



The Power of a Platform: How This Medical Group Improved Patient Satisfaction, Reduced No-Shows, and Increased Revenue with a Comprehensive Patient Messaging Strategy

THE GOAL

Develop a digital patient messaging strategy to minimize patient no-shows, build a stronger online presence, drive better efficiency, and make reporting easy.

"Patients tell us they looked us up online before choosing us as their provider," says Al Appel, Chief Administrative Officer for Associates in Dermatology, located in Louisville, Kentucky. ***"This is important because we are an independent medical group, working hard to grow organically. Our online presence is key to adding new patients to our practice."***

In 2017, Appel knew the five-location dermatology practice needed a partner who could help them establish a flexible patient messaging strategy. Though their immediate need was to help patients remember their appointments, their strategy would grow over time to help patients navigate the patient journey more holistically, from discovering their practice to keeping appointments, leaving feedback, and even paying their bills.

Finding a partner was easy because R1 had already vetted Relatient.

Associates in Dermatology started working with Relatient in 2017 on the recommendation of trusted partner, R1. R1 is an RCM company providing full-service practice management to medical groups like Associates in Dermatology. In addition to RCM services, Associates in Dermatology looks to R1 to help them manage payroll, IT support, and physician credentialing.

Appel told us, ***"As we grow, we're sometimes adding 2-3 providers at a time, there's a lot of onboarding that goes into that process. With that many moving pieces, you really need the bench strength of someone like R1, they're able to help us reach our goals quicker than we could alone and with fewer hiccups along the way."***

21%

DECREASE IN
PATIENT NO-SHOWS

30%

INCREASE IN
AVERAGE ONLINE RATING

27%

INCREASE IN
REVENUE



After implementing Relatient's bi-directional appointment reminders, Associates in Dermatology turned to Relatient to help them improve their online rating and help them establish automated patient outreach that could be easily reported for quality initiatives like NCQA's Patient-Centered Specialty Practice (PCSP) recognition. PCSP represents recognition by NCQA and an extension of the Patient-Centered Medical Home designation. When Associates in Dermatology earned their PCSP, they were the first independent specialty practice in the country to do so.

Automation and easy reporting made for quick results.

PCSP recognition requires practices to track and report their patient outreach. With Relatient's mobile-first surveys, Associates in Dermatology was able to raise their average online rating from 3.8 to 4.9 and easily report outreach their data thanks to timestamps and automation. Gone are the days of sending certified letters and tracking outreach manually, Associates in Dermatology also tracks and distributes patient satisfaction data by department, provider, or location, helping them identify areas of excellence and opportunities to further improve the patient experience.

From reminders to a comprehensive patient engagement strategy.

On R1's recommendation, the Kentucky-based medical group implemented Relatient's bi-directional appointment reminders in 2017 and by 2019 had added patient surveys, mobile payments and patient balance messaging, and health campaigns thanks to a cohesive platform that makes it easy for healthcare organizations of all sizes to grow their patient engagement strategies over time. Here's a look at how Associates in Dermatology is leveraging these solutions across their locations and providers.

Appointment Reminders: 21% Decrease in Patient No-Shows

Associates in Dermatology uses Relatient's bi-directional appointment reminders to keep patients on the schedule and their health top-of-mind. And because patient response data writes back into their PM system, Allscripts, Associates in Dermatology staff don't have to hunt down patient responses or backtrack with manual phone calls. Though Associates in Dermatology was already maintaining an average no-show rate below the national average of around 7%, after making the switch to Relatient, they were able to further reduce no-shows by an additional 21%.

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Patient Surveys: 30% Increase in Average Patient Satisfaction Rating

Relatient's mobile-first patient satisfaction surveys make it easy for Associates in Dermatology to capture near-real-time patient feedback, delivered to patients within 24 hours of the patient visit. In addition to helping them document and report their patient outreach for their PCSP recognition through NCQA, they've also been able to use satisfaction data to drive better online reviews and improve the patient experience. Their average online rating increased from 3.8 to 4.9 since switching to Relatient.

Mobile Payments & Patient Balance Messaging: 27% Increase in Revenue

Relatient's MDpay® for mobile patient payments and patient balance messaging make it easy for Associates in Dermatology patients to see their balances and pay their bills without logging into a portal or downloading an app. Appel says this is key because paper statements don't work anymore and people often don't respond to their mail quickly and sometimes don't open paper statements at all. Getting a Relatient reminder is an easy way for patients to pay and for their practices to bring cash flow in faster.

Health Campaigns: Better Efficiency and Easier Reporting

Associates in Dermatology says Relatient health campaigns are important to meeting state requirements for follow-up communication post-procedure. Procedures like melanoma removal require annual outreach and follow-up post-discharge, some Appel says is now automated thanks to health campaigns that have replaced manual phone calls and letters to patients. The easy reporting from timestamps and digital records offers confidence and peace of mind in knowing Associates in Dermatology will be able to easily show their compliance with the regulations and it saves their staff hours of manual work and outreach.

Up Next: eRegistration and Digital Check-in

As Associates in Dermatology looks to the next critical patient touchpoint, they're planning to implement Relatient eRegistration and Check-in to automate patient intake, making it easier on patients and saving them time in the waiting room. Appel says digital registration became a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic as they realized they needed to reduce the sharing of pens, papers, and clipboards and minimize the time patients spend in the waiting room with other patients. With electronic patient forms that can be completed prior to the appointment, patients will no longer need to arrive 15 minutes early to their appointments. Associates in Dermatology's call center staff will also spend less time on the phone with patients gathering payer information as it can be done digitally, freeing them to work on more complicated patient cases, like prior authorizations and other insurance-related issues.