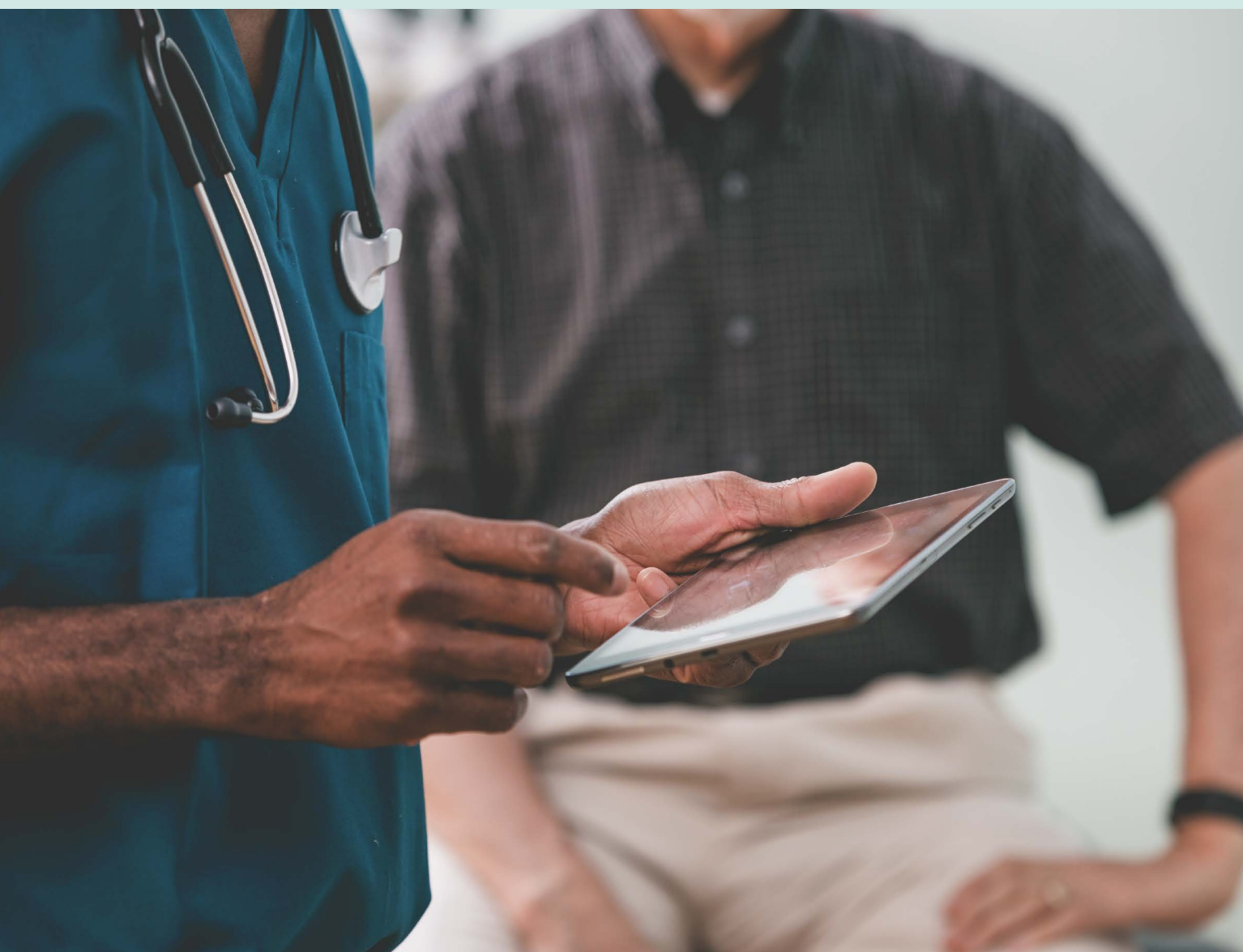


**Hori—  
zontal**

# Connected experiences that humanize healthcare

A guide to creating the holistic patient journey



# Executive summary

Within the Health and Life Sciences (HLS) sector, organizations face a plethora of issues, competing priorities and operational pitfalls that slow them down and prevent them from better serving their patients and members. From the perspective of a healthcare consumer, the journey of finding, receiving and paying for care is still a very complex (and often confusing) process. More and more consumers of health services (both treatment and care), along with customers of health insurance benefits, are demanding a tailored and simplified experience as a part of their healthcare journey.

Unfortunately, great healthcare (provider or payer) experiences tend to be the exception, not the norm. It goes without saying that the experience an organization delivers to its constituents is what helps set it apart.

In this whitepaper, we'll examine the core issues healthcare organizations face in delivering end-to-end connected patient experiences – including interoperability; and how health IT, purpose-built healthcare technologies, can solve specific-use cases with patient-centricity in mind.

All of which culminates in building personalized, omni-channel, connected experiences for patients and members that lead to healthier outcomes.

By continuously building towards a connected experience for your patients, your organization will reap the benefits of having longer-lasting customer relationships. Ones that lead to greater patient satisfaction and customer lifetime value.

At Horizontal, we are an Experience-Forward digital consultancy. That means we put people at the absolute center of everything we do. This human-centric philosophy is where all organizations should start as they embark on realizing personalized, connected patient experiences.

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## **Patient experiences matter**

What are patients and consumers of healthcare looking for and seeking out when finding the right care for them?

# Healthcare systems can differentiate themselves by providing a **positive, consistent patient experience.**

As people, we place a lot of equity in the types of relationships we have with each other and the experiences we share. It's this same sensibility that people have when they are behaving as customers while being active managers in their health.

A growing body of research has examined the relationship between patient experience and health outcomes. The following are a few examples of studies that have examined this relationship:

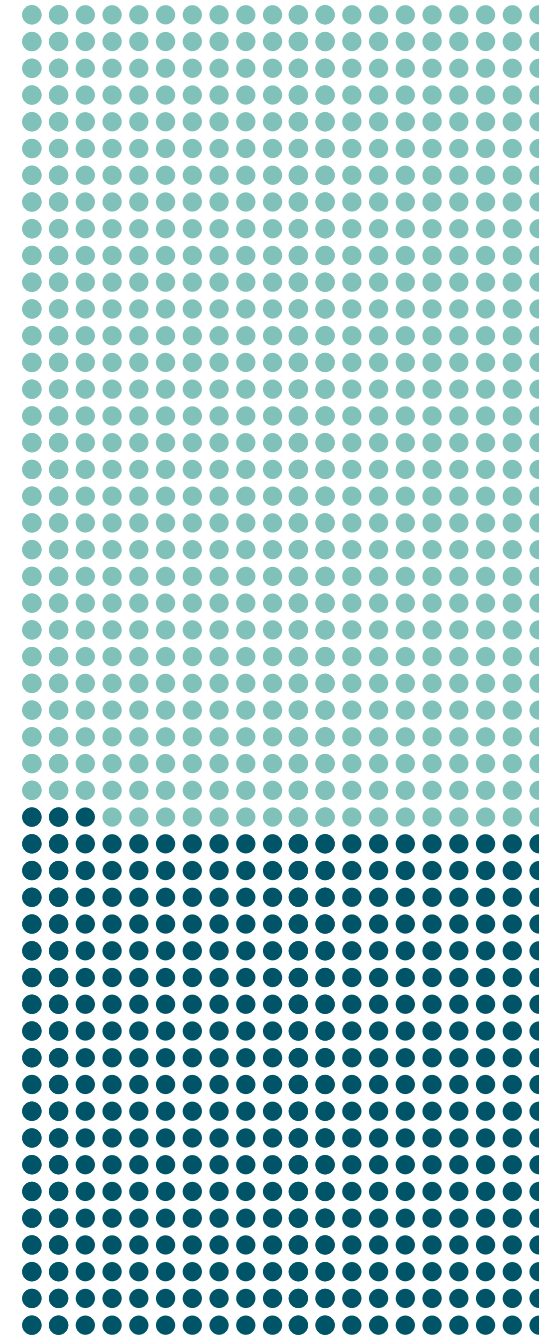
- The *Journal of General Internal Medicine* reported that higher patient satisfaction was associated with improved health outcomes, including reduced hospital readmissions
- The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that patients who reported higher levels of satisfaction with their care had better outcomes
- According to a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, patients who reported higher levels of satisfaction with their care had lower mortality rates and fewer hospitalizations
- In a study published in the *Journal of Patient Experience*, patients with higher levels of satisfaction with their care had lower rates of emergency department use and hospitalization

However, patient experience and provider marketing practitioners have the never-ending job of trying to keep up with and continually meet patient and member expectations, let alone exceed them. One of those expectations is how consumers of healthcare want a consistent and cohesive patient experience. One that is seamlessly threaded between them being known as both a patient and a (health insurance plan) member; across channels, devices and touchpoints as they traverse through the care continuum.

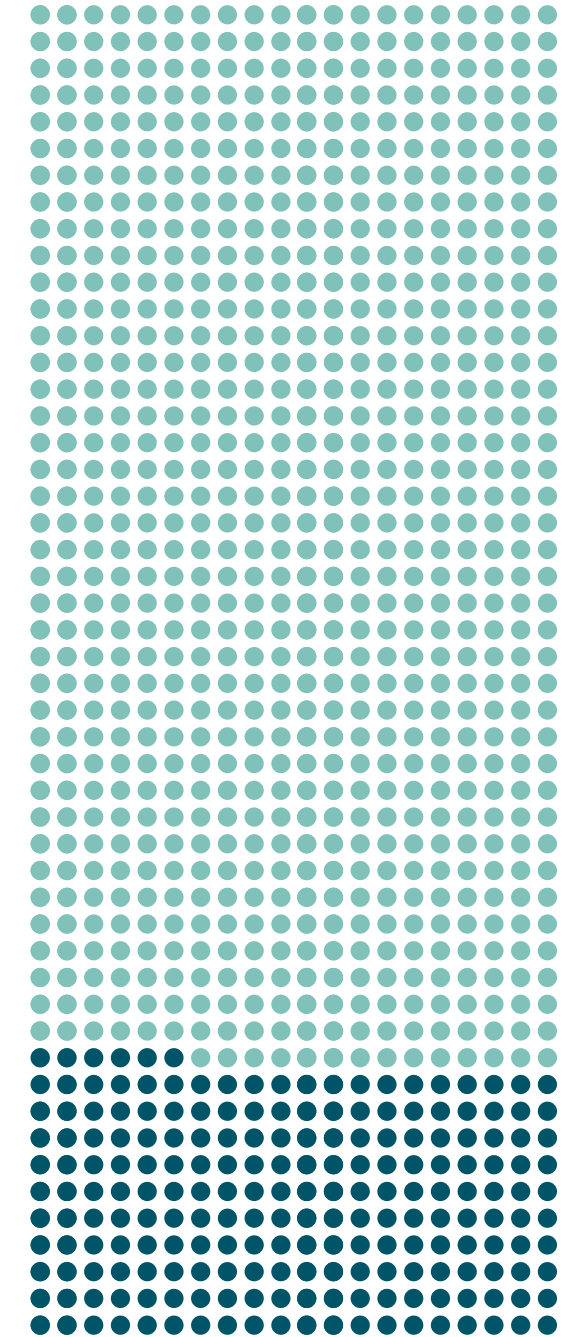
But where industry professionals can really stay on par with holistically understanding patients' wants and desires is avoiding the trap of looking at isolated aspects of the care journey that lead to internal departments owning disparate sources and siloed databases. A majority of healthcare executives indicated they need full patient context to provide the best treatment and service.

DISRUPTIONS LOOMING, ARE HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS PREPARED?

— Gartner



41%  
Fragile



22%  
Fit

# Connected patient experiences stem from connected data.

Digital transformation originated as a corporate agenda to integrate systems. It has since evolved in current times to be driven mostly by reshaping an organization's technology stack and data sources to be focused on and around patient needs (e.g., patient-centricity). Thus, more and more providers and hospitals are putting the patient at the center of everything they do in order to drive better patient experiences that lead to better healthcare outcomes.

These technologies have evolved within the enterprise to keep pace with how patient expectations have skyrocketed. No longer passive participants in their health, patients are now active actors in managing their care and the health of their families and loved ones.

77% of people said the COVID-19 pandemic has led them to pay more attention to their health in general.

— 2021 Health Care Insights Study by CVS Health®

There has been a rapid increase in public expectations for personalized and user-friendly services, but the level of staffing and other resources has decreased. The case for adopting a patient-centric approach speaks for itself. But it can also help accelerate your digital transformation, assuring both short- and long-term success.

81% of healthcare executives say the pace of digital transformation for their organization is accelerating, and 93% report that they are innovating with a sense of urgency and call to action this year.

— Accenture Digital Health Technology Vision 2021 report

According to BDO's 2021 healthcare digital transformation survey, respondents identified their top three areas of healthcare investment interest in telehealth (named by 75% of respondents, up from 42% in 2019), EHR interoperability (64%, up from 43%), and patient portals and digital messaging systems (56%, up from 50%).

- Patient Safety and Quality Healthcare

It's also important to note (and likely goes without saying), patients don't get all their care from one place. For example, parents may take their child to a pediatrician who works at one healthcare network for primary care, but when their kids need ear tubes that require general anesthesia for a short period, they may prefer to take them to a different specialty clinic.

In these cases, clinics may be using different EHRs (e.g., one may use Cerner while the other uses EPIC). For effective care, it's critical that these different health providers share patient data and records between the primary care pediatrician and the ENT specialty across their respective EHRs. This type of seamless interoperability needs to exist within the entire ecosystem, even among competing providers, in order to truly service patients and deliver the best outcomes.

05 Transform the institution

## Digital transformation

A series of deep and coordinated culture, workforce, and technology shifts that enable new educational and operating models and transform an institutions operations, strategic directions, and value proposition

04 Streamline processes

## Digitalization

Using digital technologies and information to transform individual institutional operations

03 Automate processes

02 Organize information

## Digitization

Changing from analog or physical to digital form

01 Digitize information

To ensure your organization delivers an exceptional patient experience...

**essentially, it all comes down to alignment.**

When departments within an organization aren't on the same page, they often share inconsistent stories, insights and data about their value in patients' lives. This creates muddled messaging and a convoluted experience that leads to patient confusion and, even worse, apathy and frustration. Plus, when departments aren't aligned and data isn't unified, it creates redundant work and rampant duplication of patient data.

By some estimates, the typical company has more than nine copies of a single piece of information, causing the definition of "data" to no longer be considered a singular entity but instead separate copies of the intelligence.

We believe a commitment to connected experiences kick-starts the alignment of your organization through three key customer expectations and demands:

01

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Friction-free interactions

02

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Contextual engagements

03

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Anticipatory solutions

# Friction-free interactions

We think of friction-free engagements as a continuous conversation between patients and providers. Each interaction should build upon the conversation that happened before, whether on a desktop experience, mobile app, or sales and customer service calls. And the end goal should be universal across each of these interactions: helping patients move forward on their journey. Essentially, a frictionless, omni-channel patient experience.

More than 50% of customers regularly interact with brands using more than four channels today, compared to only 7% more than a decade ago.

— Marketing Week

From a patient standpoint, this means no dead ends or constant restarts from square one. Just a fluid conversation with your organization that confidently answers questions and anticipates needs in the moment. From a business standpoint, it also means building stronger collaboration between your departments. For these experiences to truly take shape, internal administrators, front-office staff, physicians and clinicians, marketing sales, customer service, and IT teams must actively share customer data and collectively make decisions based on it. The result: shared insights, a reduction in duplicate (and often inconsistent) information, and a clear path forward with your users, audiences and stakeholders.

Over 80% of companies have invested in an omni-channel experience since 2020.

— PWC

14% of brands improved their customer experience quality, primarily through back-end systems and processes in 2020.

— Forrester



## Contextual engagements

Personalization is a given. But patients and members want experiences that go far beyond knowing their first names. That means leveraging the data behind every interaction to assess personal preferences and account/portal info, their individual medical history, and even their family history. In a word: context.

Context not only adds an additional layer of meaning and understanding across interactions, but it also helps chain these interactions together to paint a clearer picture of patient and member intent: where they've engaged, how much time they spent across each engagement, the tools and resources they used, etc. With data-driven context, organizations can make more informed decisions to improve care, treatment and service offerings, channel-specific communications, and much more. It's how the world's most renowned healthcare organizations stay in lockstep with their audiences' evolving needs and continuously build solutions that drive value. And it's how they boost patient experience satisfaction scores, as service and care teams are at-the-ready with information and insights that proactively coordinate care and issues as they arise.



# Anticipatory solutions

Piggybacking off the power of context, the trove of data collected from connected experiences powers the ability to assess individual needs and predict for them; anticipating their needs in real time. This could be things like:

- Knowing their condition, proactively providing them with information about treatment options, self-management strategies, as well as access to self-service resources such as patient education materials
- Understanding a patient's socio-economic conditions, providers could identify and address any potential barriers that may prevent patients from accessing care or adhering to treatment recommendations, such as financial, transportation, or logistical issues – and offer solutions/services to overcome these barriers
- Having information that extends beyond the patient to their support system is also beneficial to understand at-home caregiving needs. This can help put plans in place and track progress – for instance, the caregiver can proactively take the patient out for a walk every afternoon or ensure they're taking their medication.

Gone are the days of creating experiences that guess at what patients and/or members want (or the classic “spray and pray” marketing approach). Or taking the passive approach by waiting for the patient or member to explain what they need.

While careful analysis of data from experts is useful, customer data platforms (CDPs) with built-in personalization and AI solutions (like Sitecore's CDP or Salesforce CDP) that activate auto-personalization are renowned for parsing through prolific amounts of data to help teams better anticipate and answer patient or member needs in the moment. It's next-level expertise at work for your constituents and your organization. Patients and members will continue to engage with more and more channels – and each new channel and engagement creates a new record/data point about that patient or member. As those data points exponentially grow, so does the expectation of patients for those engagements to be connected. To meet these demands, a single, readily available, and trusted source of truth about the individual is required.



# Technology adoption and interoperability

One of the biggest reasons healthcare organizations struggle when identifying the right health tech solutions is feeling confident about success rate before implementation. Along with the appetite of organizations to see near immediate improvements once the solution has been launched and rolled out.

The largest challenge the healthcare industry faces when it comes to adopting new technology is the initial error rate. Generally, new technological products require iteration before they're sufficiently reliable. This iterative process can be painful, potentially resulting in inaccurate predictions and inappropriate recommendations.

To avoid this, technologists and clinicians must closely collaborate when rolling out new technology. Together, they will need to carefully test new tools and identify fail-safe methods until reliability is sufficiently achieved.

— Forbes, 2022

Another point of analysis paralysis is the cost of technology. Year-over-year, health tech and IT costs continue to grow.

The healthcare information technology market is set to grow from its current market value of more than \$163 billion to over \$441 billion by 2025.

— Global Market Insights, Inc., 2019

With IT and provider technology costs increasing also comes high expectations that those platforms and solutions come with immediate return on investment. Everything from improving patient and member experience outcomes, increased operational and administrative efficiencies, and reduction of costs for care. The longer organizations delay these investments, the more they will ultimately cost as technical debt will likely build up over time. If this happens, the web of "spaghetti code" that must be untangled gets larger and more costly to deal with.

Lastly, the 21st Century Cures Act authored by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) is holding providers and healthcare networks to higher standards of interoperability. In compliance to this policy, providers need to ensure their technology ecosystem supports the patient experience through security and usage of data via EHI through systems like EHRs.

In 2016, the 21st Century Cures Act (Cures Act) made sharing electronic health information the expected norm in health care by authorizing the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to identify "reasonable and necessary activities that do not constitute information blocking."

— ONC



This bipartisan healthcare law promotes innovation in healthcare technology ecosystems to improve patient access to better information. Moreover, it promotes transparency by providing opportunities for the public to gain visibility into healthcare services, quality and costs. The legislation includes requirements promoting health information interoperability and prohibiting information blocking by health information networks, HIEs, certified health IT developers, physicians and others.

The key to achieving true interoperability is to maintain fluid bi-directional data flow. This means making patient data available to all stakeholders at all times. According to the Cures Act, practices considered non-fluid/non-liquid data could be considered information blockers. A provider accused of blocking information could face civil penalties of up to \$1 million. But more importantly, beyond avoiding fines and financial penalties, proper sharing of electronic health information improves patient care and outcomes.

All of this increased scrutiny and stringent evaluation criteria is used when deciding which healthcare tech platforms are the right ones for a particular provider organization.

# Patient engagement starts well before they step foot into a care facility

Putting patients at the center of the care delivery model is a sensibility that more and more healthcare organizations are adopting. These organizations understand that it's more than just providing treatment. It's about ensuring their staff of administrators, front-office personnel and clinicians are effectively communicating with patients. This means being transparent about answering questions and guiding patients through the entire process of the care journey.

It starts with awareness of your practice and, more often than not, if the facility and its service is in-network within their health insurance plan. Additionally, patients want convenience – both in terms of proximity of the care facility to their home or office, along with options for scheduling an appointment (via online versus over the phone). Automated notifications and reminders are also more prevalent in supporting patient compliance and adherence (such as appointment reminders or prescription pick-up).

In November 2019, DocASAP found that patients want their communication with and access to their providers to be convenient and technology-driven, or else they might not visit the provider. Later in 2020, separate data from Forrester and Cedar showed that more than a quarter of patients would switch medical providers if they experienced poor digital communication.

— TechTarget, Patient Engagement HIT

## **Develop proactive outreach programs to promote preventive care**

Increase patient and community outcomes by encouraging preventive care. Motivate patients to put their health first by simplifying access to care early.

## **Ensure that patients have access to relevant, timely resources**

Information about health should be delivered to the right people at the right time. Communicate about care options, health services, preventive care and more with personalized articles, content and communications. This could also include health plan messaging about programs and benefits they are eligible for.

## **Utilize advanced intelligence to engage patients with data**

Take advantage of AI-enabled capabilities to tailor your communications to individuals; whether it's when or how often you reach out. Engage every existing and prospective patient in the most critical moments.



# The holistic patient journey

01

Get care

Treatments administered by healthcare clinicians in serving their patients to control, lessen or eliminate health problems. Various treatments are available, including medicine, therapy, surgery and others.

02

Find care

Identifying clinic and care facilities, and practitioners/professionals (family practice, specialists, etc.) to receive treatment.

This includes searching for locations of care and determining health insurance coverage of treatment.

03

Need care (acute and/or chronic)

Acute – Providing active, short-term treatment for a severe injury, medical condition or surgery recovery

Subacute – Designated as a step-down from acute, this is limited amount of treatment given in a skilled nursing facility

04

Post care

After a disease, injury or mental episode has been treated, a patient receives follow-up care. Regular post-treatment care includes medical checkups consisting of physical exams, blood tests, prescribed medications and imaging tests. Additionally, in managing one's health, this includes understanding coverage, costs and payment for treatment.

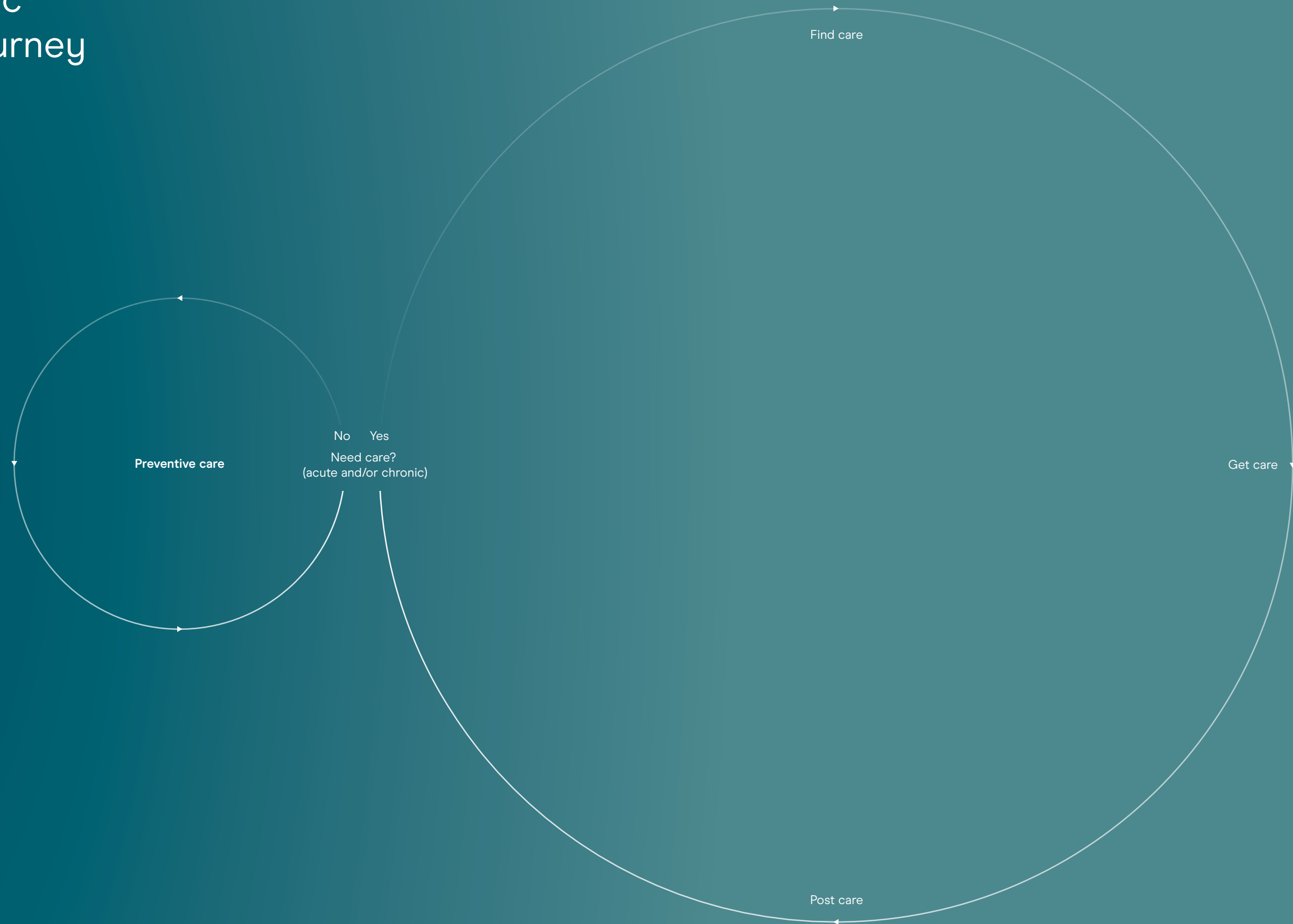
05

Preventive (well-being) care

A routine healthcare approach that consists of screenings, checkups and patient counseling to prevent illness, disease, mental health issues or other health problems.

Additionally, managing healthcare costs, including actively determining what kind of insurance coverage you should choose, and managing money in an HSA, understanding costs before you decide to see a provider or get care/receive treatment.

# The holistic patient journey



The key for healthcare organizations is identifying opportunities to turn the valleys of emotions during the patient journey...



into patient experience peaks across the care continuum



# How does a healthcare organization create an end-to-end experience to attract and support prospective patients?

For the purposes of illustrating a connected patient journey, following is a hypothetical use case, using an imagined (yet realistic) persona, “Julia.” It outlines what a potential, connected end-to-end journey looks like; along with how a healthcare organization activates the journey via implementing and integrating key systems.

Now also imagine that as a healthcare organization one of the core tenets of patient centricity is identifying at-risk community members and providing both education and opportunities for preventive care.



## With this key goal in mind, the following patient journey outlines how to address the following use cases:

01

Patient scheduling

Appointment scheduling with preferred/referred physician, along with facilitating transportation support services

02

Patient administration

Prior authorization, health insurance eligibility and plan benefit requests to payor partners for processing

03

Patient education

Knowledge center and/or distributed resources for care, prescription compliance/adherence, and cost and paying for care

04

Patient engagement

Condition-based segment campaign activation and journey management  
From appointment reminders to care compliance post-visit, in conjunction with care team specialists and administrators

# 01

## Lead identification (at-risk patient)

Julia identified from outreach program partner list (e.g., at-risk prediabetes community list): email address, mailing address, etc., ingested into Salesforce Health Cloud.

Salesforce Health Cloud

# 02

## Segmentation

Based on Julia's profile attributes, she's placed into the High-Risk Diabetes Segment within Salesforce Marketing Cloud.

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

# 03

## Campaign (High-Risk Diabetes) activation

Personalized email sent to Julia with the following message:

*Hi Julia - Did you know Vitality has free diabetes screening at the Downtown Minneapolis location?*

[Click here to schedule your free screening](#)

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

# 04

## Visit lead conversion

Julia is taken to a Vitality landing page – providing her info (insurance) and preferences to schedule the screening. All data and engagement on-site is tracked via Salesforce Personalization and ingested into Salesforce Health Cloud.

Salesforce Health Cloud

# 05

## Screening appointment confirmation

Confirmation email sent to Julia with the following message:

*We're looking forward to seeing you on xx/xx/xx at the Downtown Minneapolis clinic location. A Vitality representative will contact you soon...*

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

# 06

## Patient insurance eligibility

Vitality CEC rep receives Julia's info via Salesforce Health Cloud; contacts Julia's insurance provider and confirms in-network eligibility and coverage.

Salesforce Health Cloud

# 07

## Pre-visit outreach

Vitality CEC rep contacts Julia (w/ We Know You Script) – confirming the appointment and answering her questions. Any additional patient info is captured (including SDoH) via case record in Salesforce Health Cloud (with an integration to CTI).

Julia receives automated email and text reminders from Vitality of her upcoming screening (including driving and parking instructions) via Salesforce Marketing Cloud.

Salesforce Health Cloud

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

CTI

# 08

## On-boarding visit and screening

Upon arrival, Julia sees personalized digital signage and wayfinding to greet her – along with a Vitality clinic rep to escort her to the waiting area.

Provider clinician conducts holistic screening, health markers, blood draw, etc. – logging in patient record.

Provider clinician assists Julia in downloading the MyChart app to her phone and connecting it to the Apple Health app.

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

MyChart

# 09

## Post-visit program guidance

Julia receives notification from the MyChart app informing her that the screening results are in and a clinician will contact her soon.

Vitality Care Team contacts Julia with screening results and a diagnosis of pre-diabetes. Provides her care program including diet/nutrition, medication prescription and ongoing glucose monitoring.

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

MyChart

# 10

## On-going care & compliance: Trigger-based engagement

In following her regimen, Julia misses picking up a prescription. This triggers a notification to the Vitality Care Team.

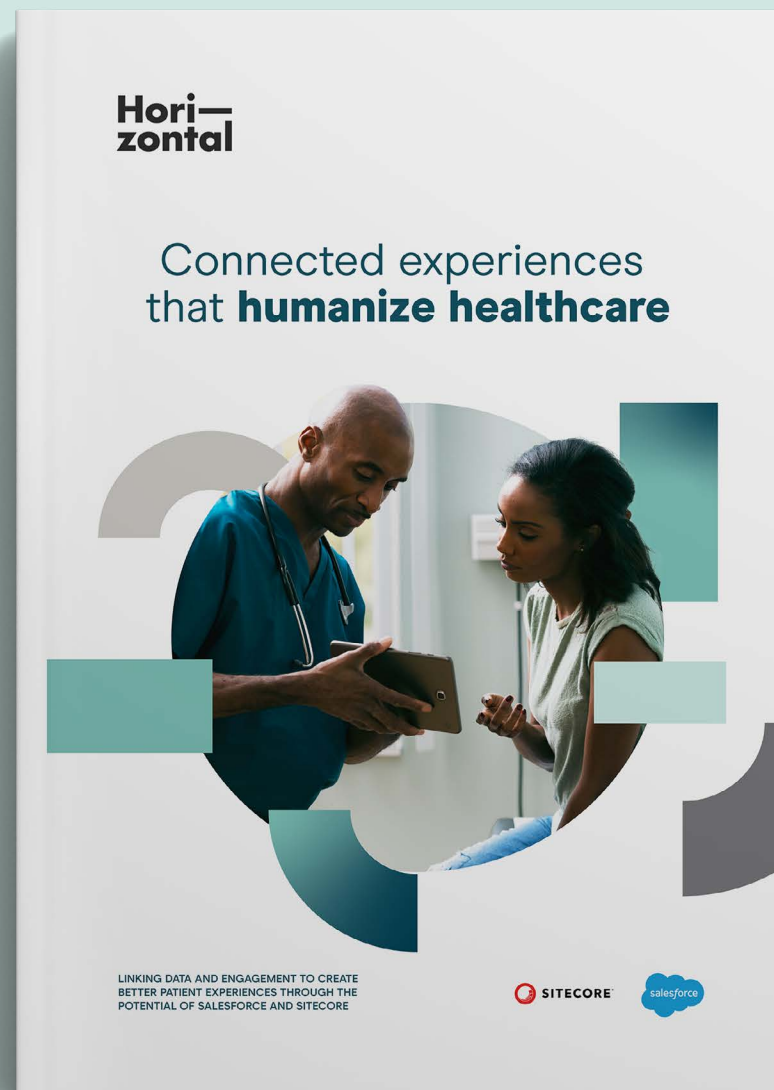
Provider Care Team contacts Julia to inquire why she missed picking up her Rx and if there's anything Vitality can do to support her, along with education on compliance.

Based on Julia's behavioral health patterns, she's now placed into the "Low Adherence Segment" with new engagement activation.

Salesforce Marketing Cloud

## Check out the full whitepaper

If you would like to learn more about creating connected patient experiences including specific use-cases on how healthcare technologies can create patient-centricity, [download our full whitepaper here.](#)



## About Horizontal

An Experience-Forward digital consultancy on a crusade to create truly connected customer experiences.

Since 2004, Horizontal Digital has helped clients across the world unlock greater possibilities through experience-forward digital marketing and best-of-breed technology.

Our founding partners — Sabin Ephrem and Chris Staley — started the company based on a disagreement. Sabin, an enterprise IT consulting veteran, complained that marketers lacked the know-how to bring their creative ideas to life. Chris, with a long history at global marketing agencies, countered that technologists neither understood nor cared about the end users and customers.

Rather than let it go, they decided to join forces and formed Horizontal to help clients stay ahead of the curve by bringing technical and creative disciplines together with a laser-like focus on the customer experience.

From the early days of developing websites to understanding the power of context-centered mobile experiences, we've established a reputation for using technology in service of people, not the other way around. And in concert, we've accelerated our knowledge of

pinpointing customer needs and motivations through data-driven insights and strategies — including AI implementation to help businesses think and respond to customers in real time.

As an Experience-Forward digital consultancy, we put our clients' customers at the absolute center of everything we do — designing with empathy and building frictionless, contextually engaging and anticipatory experiences.

By harnessing the power of Salesforce, we apply our deep, cross-cloud knowledge of the product suite to activate seamless customer engagements that translate into greater insights and opportunities. With global Salesforce practitioners rooted in decades of digital legacy, we implement best-in-class digital solutions fueled by strategic marketing programs and powered by analytics and AI.

We know the key to successful Salesforce investments goes beyond technical functionalities — it's about understanding business challenges, defining success metrics, marrying user experiences with technical capabilities, and driving actionable insights to optimize results. This enables us to deliver Salesforce implementations for the world's most recognized Fortune 500 companies.