 20 percent of patients are considered 'chronically frail' and account for 80 percent of health dollars spent," says Dr. Arta Bakshandeh, senior medical officer for Alignment Healthcare. "We assist PCPs by taking on the management of their chronically frail patients, ensuring they get the extra attention they need. This allows PCPs to focus on routine health

maintenance for the 80 percent of patients we call the 'walking well.'"

To help keep patients healthy and out of the hospital, AHC built clinics where patients can see medical professionals as often as needed, at no additional expense. But AHC also needed a sophisticated remote health monitoring solution for its highest-risk patients.

This would enable the team to capture daily biometric data, see and communicate with patients via video calls, access patients' health statuses 24/7 from AHC's Command Center and arrange medical intervention at the first sign of trouble.

The remote monitoring solution needed to be reliable, seamlessly integrated with AHC's electronic health records system and easy for patients (whose average age is 71) to use.

The Samsung Solution: Robust Platform, State-of-the-Art Mobile Devices

After considering several options, Alignment Healthcare chose a solution combining software from Vivify Health, a leading remote care platform, and Samsung Galaxy tablets, which provided a seamless mobile solution for patients to track their medical conditions.

During the initial onboarding assessment for new patients, AHC uses proprietary algorithms to determine which individuals need home monitoring. About seven percent — those Dr. Bakshandeh calls “the frailest of the frail” — go home with a Vivify/Samsung kit that has been customized for their unique medical conditions.

Each day, remote care patients use Bluetooth-enabled medical devices — such as weight scales, blood pressure cuffs and oximeter/pulse readers — to capture biometric data on the Samsung tablets and transmit it to AHC’s Command Center. Patients also answer a series of daily questions, based on their conditions and care plans. When AHC medical teams notice troubling trends in the data or spot potential problems, they can immediately reach out to patients for more information and to offer support.

“Getting the data from home is really important,” says Dr. Bakshandeh. “When I worked in hospitals, I’d have patients’ family members say, ‘When I checked Dad’s blood pressure this morning, it was fine. Why did he have a stroke in the evening?’ His blood pressure probably spiked most evenings, but no one knew this

was happening because they never checked it at night. The human body is a pretty amazing machine, and its adaptive capabilities are second to none. But we don’t have the ability to see what’s really happening if we’re only doing one point of care once a day, or worse, whenever the patient sees a doctor.”

Patients can also request video calls with their care team using their Samsung Galaxy tablets, asking that someone from the team call them “within an hour” or “within 24 hours.” During these secure, face-to-face calls, physicians and nurse practitioners visually assess patients and do virtual examinations to determine if patients need to be seen in person for further treatment.

Dr. Bakshandeh says AHC chose the Vivify/Samsung solution for two main reasons: Vivify Health’s ability to customize care plans and alerts for specific patients, and the robust features of the Samsung tablets.

All Vivify kits deployed in the United States utilize Samsung tablets. Robin Hill, vice president of clinical solutions for Vivify Health, says, “Samsung does some unique things with its own Android stack that enables us to do mobile device management. The tablets are also high-quality and durable, so they stand up to disinfection routines between patients. We’re also working on integrating our platform with the Samsung Gear S, hoping to offer our software via wearable technology in the future.”

Quick Profile:



Samsung Galaxy Tab E

DISPLAY: 9.6” WXGA 1280x800 TFT

OPERATING SYSTEM: Android Lollipop 5.1.1

PROCESSOR: 1.2 GHz Quad Core

CAMERAS: 5MP back / 2MP front

CONNECTIVITY: 802.11 a/b/g/n and 4G LTE

SECURITY: KNOX 2.4; premium features require license fee



The Results: Close Calls Averted with Home Monitoring

Alignment Healthcare currently has more than 120 patients using the Vivify/Samsung solution, with an 86 percent compliance rate. Patients find the tablets easy to use and appreciate knowing someone is watching out for them. They also receive ongoing education, take more responsibility for their own health outcomes, and are far less likely to be admitted to the hospital.

“I thought getting our senior patients to use these devices would be a lot harder than it actually is,” says Dr. Bakshandeh. “We spend about half an hour training patients and their caregivers. Then we have them go home and call us from the device. This way, we can look for connectivity and be sure the patient knows how to use it. There’s also a reminder chime that reminds patients to follow their care plans and take their medications. So, the whole initiative has been really successful.”

Dr. Bakshandeh says the solution has helped his team avoid many close calls with patients. For example, one elderly woman in North Carolina, who came in for her initial visit to Alignment’s

care center, went home with a Vivify/Samsung kit, even though her blood work looked fine, because she had multiple chronic diseases.

A few weeks later, she requested an urgent video callback. The nurse practitioner who received her case reviewed the patient’s biometric data, which showed her blood pressure was slightly lower than normal, while her heart rate was slightly elevated. “Just as importantly, the nurse could see the patient was very pale on the video,” says Dr. Bakshandeh. “This prompted her to ask, ‘Are you having dark stools?’ When the patient said yes, the nurse realized the patient might have a gastrointestinal bleed.”

The nurse arranged an immediate appointment for the patient at her local AHC clinic, where the team tested her hemoglobin level and determined it was half the normal rate. They transferred her to a local hospital, where she was able to bypass the emergency room and see a gastroenterologist immediately. “She had two units of blood transfused within the hour and was able to stay on a telemetry unit, rather than being admitted to intensive

care,” says Dr. Bakshandeh. “This woman was on her way to a stroke, heart attack and potentially death within 24 to 48 hours. It would have been a catastrophe — not only for her quality of life, but also financially. But because we could have a simple face-to-face with her via video, we were able to diagnose her, address the issue and get her back home with no deficits in less than two days.”

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– Dr. Arta Bakshandeh,
Senior Medical Officer for
Alignment Healthcare

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