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Five ways to simplify the delivery of virtual care for clinicians

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There is no question the healthcare industry is operating in a new era. Virtual care hit its stride during the pandemic, so it's no surprise that consumers are bringing their everyday expectations of user experience from the retail, travel and entertainment industries into healthcare. Consumers prioritize flexibility and convenience, and want to access care on their own terms. It's a dynamic that many hospitals and health systems were working towards prior to 2020, but was catalyzed by the pandemic.

In the scramble to provide remote care, many organizations quickly stood up virtual care solutions or turned to leverage their current communication and collaboration solutions to connect clinicians and patients. While effective for providing care and meeting patient demand in the short term, this also exacerbated many of the issues clinicians face today, highlighting the fragmented nature of platforms. For example, test results, bloodwork and images exist on separate computers or applications. Clinicians must navigate multiple devices and proprietary software to find the information they need.

In addition, patient care can resemble a jigsaw puzzle with a few or many missing pieces. And today, clinicians must navigate this jigsaw puzzle while managing patients both in-person and virtually. The lack of interoperability between systems and the burden of additional administrative work often results in time and attention taken away from patient care.

Hospital and health systems' frustration with siloed systems has long lingered and this is no exception. In fact, hospital and health system leaders recently surveyed by Becker's Healthcare indicated their desire for enterprise-level software that can span multiple locations and acuity levels within and outside their organization. They see virtual care as a solution to help them perpetuate patient-centric clinical and administrative workflows.

In the information age, problems like these beg for solutions. Here are five ways to make the delivery of virtual care as easy and efficient for clinicians as the delivery of in-person care:

1. **Streamlined clinical workflow.** A big step forward is the ability to combine the convenience of virtual care technology with administrative workflows that put everything a clinician needs into one platform. Capabilities could include viewing appointments, accessing current patient information, mirroring clinical workflow, integrating chats and video visits with colleagues, and more. By reducing the number of logins, screens and applications needed, we can reduce the "swivel chair" effect experienced by clinicians today.
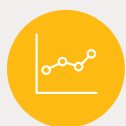
2. **Accessible, analytics-ready data.** Today, there is a plethora of raw data generated from connected devices. The ability for a care team to access curated data delivered as actionable insights simply and easily via a single platform is paramount and enables hyper-personalized care when and where it is needed, across the care continuum.

3. **A collaborative platform.** The ability for a care team to communicate and collaborate is vital for exceptional patient care. Users want one application that both enhances the virtual care experience and provides secure communication among care teams, clinicians and patients, without any additional administrative burden.

4. **Free-flowing, secure communications.** Security is paramount for care delivery and the patient experience. By providing clinicians a single, secure, compliant environment in which they can deliver care and perform administrative tasks, they can focus on what matters most — taking care of their patients.

5. **An elegant, intuitive user interface.** All too often, applications are hard to use and are not purpose-built for virtual care delivery, necessitating clinicians deviate from their normal workflows. The integration of purpose-built solutions into a single, unified platform simplifies the way care teams work, enabling a stronger focus on high quality care.
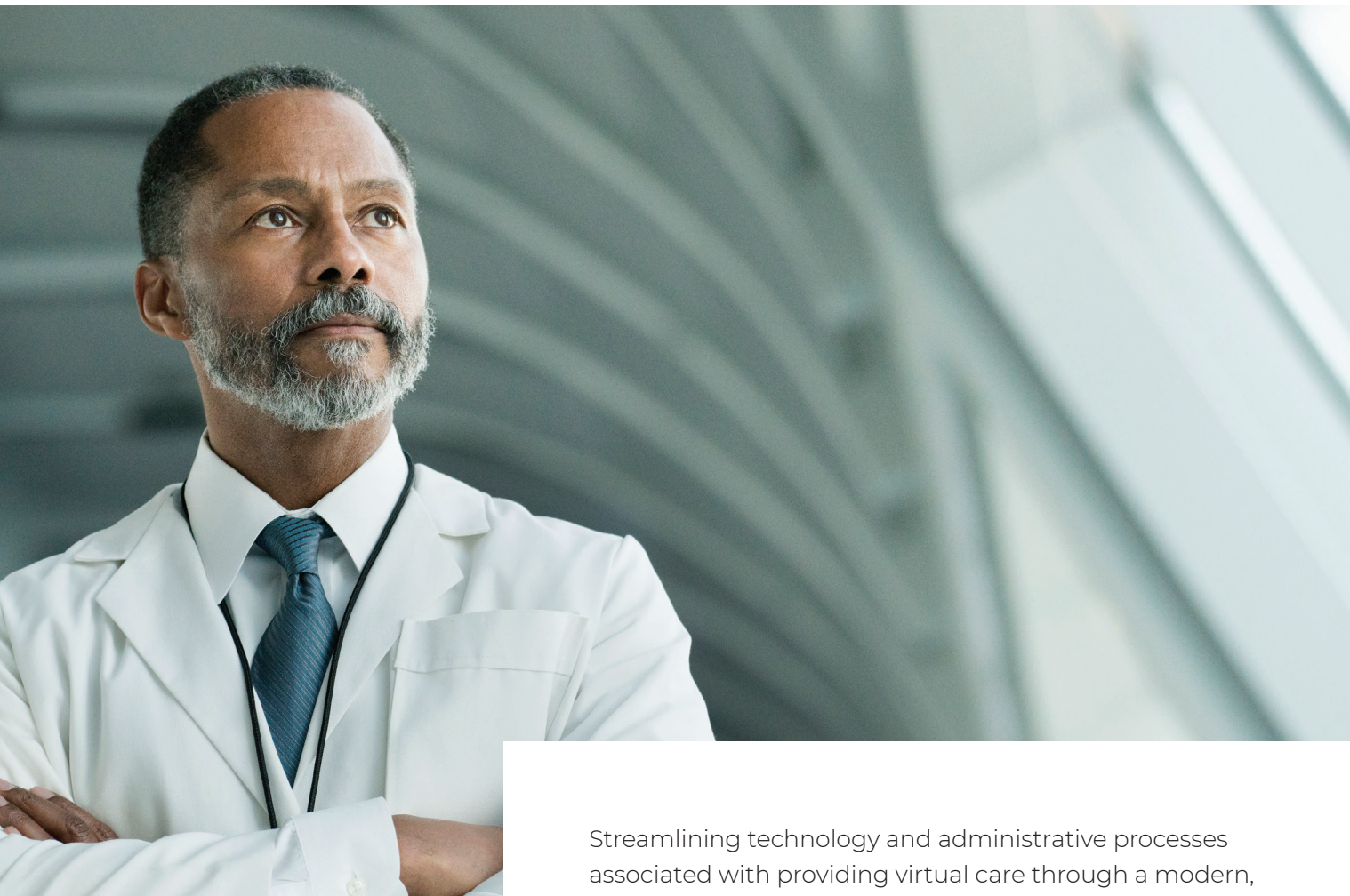
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Streamlining technology and administrative processes associated with providing virtual care through a modern, unified platform will not only simplify workflows but ultimately improve the care experience. Virtual care should perpetuate patient-centric, clinical and administrative workflows and provide clinicians with the relevant, actionable data and insights required to provide the best possible patient care. With a single interface for patient engagement, clinicians will be freed of administrative burden and available to practice at the top of their license and provide the best care possible.

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