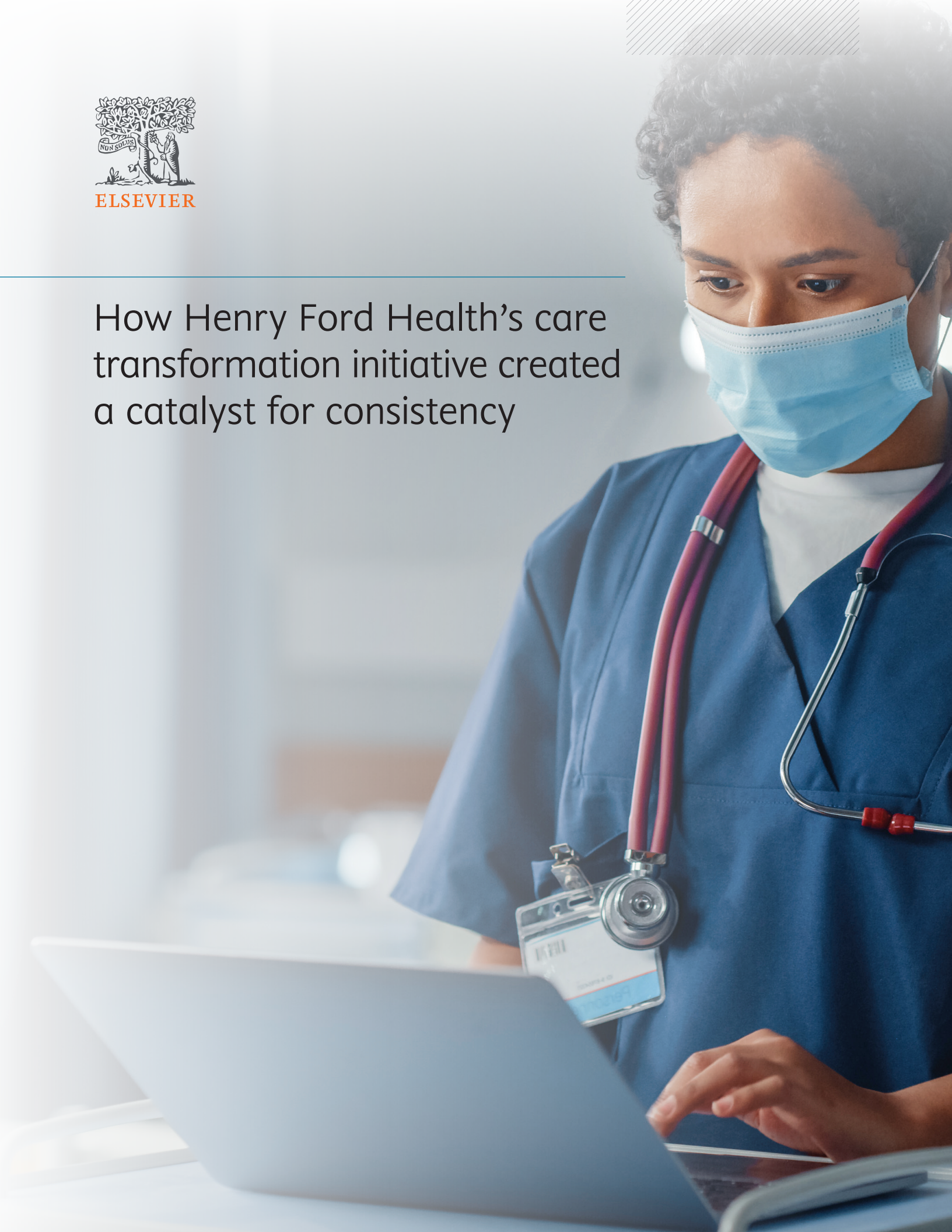# How Henry Ford Health's care transformation initiative created a catalyst for consistency

A discussion on transforming patient education

Effective patient education and engagement strategies are critical to supporting patients across the care continuum and improving health outcomes.

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, patients today are taking an active role and want more personalization in their care experience. As a result, patient education is an important element of a broader patient engagement strategy.

87% of consumers want personalized healthcare tools.[1]

About Henry Ford Health

Founded in 1915 by auto pioneer Henry Ford, Henry Ford Health is a $6.6 billion comprehensive, integrated and academic health system focusing on healthcare delivery and coverage, research, and medical education and training. With more than 33,000 team members, Henry Ford Health is one of Michigan's largest and most diverse employers, including nearly 6,000 physicians and researchers from the Henry Ford Physician Network and Jackson Health Network.

To better meet patient needs, Henry Ford Health sought to advance their patient education initiatives. The experts who were instrumental in moving this initiative forward discuss their vision and share their experience.
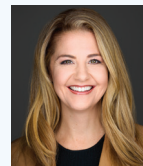
Discussion participants

Donna Summers
RN, MSN-BC,
Chief Nursing Informatics
Officer, Henry Ford Health

Kevin Kinsel
LMSW, Program Manager and
Epic/CPM Site Coordinator,
Henry Ford Health

Angela Murphy
M.Ed., RN, Manager of Patient
Education and Health Literacy,
Henry Ford Health

Tiffany McCauley
MSN, RN,
Clinical Nurse Executive,
Elsevier

Donna Summers
RN, MSN-BC,
Chief Nursing Informatics
Officer, Henry Ford Health

Care transformation front and center at Henry Ford Health

Within our care transformation initiative, we were seeking a catalyst for consistency, focusing on patient education. We wanted to identify an approach that would not only provide education resources for our patients, but work across all care settings, too.

We also wanted to make it easy for clinicians to assign education. Importantly, we wanted to roll out this effort in a way that maximized the use of our existing solutions rather than bringing in a new vendor solution.

Our goal was to provide a personalized experience for patients, giving them access to materials in the way they wanted to consume them to maximize engagement.

Challenges that led to standardizing patient education across the health system

With so many locations and staff, we found that we were duplicating patient education materials and efforts. As a result, we had differing versions throughout the organization that lacked consistency and standardization. Additionally, we had no way of knowing if patients were viewing materials at home once they left our care.

Since studies show that 88% of people in the United States struggle with health literacy[3] and that patients only recall about half of the information discussed in a visit[4], it was important to have a more consistent and patient-friendly education approach with actionable usage insights for clinicians.

Our vision was to standardize across the health system so that we could stay connected and engaged with patients whether they were in our facilities or in their homes. In doing so, we sought to ensure that all materials not only had a clear action for the patient, but that they understood them too. To get there, we knew that improving the comprehension and retention of education information would be key.

57% of healthcare leaders say their patient education is disjointed.[2]

Angela Murphy
M.Ed., RN, Manager of Patient Education and Health Literacy, Henry Ford Health

Gaining buy-in for a systemwide approach that supports clinician engagement

Henry Ford Health takes a patient-centric approach to care, including comprehensive education to help patients and families make informed decisions about their health. We're continually looking for ways to raise the bar.

For this effort, we took a system-level approach, communicating our project mission by explaining the "why" and "how" of the impact on frontline staff. Our way forward was clear: standardize content and workloads, share resources, and provide easy access for staff and patients. We needed an approach that ensured clinicians had confidence in the information and the process.

Additionally, because each patient's learning style is unique, the content delivery should be, too. By providing consistent education to patients throughout their health journeys across all our care settings, we'd accomplish our goal of personalizing their experience.

Kevin Kinsel
LMSW, Program Manager and Epic/CPM Site Coordinator, Henry Ford Health

Leveraging technology to support a longitudinal approach to patient education and care

Our IT team were catalysts for consistency. Reinforcing that all clinicians use the same patient education across the system, both within our EHR and in any patient materials, was critical to support this.

We asked nursing leadership to remove all the old paper education materials from file cabinets, storage units, and the like, so that we could streamline education across our health system – including five hospitals plus

our physician offices, many of which had their own instruction sets for procedure prep and other information provided to patients.

We then aligned efforts to define the best course of action for patient education, from before, during, and after their visit. Clinicians were included in usability testing, and then, we went live with embedded custom content into our EHR.

Previously, we lacked clarity on how patients accessed and used our patient education materials unless they came to us with a direct question. Now, as we continue to streamline our content into a single, web-based format, we'll have better usage tracking across patients, staff, and providers.

62% of facilities use at least three vendors for patient education materials, with no good way to know what's being used.[5]

Angela Murphy
M.Ed., RN, Manager of Patient Education and Health Literacy, Henry Ford Health

The importance of governance in patient education

At Henry Ford Health, a robust governance includes a system council which brings IT, frontline staff, and leadership together with patients. For this initiative, our council started by answering questions: What is our education need? Is someone already working on this?

Once a gap was identified, we defined what content would be needed. All content goes through a formal review process to ensure quality materials, including:
- Is it written in plain language?
- Does it meet grammar and spelling standards?
- Does it meet diversity requirements?
- Did the right subject matter expert (SME) look at it?

Once the material is in circulation, we want to know:
- Are people reading the document or watching the video?
- If it's in our EHR, are people looking at it within the EHR?

And over time, we review materials to make sure they stay current:
- Are images still up to date?
- Does the education still reflect best practices?
- Has information changed?

69%

of healthcare leaders believe diversifying and optimizing media for patient education can help empower patients to take an active role in their care.[6]

Moving forward into the future with patient education

The work we're putting in today is an important building block in our effort to meet patients' needs and help improve outcomes. In the future, we hope to be able to coordinate patient education more fully with our community providers and insurance provider partners to reduce duplication. We'd love to see everyone working together and using the best resources in a meaningful way to meet patient needs.

Tiffany McCauley
MSN, RN,
Clinical Nurse Executive,
Elsevier

The role of a digital patient education and engagement strategy

A well-thought-out digital patient education and engagement strategy is key to improving the health and well-being of our most vulnerable population. In today's reality, hospital stays are shorter, and patients and their family members are going home to manage complicated health conditions. Patients and their support system need to be armed with the same evidence-based health information that guides their clinicians. More importantly, this information needs to be translated into simple, easy-to-understand guidance, personalized to their need, and designed to help individuals to develop their knowledge, confidence, and skill set so they can better manage their health and live their best lives.

4 key takeaways to help you improve your patient education approach

1. **Align accessibility to multimedia education across your organization.** Consistent and standardized information shared with your patients will promote retention.

2. **Devise a technology strategy that supports efficient clinical workflow and personalized patient experience.** Ensure clinicians can easily access and personalize the multimedia education that they share with patients. Provide multiple ways of getting education to patients in your care and at home — whether that's within the patient portal or via email, text, or other methods.

3. **Choose technology partners carefully.** Look for a partner who understands your organizational needs, is committed to supporting your future challenges and goals, and will be there for your patients as technology changes.

4. **Consider how you will monitor the effectiveness of your patient education program.** Know how your education efforts are working and if patients are using it, and how these insights can help drive improvements and refinements.

About Patient Engagement

Elsevier's Patient Engagement solutions engage, educate and empower patients with interactive, engaging, and easy-to-understand medical information that's built on the same evidence-based information clinicians use each day to care for patients. Patients receive education personalized to their preferences, driving engagement at every step of their healthcare journeys and turning them into active participants in their care.

- Patient Engagement delivers:
    - Consistent, evidence-based multimedia education
    - Efficient clinical workflows for clinicians
    - Personalized experience for patients
    - Data and insights for healthcare leaders

To learn more, please visit
https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/patient-engagement

1. "Personalization in Healthcare, A Global Perspective, 2020." Irma Rastegayeva, Dassault System, https://blog.3ds.com/industries/high-tech/personalization-in-healthcare-a-global-perspective/

2. "Building the Future of Patient Education: How Hospitals can Deliver Better Health Outcomes Through Digital Education Solutions and a Unified Patient Education Strategy, A 2021 NGPX Report," Insights Worldwide Business Research, NGPX, Elsevier. NGPXElsevier2021RPT.pdf.

3. "Health Literacy in the United States: Enhancing Assessments and Reducing Disparities," Claude Lopez, PhD, Bumyang Kim, PhD, and Katherine Sacks, PhD, Milken Institute, https://milkeninstitute.org/report/health-literacy-us-assessments-disparities

4. "Patient Recall Suffers as Patients Remember Half of Health Info," Sara Health, Patient Engagement HIT, TechTarget, March 26, 2018, https://patientengagementhit.com/news/patient-recall-suffers-as-patients-remember-half-of-health-info

5. "Building the Future of Patient Education: How Hospitals can Deliver Better Health Outcomes Through Digital Education Solutions and a Unified Patient Education Strategy, A 2021 NGPX Report," Insights Worldwide Business Research, NGPX, Elsevier. NGPXElsevier2021RPT.pdf.

6. "Building the Future of Patient Education: How Hospitals can Deliver Better Health Outcomes Through Digital Education Solutions and a Unified Patient Education Strategy, A 2021 NGPX Report," Insights Worldwide Business Research, NGPX, Elsevier. NGPXElsevier2021RPT.pdf.

ELSEVIER