



The Warren Clinic Leverages Epic and Relatient to Distribute COVID-19 Vaccines

“Three million people need the COVID-19 vaccine in Oklahoma, we are the hub for Tulsa and seven surrounding counties, so we needed a good way to communicate with a lot of people quickly and keep the vaccination process organized,” says Steve Davis, Executive Director for Warren Clinic.

Warren Clinic, a 450-provider employed medical group that’s part of the Saint Francis Health System, started planning early for how they would handle the influx of appointments once the COVID-19 vaccine became available, of the utmost importance was making sure vaccine doses didn’t get wasted. Warren Clinic established a COVID-19 department to run point on the entire initiative and set up vaccine clinics to focus solely on the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Collin Henry, Vice President for Warren Clinic, explained that the organization and efficiency of appointments hinged on a new build in Epic that would then feed their appointment reminders with Relatient. The new Epic build is automatically triggered by a patient’s first vaccine dose to create a second appointment 21 days later at the same time as the first. Warren Clinic also added their new COVID-19 vaccine department to their Relatient appointment reminder set up so patients are not only delivered a reminder to their appointment but also a link to directions and a map to the drive-thru vaccine clinic. What’s more is that because the local health department is also using Warren Clinic’s Epic setup, they also have access to Relatient’s reminders and proven algorithm. Davis says this experience with Relatient’s messaging and algorithm are key to keeping no-shows and therefore, wasted doses, minimal. Warren Clinic has been working with Relatient for five years since their implementation of appointment reminders reduced their patient no-show rate by 52%.

As for advice for other healthcare leaders, Henry says, ***“Plan ahead or you’re basically paralyzed. You can have all the staff and supplies in hand but if you can’t document it in the EMR and have a system set up where you can feed that information back to the state for the federal government can also have their daily reporting, you’re basically on an island, you can’t move forward.”***

Davis adds that the integration to Epic is key to the success of any initiative aimed at optimizing schedule availability and reducing no-shows, ***“It doesn’t matter if you remind a patient of an appointment 100 times if the patient cancels and the office doesn’t have the ability to manage appointments and backfill from the DAR (Epic’s Department Appointments Report), it doesn’t matter.”***



Why Relatient?

When it comes to finding a long-term patient messaging partner, Warren Clinic says Relatient offered a level of responsive support and integration with Epic they hadn't experienced with their previous vendor. Davis says, ***"with Relatient, I know who to call. If there's an issue or we need help with something, I can get moving quickly and a fast-turnaround resolution."***

Warren Clinic has also been a super-user of Relatient's Broadcast Messenger (previously Demand Messaging), using it to keep patients and staff updated during interruptions that range from inclement weather to the COVID-19 pandemic to unforeseen emergencies. Most memorable to Warren Clinic is still a flood a few years ago that created standing water in their main tower and caused them to evacuate 10-12 physician offices early in the morning—all with full patient schedules for the day. Davis explained, ***"by lunchtime, we had re-routed all those patients to new locations where they could be seen. Without that messaging, all those appointments would have just been canceled."***

What's Next?

With the organization still heavily focused on the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine, Warren Clinic says they're looking forward to expanding vaccine sites from their three drive-thru locations to their 46 primary care locations, something that will significantly increase their vaccine capacity and speed up distribution. Early January 2021 also began the cycle of second doses for Warren Clinic patients who had received the first dose a few weeks prior. While they hope COVID-19 vaccine availability eventually allows for walk-ins, for now, they say Relatient's appointment reminders are key to making sure patients get their second dose and know where to go.