

6 Ways to Optimize the Continuum of Care

The objective of the continuum of care is to maintain continuity of the medical care delivered to the patient at all touchpoints and at all times. Maintaining the continuity is extremely important when switching between care providers (such as physicians, nurses, specialists, care coordinators, case managers, pharmacists) and/or care institutions (such as hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, clinics).

Enhancing the continuum of care is important to providers and patients as everyone can benefit from enhanced satisfaction, reduced costs, and improved health. Maintaining a patient's continuum of care is especially vital for a patient who is more dependent on the medical services whether due to age, complex conditions, behavioral issues, and/or chronic diseases.

There are several ways to optimize the continuum of care:

- 1. Determine Key Roles**

Identify which specific provider will play a central role in the care team. At times, the primary care physician may serve as the center of the core team, especially at the beginning of a patient's continuum of care. At other times, other resources - such as a pharmacist, a payer, a nursing facility staff member, etc. - may need to be integrated into the care team depending on the patient need.

- 2. Be Flexible and Understanding**

Understand that a range of care may need to be delivered over time. The care team should maintain a level of flexibility so services can be modified as patient needs change. The care team itself may expand and contract during the continuum of care as additional resources are brought into the conversation.

- 3. Make It Convenient for All Involved**

Reduce patient barriers to conveniently accessing care. Allowing patients to participate in their care via their personal devices and/or at nearby facilities will enable a patient to easily connect with specialists who may be hours away. Windshield time – and time spent waiting for the appointment to begin – can be minimized for patients and providers.

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4. Share Info and Insight

Ensure easy access to the patient's EHR across all providers. Because medical care can involve multiple providers and institutions, it is critical to allow all providers to be able to access patient records, update the records, and share the records across the specific care team involved.

5. Start Sooner vs. Later

Initiate the continuum of care upfront in the patient relationship (e.g., prior to onset of disease or chronic condition or before hospital discharge) in order to be able to set expectations, refine communication touchpoints, monitor the patient's progression and address potential care and collaboration issues earlier.

6. Put Your Patient at the Core of the Care

Remember that the continuum of care is patient-centric, not provider- or payer-driven. The objective is to holistically design – and deliver – the care around the patient's needs.

High-tech and High-touch Delivery of Healthcare

For optimizing the continuum of care, virtual care technology can be the high-tech answer for the high-touch delivery of patient care. Virtual care can be used to optimize the continuum of care by providing an opportunity (in verbal and visual form) to ensure that all care providers are connected, communicating, and collaborating in delivering patient-centered care across the health continuum.

Technology is advancing, impacting the way we live and presenting new opportunities to improve the delivery of healthcare. Synzi leverages these innovations every day, developing state-of-the-art solutions that make it possible for healthcare professionals to do what they do, only better.

We enable better performance for healthcare organizations, better access for patients, and better outcomes for all. Our goal is to continuously improve our platform and future-proof offerings that simplify complexity and inspire positive change among healthcare professionals and in the lives of patients.

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