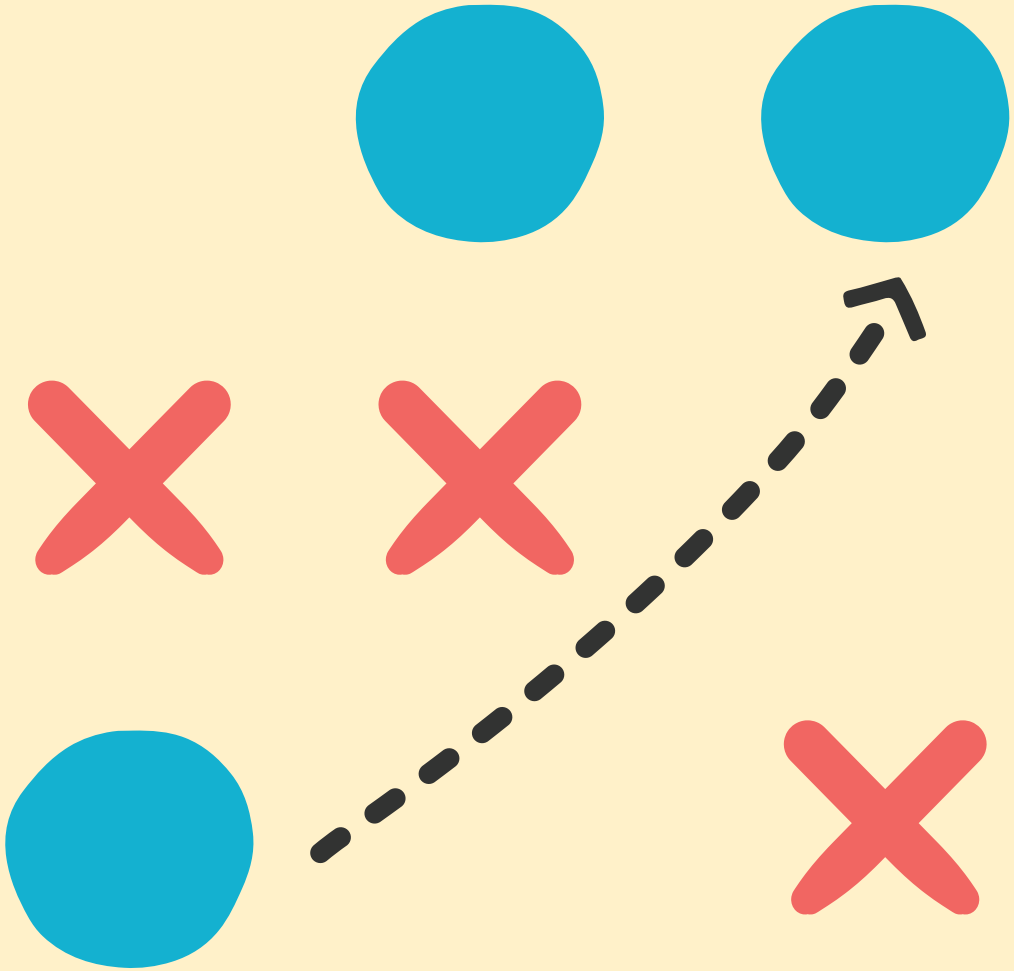
eBook

How to create a Patient Relationship Management Strategy



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Is your patient relationship management program in pretty good shape, but may need a few tweaks here and there? Or does your platform seem to be stealing precious time from care teams and letting patients slip through the cracks?

Regardless of which situation you are in, there's good news - you can create care plans and relationship management workflows that keep your program design efficient and affordable.

The result will be better patient-centered experiences and improved patient-reported outcomes, that help you prove the effectiveness of your program to your partners.

To create a streamlined PRM workflow, however, you need to understand the patient's journey - any barriers that hinder lifestyle changes, complications within their own health, and reasonable goals for each patient's circumstances. Once barriers are accounted for, you can then streamline and automate within those parameters, allowing care teams to be more efficient while providing consistent levels of care.

Step 1: Map the Patient Journey

Here are questions to ask to help you map the patient journey:

1/ What Are The Core Activities of Patient and Care Teams?
For starters, consider when your ideal patient's path crosses with care staff. What situations preempt these interactions? Do patients normally reach out, or is it the care team that initiates the conversation?

Beyond that, it's important to examine what daily tasks look like for care team members. How often are they on the phone? How often are they interacting in person? At what point does staff workflow intersect with patients' lives? And how can care managers optimize these interactions?

At this point, you may be seeing some breakdown between patient management and patient engagement. For instance, care managers may be spending far more time on administrative tasks - sending followup emails, logging when patient interactions happened, digging through digital patient files to get the background - than they actually spend conversing and engaging with patients.

If you're seeing workflow problems like these, that means you're on your way to creating a seamless PRM strategy. You can't seal the gaps unless you first know where they are.

2/ What Does Real Life Look Like For Patients?

The reason patient relationship management is challenging is that no two patients are the same. Not only do they face different health conditions, but they also encounter different social determinants of health (SDOH) that make it harder to keep up with their care plan.

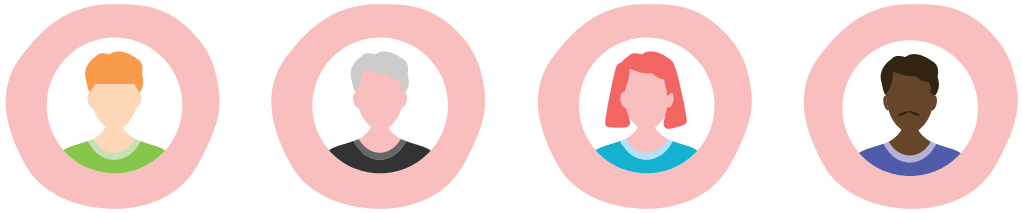
That means that care plans, staff interactions, and data needs to take into account these varying needs and adjust accordingly. Needless to say, it's very easy for patients to slip between the cracks at this stage of their journey.

What health providers don't always realize, however, is that factors like the SDOH actually are great predictive analytic tools[1] to help care teams provide stronger outreach. For instance, if care managers have automated questions that help them analyze how many SDOHs affect patients' wellbeing, they'll know which patients could probably use more support.

Take for instance a patient who works night shifts. If care managers understand how work affects this patient's schedule, they can avoid months without interaction.

Or what about a person working two jobs trying to keep food on the table for their growing family? A patient in this condition with type 2 diabetes probably won't have time to cook healthy meals or go grocery shopping. As a result, they're more likely to default to food like donuts, hotdogs, or pizza, especially if they're employed at a restaurant or convenience store where they constantly handle and serve these foods.

All this to say, this knowledge can help care managers better invest in those who need support, allowing them to adjust care plan goals so that patients can take small steps toward change.



1 https://patientengagementhit.com/news/using-social-determinants-of-health-in-patient-centered-care

3/ What Population-Specific Factors Could Improve Workflow?

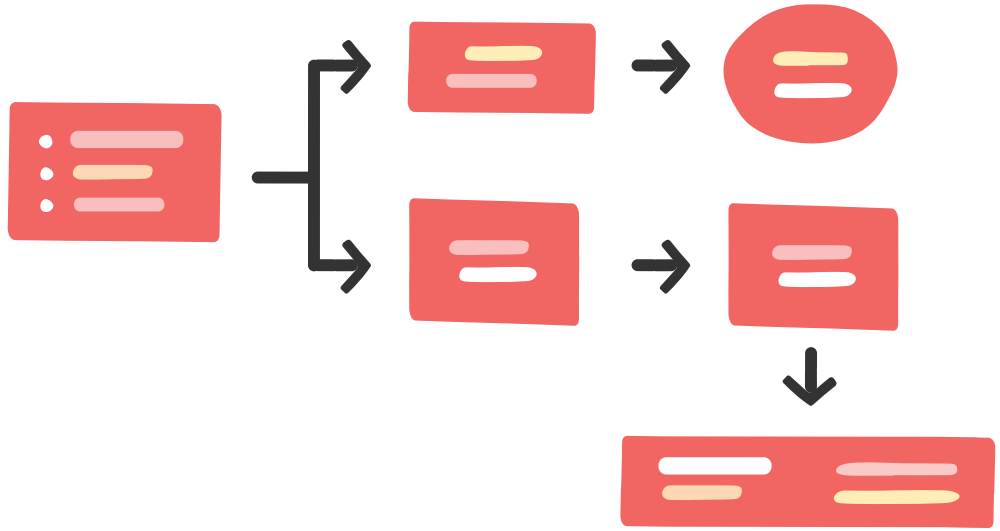
Among patients, there are other population-specific factors that can alert care teams of potential care plan concerns. By way of example, those who pay with Medicaid are more likely to have additional economic challenges.[2] Factors surrounding financial hardship may predispose them to poorer health outcomes.

Patients who qualify for Medicaid may also be more likely to participate in unhealthy lifestyle choices such as smoking, further predisposing them to other complex conditions such as chronic illness. In addition, this population also displays higher rates of mental and emotional complications.

Consider also population sectors such as those who are aging and will need long term care. These patients often have additional compounding conditions[3] such as heart disease, diabetes, loneliness, and depression that require better care coordination between medical staff. If care plans take these factors into account, teams can have better procedures in place to streamline care[4] and ensure consistent levels of attention.

By noticing and addressing population sectors like these, care teams are better able to adjust expectations and provide greater levels of support to offset these challenging factors.

So what population-specific factors could help your care teams develop proactive procedures and more strategic outreach?



2 https://news.gallup.com/poll/223295/medicaid-population-reports-poorest-health.aspx
3 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1464018/
4 https://patientengagementhit.com/news/aha-launches-strategy-for-patient-centered-care-for-aging-patients

4/ What are your methods and cadence for communication?
After considering obstacles in the patient's journey, it's time to address expectations for communication.

- What channels will your teams use?
- How do teams know when to reach out to patients?
- What are you trying to achieve through each channel?
- Are you using the right medium for the right goals?

By way of example, care managers could waste valuable time on phone calls if they use that time to conduct a survey. Typically, the best medium for surveys is through email. On the other hand, phone calls are often the best medium for personal interaction and taking stock of patient morale.

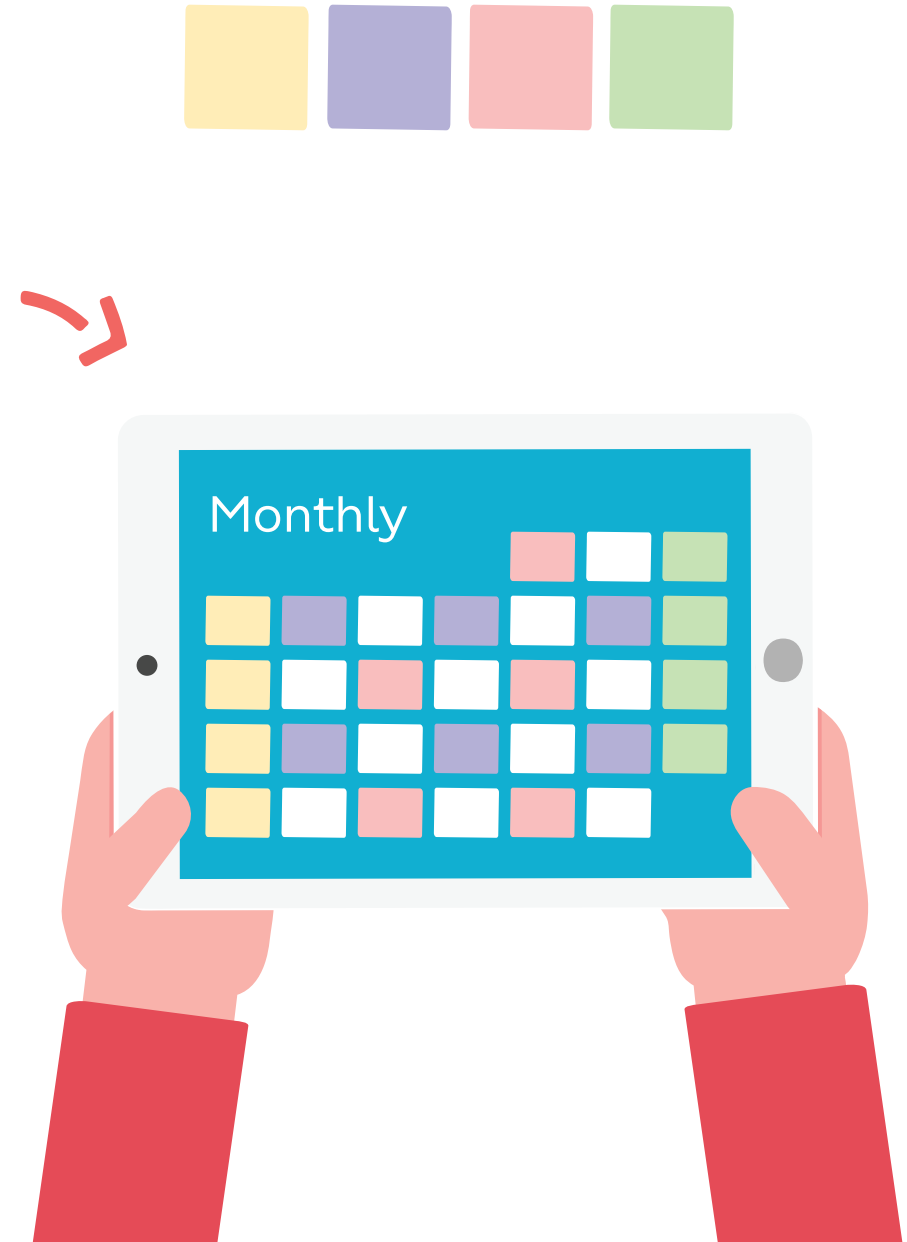
Are there any ways that your program could be using the strengths of different communication channels more effectively?

5/ What action steps can patients take between interactions?
Even when care teams aren't communicating directly with patients, the program can still be set up in such a way that people still feel connected to their care management team.

Automation[5] is key for creating this personal atmosphere of trust and connectivity. For instance, care managers can automate goal reminders for patients that routinely pop up, providing personal motivation on a regular basis.

Plus, care teams can have automatically generated scheduling emails, helping patients set up phone calls. In addition, follow up emails that include surveys or questionnaires can help to improve value-based care over the long run while gathering useful metrics to prove the value offered within the program.

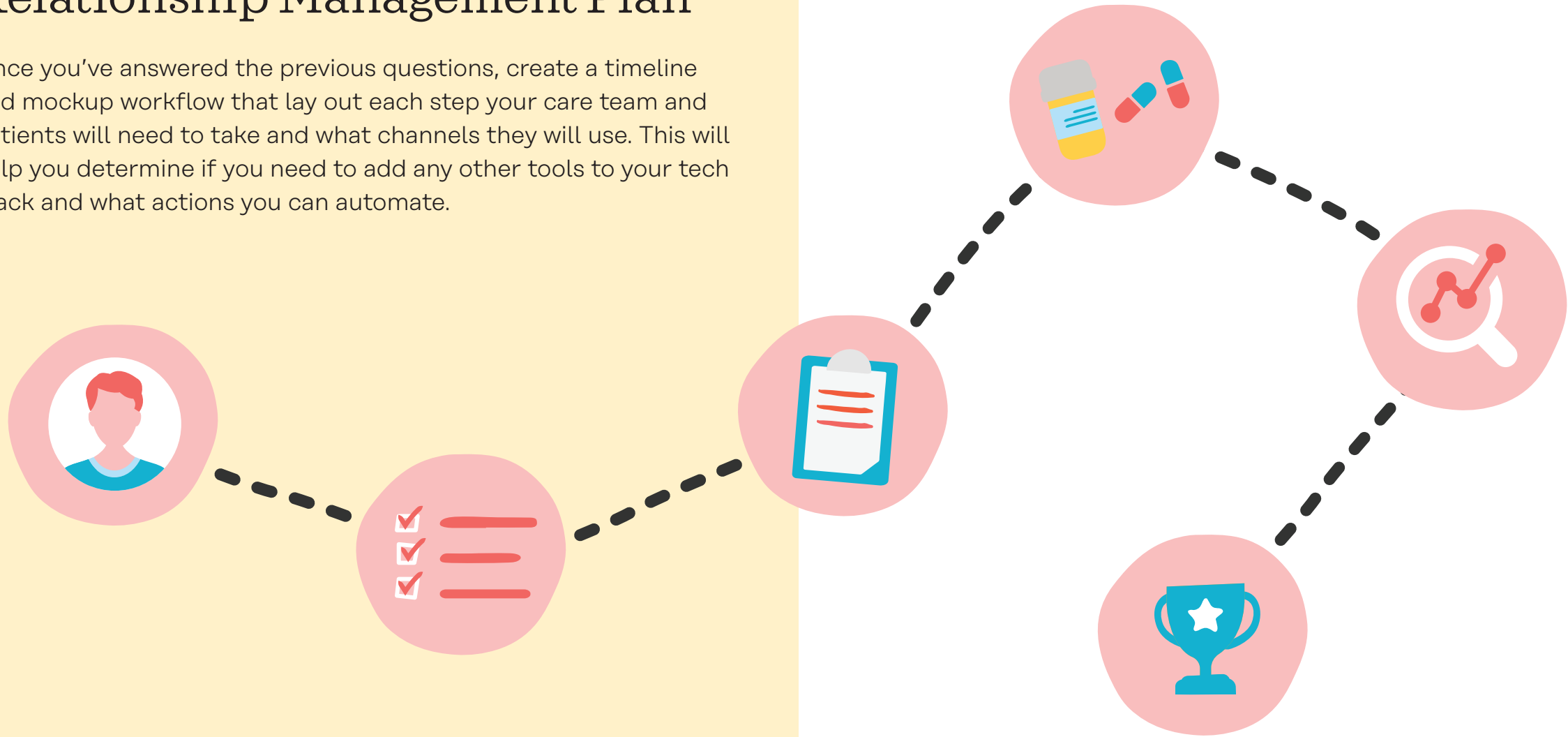
In short, if care teams aren't automating the right procedures, patients can easily fall through the cracks.



5 https://welkinhealth.com/updates/why-its-easier-to-create-efficient-workflows-than-you-might-think/

Step 2: Create Your Patient Relationship Management Plan

Once you've answered the previous questions, create a timeline and mockup workflow that lay out each step your care team and patients will need to take and what channels they will use. This will help you determine if you need to add any other tools to your tech stack and what actions you can automate.



Step 3: Collect Data and Learn from It

Your PRM strategy should also include the ability to quickly re-analyze your program on a regular basis to avoid patient drop off or inefficiency in workflow. By collecting data that lets you view staff metrics and patient progress, you can see in real-time how the program could improve.

In addition, it's vital that you have a way to show month over month progress to payers and investors. Luckily, you don't have to create these evidence-based assessment tools from scratch because there are plenty of industry standard resources that can break down the analytics into meaningful data.

If you notice diminishing returns on patient relationship management, your PRM strategy should include a way to re-evaluate metrics at a moment's notice to learn how to re-engage and help the program grow for the long-run.

Need help creating your patient relationship management plan?

Talk to a patient relationship strategist.

Foster Strong Patient Relationships At Scale

Reach more patients in less time to activate them in their care plans. A PRM solution gives your care teams the tools they need to spend more time focusing on patients, keep track of where patients are in their care plan and re-engage patients who may be slipping through the cracks.

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