qliqSOFT

Customer

First Choice Neurology

Challenges

1. Automate multi-group practice front-office workflows for 1,600-plus patients and healthcare workers at all 36 practice sites across six counties.

2. Communicate securely with staff and physicians

3. Preventing hospital readmissions

Solutions

- QliqSOFT Secure Messaging
- QliqSOFT Chatbot
- QliqSOFT Virtual Visit

Results

- Reduced staff overtime by 18%

- Rolled out the solution within 10 months to 24 clinics, creating 56 unique physician workflows

- Streamlined physician workflow, enabling two to three more patients seen daily per office

- Improved clinic revenue 10-15%

- Shifted from one FTE to 100% digital touchless check-in at smaller clinics

- Scored 4.8/5 in patient satisfaction survey

Largest U.S. Neurology Physician Practice Earns 10X Return on Investment by Adopting Digital In-take

FIRSTChoice **NEUROLOGY**

SUCCESS STORY

Growing consumer expectations for patient engagement solutions coupled with managing the COVID-19 pandemic has spurred medical groups into rethinking safety strategies to manage dramatic increases in patient volume while reducing risks posed by the respiratory viral illness. Rising to the challenge, the 122 providers and nearly 300 healthcare staff members at First Choice Neurology (FCN), the largest U.S. private practice neurology group throughout South Florida, endeavored to deliver care to its more than 1,600-plus patients at 36 locations across six counties.

FCN set out to select a digital technology solution to provide relief to overwhelmed healthcare workers, and reduce in-person patient volume in an at-risk infectious environment. Moreover, the 60 adult neurologists and 16 pediatric neurologists sought a HIPAA-compliant, consumer-friendly care solution to engage parents and caregivers responsible for their diverse patient mix: children with congenital and cognitive conditions and adults age 50-plus with memory issues.

Jose Rocha
Director of Central Business Office
First Choice Neurology

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In December 2020, FCN implemented QliqSOFT's automated patient communications suite: secure texting, chatbots and virtual visits. Since then, the practice has launched Neuro2Go, an on-demand, face-to-face chat with a board-certified neurologist to discuss a new neurologic concern affecting patients or their caregivers.

"The virtual visit is great for those who have never been to the neurologist and need up-to-the-minute information about, for example, dealing with memory loss, a headache that won't go away, or any adult or pediatric neurologic condition," said Jose Rocha, First Choice Neurology's Director of Central Business Office.

The digital solutions were quick and easy to scale and implement. QliqSOFT's customer success team taught the FCN practice staff how to set up, customize and use a chatbot for different clinical and administrative use cases. They also demonstrated how to create custom intake forms to streamline the onboarding process before patients walk in the door. "We needed a flexible communications

solution that staff could personalize to meet each physician's unique, specialized needs," said Rocha. "We have 122 providers, and they all work in 122 different ways. With QliqSOFT's web-based platform, we could easily customize our chatbots based on location and without hiring expensive IT resources. Our specialists particularly liked the ability to create highly specific clinical questionnaires."

Streamlining the check-in process digitally provides workforce relief and patient convenience

Through digital self-services, FCN has empowered its patients to perform routine activities online, such as scheduling appointments, completing insurance forms for preapproval, and accessing test results at home or any location at their convenience. They can also initiate chatbots to consult their doctors or other clinicians about pre- and post-visit clinical concerns and outcomes.

"Patients often arrive at a practice site anywhere from five to 15 minutes late," said Rocha. "Filling out forms requires

another 15 minutes, which can lead to overflowing waiting rooms and delayed patient appointments by half an hour or more. The consequences of an extended in-take process can be severe. Front-desk bottlenecks, frustrated patients, long wait times, and care team stress can affect everyone involved. It can negatively impact the number of patients seen by the physician that day."

First Choice Neurology staff learned to trust the digital tools once they became comfortable using them. Healthcare professionals coordinate patient outreach activities, such as set up auto-reminders to schedule visits or pick up prescriptions, escalate concerns of mobility patients to doctors, forward required documentation to patients traveling internationally, and remotely monitor a patient's condition.

The result: Patients avoid crowded waiting rooms. Physicians and staff communicate directly with patients in a more expedient and private manner online as opposed to incessant phone calls, emails, voice messages and faxes.

"Patients have shared their excitement that they no longer feel rushed and that they had no idea that they were conversing with a chatbot versus a live agent," added Roche. "The user-friendly interface and conversational AI workflows make the solution easy for patients to use communicating online with their providers. In most cases, we do not have to teach patients – who don't have to be tech-savvy – how to use the new digital tools."

Digitally optimized office operations reaps dramatic outcomes practice-wide

Following solution implementation in December 2020, within a month or by January 2021 First Choice Neurology immediately realized results: increased patient throughput, reduced wait times, and recouped costs associated with decreasing reams of paper and secure document shredding. Providers welcomed the flexible choice of scheduling up to two extra patients per day or leaving work earlier.

Within 10 months of fully rolling out to 24 clinics and creating multiple unique physician workflows, FCN delivered 10X operational and cost efficiency ROI:

- **Streamlined physician workflow**, saving eight to 10 minutes per appointment and sometimes more for cognitive challenged patients.
- **Increased revenue 5% to 13%**, depending upon location, by adding two to three additional patient appointments per day at select practices.
- **Transformed patient in-take experience**. Reduced crowded waiting rooms through enhanced patient-provider digital communications. Nearly 81% of 402 polled patients rated the neurology group **4.8 out of 5 in patient satisfaction**, favoring the auto-appointment booking and check-in process.
- **Enabled a small practice office to switch to touchless check-in fast** and eliminated the need for a full-time front-office employee at the height of the pandemic.

"The biggest challenge in shifting to virtual care was facing our own fears," said Rocha. "The future is here, and we knew we had to adapt to service our patients better online, which meant giving up our comfort with pens, paper and clipboards. Initially, we were concerned that chatbots would be impersonal and difficult to use, but the results have been amazing."

Next focus: Reducing neurological readmissions

In February 2022, FCN launched a custom chatbot to provide follow-up care to stroke patients. The AI chatbot initiates a human conversation questioning the patient about their current health status and symptoms. The new chatbot is part of a post-discharge care management program to: 1) keep the patient from returning to the hospital within 30 days of being discharged, and 2) to ensure that following the stroke the patient - and especially those with disabilities - received appropriate treatment and care in a timely manner.

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