

# How Eagle Physicians & Associates Uses PatientPing to Improve Its Transitional Care Management Services



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# BACKGROUND

Eagle Physicians & Associates is a private, physician-owned and physician-led multispecialty medical group located in Greensboro, North Carolina. Eagle Physicians is the largest affiliated provider organization of Triad Healthcare Network (THN) ACO, with its membership consisting of six family practice sites, four specialty sites, one pediatric site, one walk-in clinic, and one endoscopy center. Eagle Physicians' core objective is to ensure long-term, consistent health and happiness for the patients it serves.

In recent years, and as trends have shifted toward value-based care, Eagle Physicians began to focus on improving its Transitional Care Management (TCM) services. Prior to refining this process, Eagle Physicians' primary care providers (PCPs) were responsible for all TCM services via standardized documentation. Patients leaving acute care settings often lacked the support services necessary to ensure medication adherence at home, and were not always able follow through with discharge instructions and follow-up appointments.

With the goal of conformity and consistency in mind, Eagle Physicians partnered with two payer organizations in January of 2015 on an initiative to manage patients covered under those plans. Eagle Physicians also created a Transitions of Care Team to work directly with the payer teams. Shortly thereafter, they developed a Centralized Quality Team consisting of three auxiliary clinical staff to manage care transitions across all Eagle Physicians sites.

Under this workflow, the team received a daily report from its hospital system with information on patient admissions and discharges. The report, however, was specific to only the hospital system, meaning that the Centralized Quality Team had to run additional internal reports to accurately identify Eagle Physicians patients.

# BACKGROUND

The team then distributed the list to all Eagle Physicians practices and used this report to perform transitions of care services. Eagle Physicians would follow up with patients within 7 to 14 days, depending on the patient's acuity level.

Because the data provided by the hospital system was delayed and sometimes inaccurate, the team was unable to effectively monitor patient events. This resulted in missed opportunities to facilitate patient follow-up appointments, reconcile medications, and appropriately follow through on discharge plans. In March of 2018, Eagle Physicians implemented an additional database in hopes of obtaining more streamlined patient information. Though this database offered them more comprehensive patient data, both systems still required significant data manipulation to gain relevant insights. They also lacked the ability to monitor skilled nursing facility (SNF) patients. The team had to create weekly reminders within their EHR to call SNFs in order to monitor patient status. This process was time consuming and, in many instances, the team was unable to make contact with a staff member at the facilities or obtain discharge information in a timely manner.

Eagle Physicians was looking for a solution that would allow them to monitor patients' care transitions in real time and facilitate timely follow ups.

# PATIENTPING IMPLEMENTATION

Eagle Physicians' affiliated ACO, THN, began using PatientPing in July of 2017 to effectively monitor and manage their patients' care events. Eagle Physicians soon saw the value that PatientPing provided to THN and decided to implement the platform to improve care across the entire Eagle Physicians network.

They began implementation with six of their primary care sites, as well as their pediatric site, in July of 2018. Over the following weeks, the PatientPing team and the Centralized Quality Team facilitated in-person onboarding meetings with each Eagle Physicians site and team, consisting of the practices administrator, clinical supervisors, front administrative supervisor, along with one pod member identified as a PatientPing "super user". During these meetings, PatientPing provided each site with a demo to review the platform, as well as an overview of customized best practices and workflow recommendations.

# WORKFLOWS

Currently, Eagle Physicians' workflows for its hospitals are as follows:

1. At the beginning of each day, the Centralized Quality Team's lead patient care advocate signs into PatientPing and views all patients who have been admitted to or discharged from a surrounding hospital within the last 24 hours.
2. The patient care advocate then uses PatientPing's export feature to pull a report on these care events. The report includes patient demographic information (age, sex, address, phone number, etc.), primary care provider/care team information, admission diagnosis, event location, and date of event.
3. Care events are then divided among team members based on patient location. From here, patients are prioritized based on their level of complexity, with high complexity patients receiving the first outreach.
4. The Centralized Quality Team then calls recently-discharged patients and schedules appointments with their respective PCPs within 7 to 14 days. They also ensure that any other necessary appointments with specialists or home health services are in place. The Centralized Quality Team also uses this outreach to perform a complete medication reconciliation, troubleshoot any potential acute care events by answering questions or concerns, and facilitate appointments with patients' PCPs sooner if needed.

Eagle Physicians rolled out a similar TOC process for its SNF patients. By being able to easily identify which patients are admitted to or discharged from SNFs through PatientPing, the Centralized Quality Team ensures that patients' needs are met immediately following the care event, avoiding potential unnecessary acute care readmissions.

# WORKFLOWS

This outreach increases follow-up visits, improves overall TCM services and bolsters patient satisfaction.

Eagle Physicians' Centralized Quality Team also monitors PatientPing throughout the day to view real-time events. The team can receive text and email notifications on new events and view them within the web application to ensure timely intervention and safer patient transitions.

The Centralized Quality Team, having only been using the platform for three months, is continually exploring the use of new features, such as PatientPing's 'High Utilizer' flag, which flags patients with three or more ED presentations in the last 60 days, as well as PatientPing's 'Readmission Risk' flag, which flags patients with an inpatient discharge within the last 30 days. The team also hopes to start using PatientPing's data to monitor specific patient segments based on diagnoses; specifically, their chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients.

# PATIENT SUCCESS STORY

In October of 2018, the Centralized Quality Team received a call on a patient who had been discharged from a SNF. With limited information on the patient's care event, the Centralized Quality Team searched for the patient within PatientPing, and determined that the patient's PCP was within the Eagle Physicians network. The team called the PCP's office, and discovered that they had not been able to facilitate an office visit due to several failed attempts to get ahold of the patient or her family.

The Centralized Quality Team noted a unique phone number listed within PatientPing under the patient's demographic information. Upon calling the new number, the team was able to reach the patient, and learned that she had moved to live with a family member, obtained a new PCP, and had sustained a C5 fracture. The team was able to gather the patient's new information, while also providing support for the patient's family members regarding where the patient could receive care.

By accessing PatientPing, the Centralized Quality Team was not only able to get in touch of the patient after numerous failed attempts, but was also able to determine discharge information and update the patient's information, all of which are important for quality metric reporting and for the appropriate flow of patient records. Additionally, the team was able to provide support to the patient and her family and educate them on alternative settings where the patient could receive care for her injury.

# RESULTS & IMPACT ON BUSINESS METRICS

Since implementing PatientPing in July of 2018, Eagle Physicians' Centralized Quality Team has **contacted 67% more patients for SNF transitions of care follow-ups.**

Eagle Physicians has also experienced a **25% increase in the number of TCM visits** that were billed for their THN patients between May of 2017 and May of 2018.

Increase in SNF transitions of care follow-ups	Increase in TCM visits billed for THN patients
↑ 67%	↑ 25%

