



synzi

Enhancing Clinician-Patient Communication:
The Role of Virtual Care in Rehabilitation

Overview



Rehabilitation is defined as the restoration of an ill or injured person to self-sufficiency. The rehabilitation process is comprehensive yet compassionate, with the goal of helping people restore lost skills and be able to return to leading active, independent lives. Inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation programs are increasingly leveraging technology to provide patients with the most innovative care that can help patients return home quickly while restoring hope, freedom, achievement and success.

With a virtual care communication platform, medical staff can coordinate and deliver timely, specialized care from the ER to hospital admission, onto a rehabilitation stay, and culminating with post-acute care when the patient has returned home. Virtual care technology can help patients' journey towards self-sufficiency by facilitating and improving access to efficient and effective care.



“As consumerism in healthcare grows, hospitals must meet patients’ demands for the convenience and flexibility they’re accustomed to in other industries,”

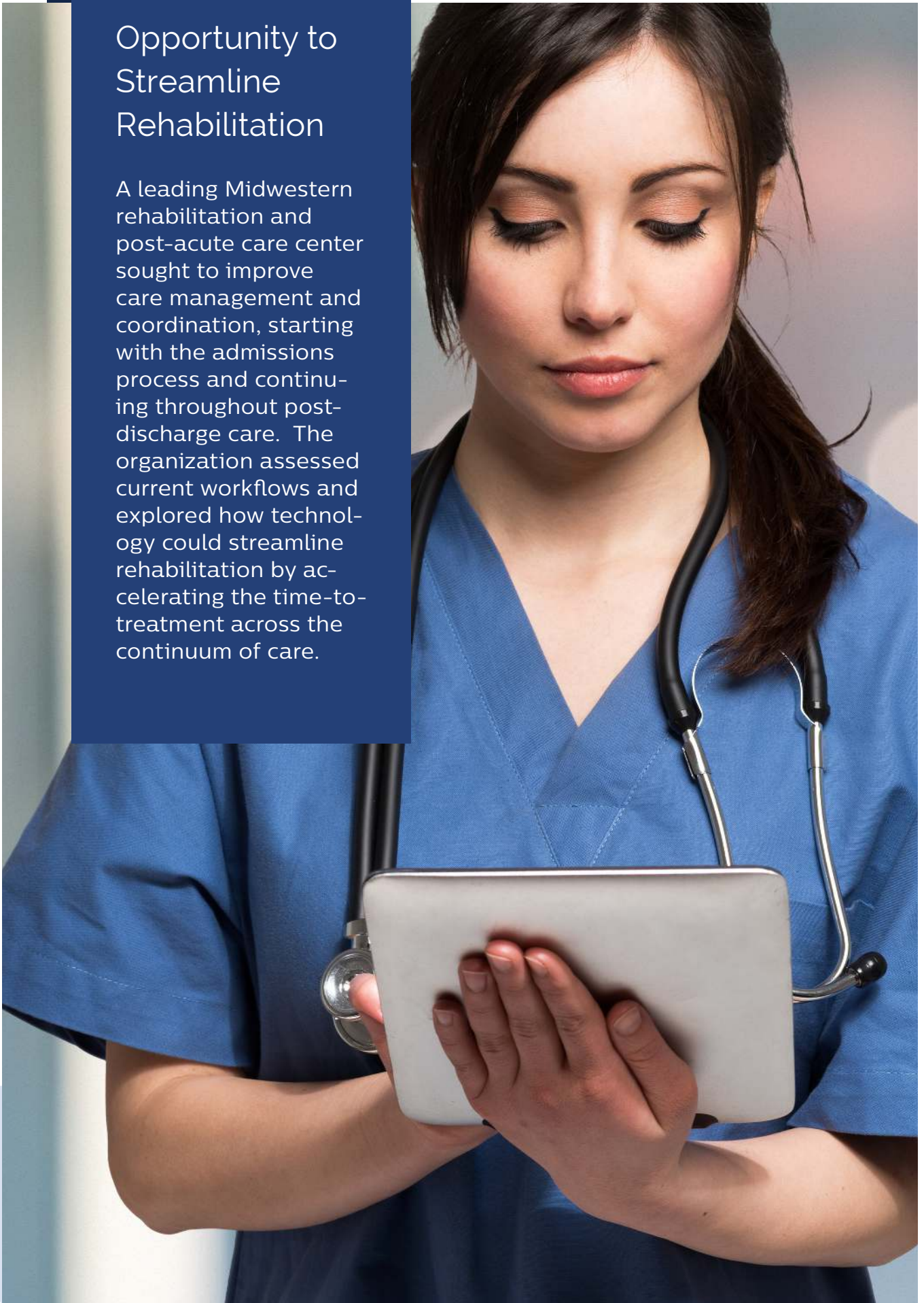
said Lee Horner, CEO of Synzi.

“We are honored to support the commitment to improve patient satisfaction and engagement by increasing digital touchpoints across the continuum of care.”



Opportunity to Streamline Rehabilitation

A leading Midwestern rehabilitation and post-acute care center sought to improve care management and coordination, starting with the admissions process and continuing throughout post-discharge care. The organization assessed current workflows and explored how technology could streamline rehabilitation by accelerating the time-to-treatment across the continuum of care.



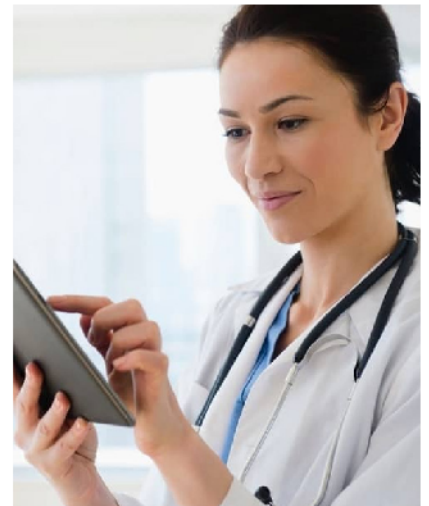
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The center's clinicians typically drove hours (each way) to various facilities, within the state and the Midwest, in order to provide patients with needed consults. With the use of technology, clinicians could effectively provide virtual consults across the region by connecting with patients via video and facilitating a virtual referral review and admission. The patient could also engage with one's care team before the patient is even admitted to another facility or transferred/admitted to the rehabilitation center's campus.



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During a patient's hospital stay, care coordination amongst care providers, campuses, and facilities typically resulted from in-person meetings which required clinicians and staff to travel to other floors or locations. With technology, ongoing care could be efficiently coordinated with the hospital's specialists through the use of the platform's video and messaging functionality. Team members could better align on next steps in treatment and transfers, driving more successful hand-offs at each transition point.



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After being discharged from a hospital stay, patients often need to secure transportation for their follow-up appointments. With technology, discharged patients could virtually connect with their provider and conveniently participate in follow-up visits via video. Patients could also receive helpful messages about upcoming appointments and medication/therapy reminders. Patient preference for text, SMS, email, and language would be factored into the design of the post-discharge messaging for each individual patient. As a result, patients and caregivers would see a dramatic reduction in travel costs and lost wages typically associated with in-person follow-up appointments and patients would become more knowledgeable about the expectations of self-care.



The Role of Synzi's Virtual Care Communication Platform

The rehabilitation and post-acute care center selected Synzi's HIPAA-compliant virtual care communication platform to drive more efficient and effective clinical communication across the rehabilitation network.

Using Synzi's platform allowed this center's specialists to "lay their hands virtually on the patient" throughout the care continuum and across geographies and facilities. Synzi's platform enables the facilitation of timelier, more convenient care while eliminating transportation costs and burdens. With enhanced connectivity, patients are provided access to the clinician best suited to address a patient's individual needs, regardless of either party's location.

An interdisciplinary team of providers can focus on optimizing the care for the patient (as well as share best practices amongst each other) by also using HIPAA-compliant emails, text, and SMS to communicate with each other and engage the patient across all points of care. With the platform, medical staff can coordinate patient care from the ER and hospital admission onto rehabilitative care and post-discharge care-at-home. Virtual care technology can help patients return home sooner and become more self-sufficient by facilitating and improving access to efficient and effective care.

Physical medicine and rehabilitation providers are using virtual care technology to deliver care to patients via inpatient and outpatient settings.

- *Video-based virtual visits enable patients with impaired mobility (and patients who live a great distance from rehabilitation facilities) more convenient access to care.*
- *Video-based virtual consults help facilitate care collaboration between specialists and onsite providers in a more immediate and cost-effective manner.*
- *Virtual care communication platforms facilitate care coordination between a rehabilitation hospital and its network of partner hospitals, outpatient/day clinics, home healthcare / visiting nurse associations, and provider offices.*



Virtual Care: Acute Care and Admissions

To gain additional insight into the patient's condition, discharge plan and determine best placement of the patient in the continuum of care, the rehabilitation center is also using the Synzi platform as a facilitation tool for real-time audio and visual connectivity. This has also resulted in greater alignment on immediate next steps amongst the patients' care team.

During the admissions process, clinicians have used Synzi to streamline the admissions process and convert many patients who were initially transported to acute care hospitals to the rehabilitation campus. The Synzi virtual care communication platform has been integrated into the rehabilitation hospital's admissions process, providing physicians with a better idea of who they will be admitting while helping patients understand where they are going, who will be taking care of them, and the overall objective of rehabilitation. This rehabilitation leader found that it was critical to use video-based virtual consults to evaluate patients before they are transferred to its campus.

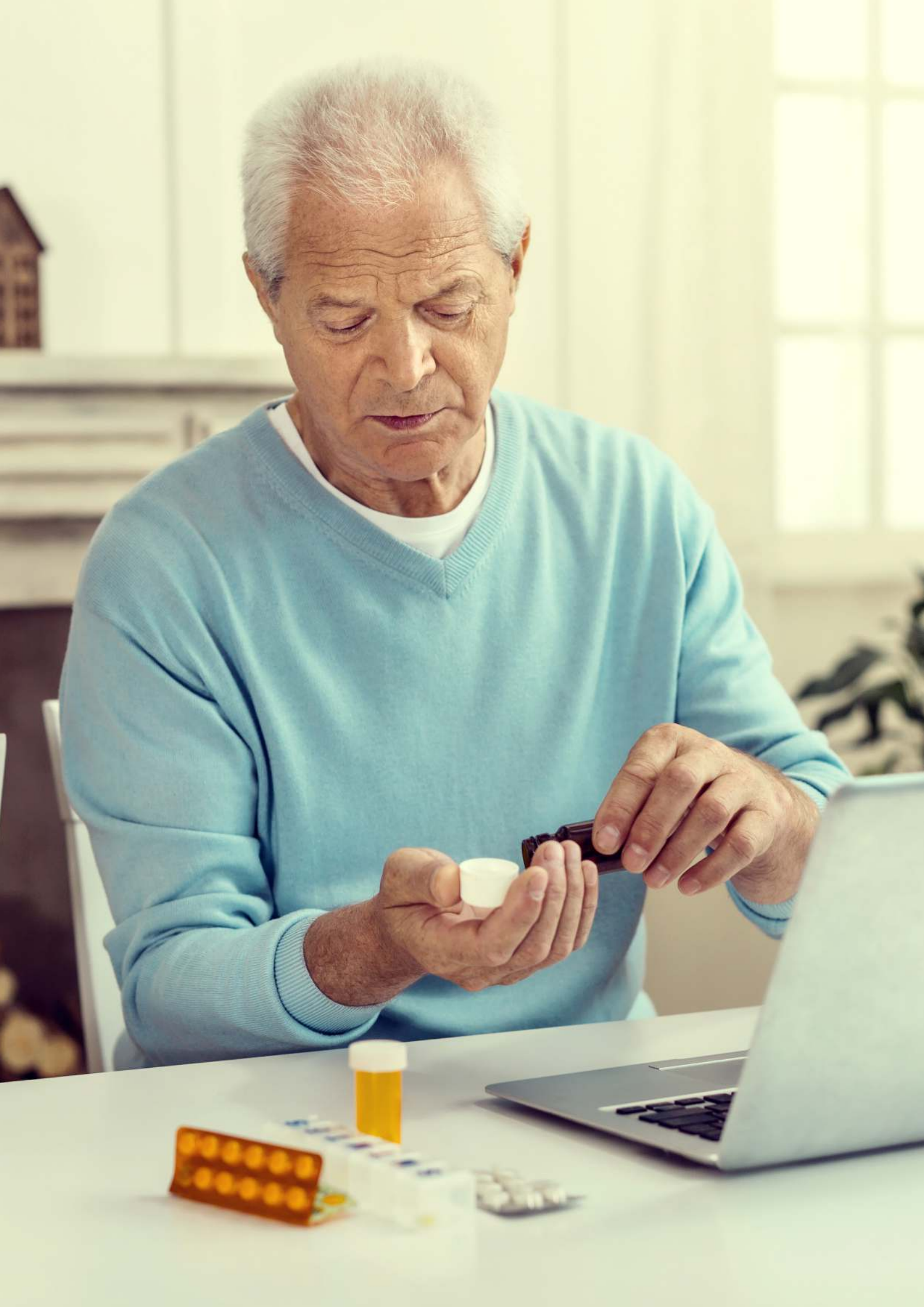




Virtual Care: Treatment

To assist other hospitals which may suffer from a gap in specialized care, this innovative rehabilitation center shares its expertise by using virtual care to enable its specialists to virtually “see and treat” patients residing at other hospitals in the state and region. Since the launch of the platform, the Midwestern rehabilitation center has used the Synzi platform to facilitate multiple virtual consults with patients at other facilities and hospitals, reducing windshield time for their on-staff specialists and improving access to needed care for the broader Midwestern community. For example, one staff specialist no longer spends 5 hours of windshield time each week driving back and forth to another hospital, across the state. The physician now uses the Synzi platform to provide neuropsychology consults virtually to the other hospital and repurpose “drive time” to increased productivity and greater “patient time.”

As a result of using the Synzi platform, the rehabilitation center’s physicians now have the capacity to care for nearly 15% more patients each week by being able to conduct 20 additional virtual visits each week. The associated transportation costs and liabilities are also reduced when minimizing the need for a staff specialist to drive 5 hours each week across the state.

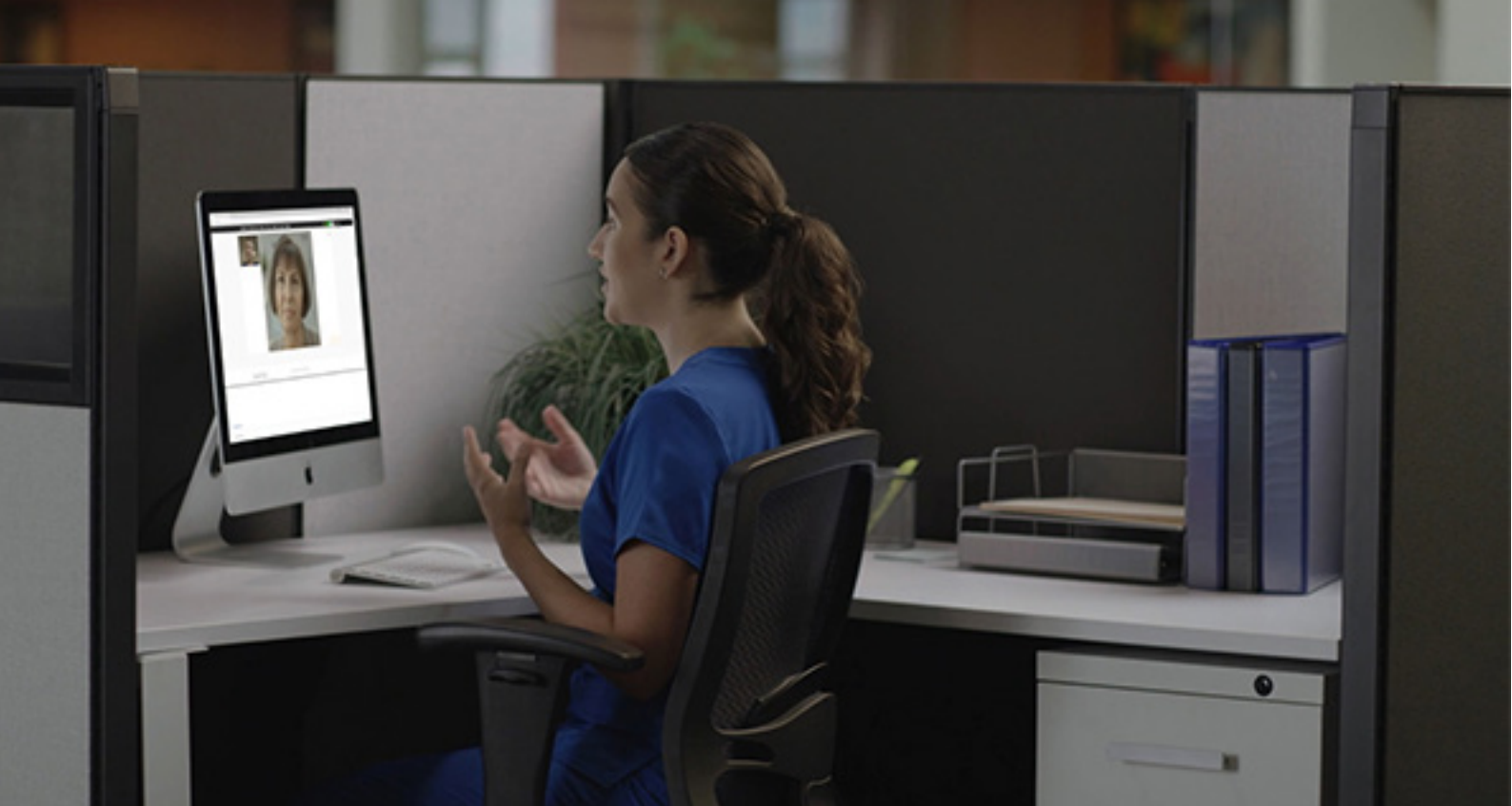


Virtual Care: Post-Acute Care

To strengthen follow-up care and drive better outcomes, the rehabilitation center is using the Synzi platform to continue rehabilitation care and maintain communications with discharged patients post-discharge, a patient participates in the initial, in-person physical therapy session. Depending on one's ongoing rehabilitation process, the patient can then participate in follow-up virtual visits with therapists. The center's therapists continue to engage patient by sending an email, text, or SMS message after each visit and/or a medication change. Utilizing virtual visits can save valuable and critical time for both the patient and the busy caregiver. By being able to use their everyday devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets and PCs) to access follow-up therapy and receive timely messages, patients are more engaged in their role in self-care during the rehabilitation process. The platform can also push text messages, SMS, or emails which reinforce appropriate lifestyle modifications, appointment updates, and medication reminders. The communication strategy helps patients stay in touch with their therapists and on track with their treatment program in a more convenient manner while alleviating the costs in time, transportation, and missed work which patients and caregivers typically encounter with follow-up in-person therapy sessions

Video-based virtual visits enable patients with impaired mobility (and patients who live a great distance from rehabilitation facilities and physical therapists) more convenient access to care. The virtual care communication platform facilitates care coordination between the rehabilitation center and related hospitals, clinics, home healthcare / visiting nurse associations, and provider offices. Thus far, over 150 patients have been part of this program.

Many discharged patients may be unable to leave their residence for follow-up appointments. Reliable, timely, and/or affordable transportation to a rehab facility or medical office might not be always available. With Synzi, providers bring the care to the resident – regardless of location and timing.



Conclusion

By implementing virtual care into the admissions process and ongoing treatment (whether inpatient or outpatient), the rehabilitation center is able to continue to deliver on their commitment to providing unparalleled rehabilitation care. The use of Synzi is being expanded to provide discharged patients with more convenient access to nutrition services, medication management, chronic care coordination, DME and prosthetics suppliers, and even mental health specialists. Also, the center seeks to integrate the virtual care platform with other hospitals in the state and region in order to provide all patients with better access to timely, specialized care.

Ultimately, Synzi is supporting this leading rehabilitation and post-acute care center in its mission to provide innovative care that can help patients return home faster and return to leading active, independent lives.





About Synzi

Synzi offers a patient program management framework that combines video, email and secure messaging communication modalities for healthcare organizations to address specific patient needs easily, efficiently, and seamlessly. Synzi uses a sophisticated platform and configurable framework which automates and optimizes workflows across multiple modalities. This creates more valuable connections and more effective care, while bringing convenience and peace of mind to patients. The company helps enable better performance for healthcare organizations, better access for patients, and better outcomes for all. To learn more about Synzi, visit www.synzi.com.

