

# Are interactive patient systems the key to a better patient experience?

Why 85 percent of hospitals will adopt IPS  
to improve patient care and satisfaction

## 85 percent of large hospitals state that purchasing IPS is in their long-term plans.

-Interactive Patient Systems 2017: Turning Interactivity Into Outcomes<sup>2</sup>

Dayton Children's Hospital wants to deliver an exceptional experience for critically ill children and their families. Its eight-story patient tower, opened in June 2017, features large private rooms, WiFi, exercise areas for family members and new technologies providing real-time, two-way communication and feedback. The tower also includes indoor/outdoor play spaces and other elements that educate, entertain and engage its young patients.

Dayton Children's is not alone in its efforts to provide a first-rate patient experience. A growing number of hospitals are taking steps to upgrade services and improve communication as they work to achieve the Quadruple Aim, which strives to:

- improve the health of populations;
- enhance the experience of care;
- reduce the per capita cost of healthcare;
- and improve the clinician's experience.

With an aggregate cost of well over \$300 billion just for administrative expenses,<sup>1</sup> healthcare organizations are exploring new and innovative ways to improve the patient experience that won't break the bank. One emerging solution in particular, interactive patient systems (IPS), is rapidly gaining in popularity, with 85 percent of large hospitals stating that implementing IPS is in their long-term plans.<sup>2</sup>

The patient experience is becoming increasingly important. When backed by reliable network infrastructure, IPS offer a cost-effective way to improve that experience and better meet Quadruple Aim goals.

### **Patient experience is a priority**

In recent years, healthcare organizations have made elevating the patient experience a priority in an effort to increase Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey scores, which are directly tied to patient satisfaction, price transparency and the quality and convenience of care. The results of the HCAHPS survey, which is required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), are critically important because they drive incentive payments for reimbursement.

As healthcare moves from fee-for-service to value-based care models, HCAHPS will play an even larger role in incentive payments. In fact, 72 percent of hospital CEOs say patient experience improvements are something they will begin to invest in — or increase investments in — over the next three years.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this enhanced focus on the patient experience, hospitals continue to struggle with achieving optimal HCAHPS scores: only 251 out of approximately 5,500 U.S. hospitals achieve 5-star ratings.<sup>1</sup> Today's healthcare consumers expect — even demand — personalized care, transparency and an extraordinary experience.

Hospitals are using IPS to reduce readmission rates, provide patients with the comforts of home, improve care management and more.

#### **Technology is transforming patient care**

Technology is playing a vital role in transforming patient care and improving outcomes. Experts predict that in the not-so-distant future, every patient, clinician and medical device will be connected over fiber-based networks that enable positive patient experiences.

These networks support technologies like Smart TVs, tablets and bedside “infotainment” units that provide a “homelike” experience and enable improved communication with nursing staff. Use of these technologies and many others show no signs of slowing down — by the year 2020, the digital healthcare market is expected to reach \$206 billion.<sup>4</sup>

IPS in particular are enjoying a rapid rise in adoption because when supported by a scalable fiber network, they provide an economical way to impact many aspects of the patient experience. Hospitals are using this innovative solution to reduce readmission rates, provide patients with the comforts of home, improve care management and more.

#### **Customized education programs reduce readmission rates and increase satisfaction**

Patient education can play a vital role in increasing treatment adherence and reducing readmission rates. Studies show patient satisfaction with health education offerings increases by as much as 42 percent when they are delivered using IPS.<sup>5</sup>

IPS lower readmissions by enabling hospitals to educate patients on their conditions and treatments using on-demand video content tailored to their diagnosis, procedures and medications. To optimize compliance, watching the videos can be a requirement for discharge.

The financial impact of reducing readmissions can be substantial. Under the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program, CMS withholds up to three percent of reimbursement payments if hospitals have a higher-than-expected number of readmissions within 30 days of discharge for certain conditions. In 2017, more than 2,500 hospitals — almost half of all U.S. hospitals — were penalized.<sup>6</sup>

#### **“Positive distraction” increases patient well-being**

IPS provide “positive patient distraction,” which studies show reduces pain, anxiety, stress and fatigue. IPS solutions incorporating WiFi and HDTV enable patients to browse the Internet, stream content and listen to music. “Positive patient distraction helps patients pass their time more comfortably, which takes their minds off their pain and the general discomfort of being in an unfamiliar setting,” says Ken Honeycutt, director of strategic accounts and channels at TVR Communications, an IPS solutions provider.

A dedicated fiber network in particular is well-suited to deliver the high-bandwidth and speed required for the IPS platform.

**The ability to control and connect provides a homelike experience**

IPS help patients feel more at home by allowing them to turn on reading lights, raise or lower window shades and change room temperature. Through the use of video conferencing technologies, IPS also help patients connect with family and friends after the birth of baby or during a long hospital stay.

**Real-time data improves care management**

Patients can become better advocates for their care with IPS. “With real-time feedback and service recovery, patients can immediately let someone know when something isn’t right. Their request can then be routed to the most appropriate member of the care team,” Honeycutt says.

In addition, IPS help elevate the patient experience by providing patient data that can be used to track trends and identify areas for improvement.

**IPS require reliable and scalable digital infrastructure**

Healthcare organizations that want to get the maximum benefit from IPS need digital infrastructure that can easily scale to meet evolving business needs. A dedicated fiber network in particular is well-suited to deliver the high-bandwidth and speed required for the IPS platform.

The benefits of using a fiber network for IPS include:

- **Minimal equipment and maintenance:** TV programming and educational content can be delivered over existing wiring without the need for a set-top box or expensive, head-end equipment that requires storage, cooling and maintenance.
- **Low latency:** Fiber networks transmit information quickly and with negligible latency so communication between patients and care teams is fast and seamless, leading to improved satisfaction and HCAHPS scores.
- **No weather-related video outages:** Video delivered over a fiber network isn’t susceptible to weather-related disruptions.

**What to consider when evaluating digital infrastructure providers**

- **Healthcare expertise:** Select a provider that specializes in IT solutions for the healthcare industry and has strong client retention rates to ensure success.
- **Facilities-based foundation:** Choose a technology partner that owns its last-mile network and offers scalable solutions. Facilities-based providers with broad network reach are better-equipped to provide high-quality service.

- **Service-level agreements (SLAs):** Select a network provider that offers comprehensive SLAs that set performance benchmarks for service reliability, response and repair times.
- **Managed services:** Consider a provider that enables you to outsource management and monitoring of your technology services. This will allow you to use your budget for improving clinical spaces instead of IT infrastructure and resources.

### **The key to a better patient experience**

By educating patients, providing them with the comforts of home and empowering them to take an active role in their care, IPS have the potential to be go-to solutions for improving patient satisfaction while reducing readmission rates and boosting HCAHPS scores. When combined with reliable and scalable digital infrastructure, IPS could be the key to providing a better patient experience.

Build a strong digital foundation to support IPS and other healthcare technologies with Spectrum Enterprise. [Learn how.](#)

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6. Rau, J. Under Trump, Hospitals Face Same Penalties Embraced By Obama. [Kaiser Health News](#). August 3, 2017.

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