

# Blueprint for Better Patient Engagement in 2019



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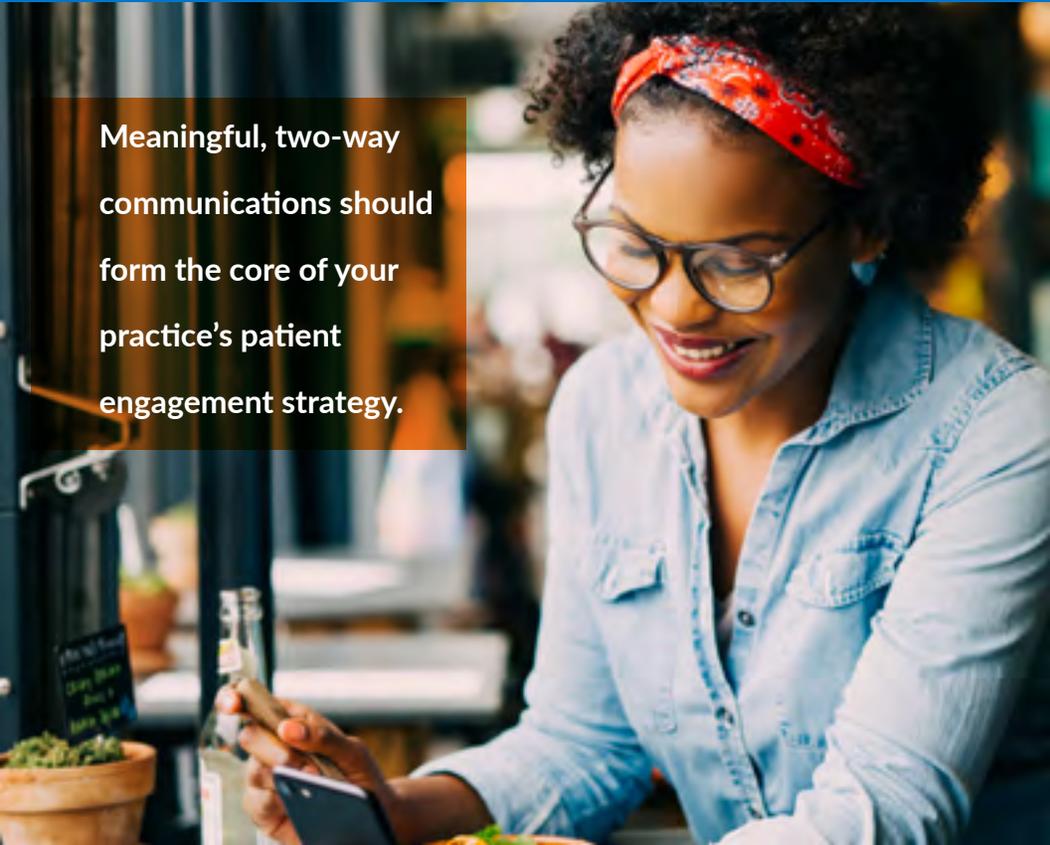
# Seemingly everyone in healthcare is talking about patient engagement these days

The demand for greater engagement is clear, with 74% of patients in a 2017 survey saying they've become more engaged with their healthcare in the past two years. At the same time, two-thirds of providers have recognized the importance of patient engagement as a means to improve overall patient health.

Technological advances such as patient portals, mobile apps, secure texting and online chats can help increase engagement as patients become more comfortable with these technologies. However, the efforts

by providers to increase engagement currently do not match patient expectations on the issue. In the same survey, fewer than one-third of patients would give their providers top grades for their current use of technology to interact with patients.

Of course, putting the patient front and center of care efforts makes perfect sense, but what should engagement look like from a medical practice standpoint?

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing glasses and a red patterned headband, is smiling and looking down at her smartphone. She is wearing a light blue denim shirt. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting like a cafe or office.

Meaningful, two-way communications should form the core of your practice's patient engagement strategy.

This ebook will explore the following five trends, focusing specifically on a communications strategy that includes texting in a secure, HIPAA-compliant manner that can increase the immediacy of communications and patient satisfaction with those communications.

1. Meet patients where they are
2. Leverage technology to facilitate communications
3. Communications should be in as near real time as possible
4. Help patients on their health journeys
5. Answer those billing questions, too

# Meet patients where they are

Cellphone ownership is nearly ubiquitous in the United States, with an overall ownership rate of 95%. Even Americans 65 and over have an 85 percent cellphone ownership rate.

Text messaging is nearly 26 years old and has become such common practice that people text every day for many different reasons. According to a 2014 Gallup poll, 70% of respondents in the 18-29 age category use their phones most often to send and read texts.

Nearly half of those in the 30-49 age group report the same thing.

People of all ages are completely comfortable using their phones for all sorts of tasks, including communicating with their healthcare providers. To be successful, any patient engagement communications strategy should include both simple (SMS) and multimedia (MMS) messages, Facebook messenger communications, as well as other social media platforms.



# Leverage technology to facilitate communications

But not all communications platforms are the same, and not all have the robust features and security protocols that the healthcare industry demands. You want a solution that's HIPAA-compliant in order to safeguard protected health information (PHI). Those communications should be archived to become part of a patient's record.

Any communications platform must respect patients and the way they want to communicate. Obtaining credentials for a patient

portal or downloading an app are additional roadblocks between patients and their healthcare providers. The simplest, most direct solution will work best and ensure the highest chance of patient adoption.

For clinicians and staff, you want a solution that operates in conjunction within their normal workflows, where questions and information requests come up during the work day so they can be handled quickly.



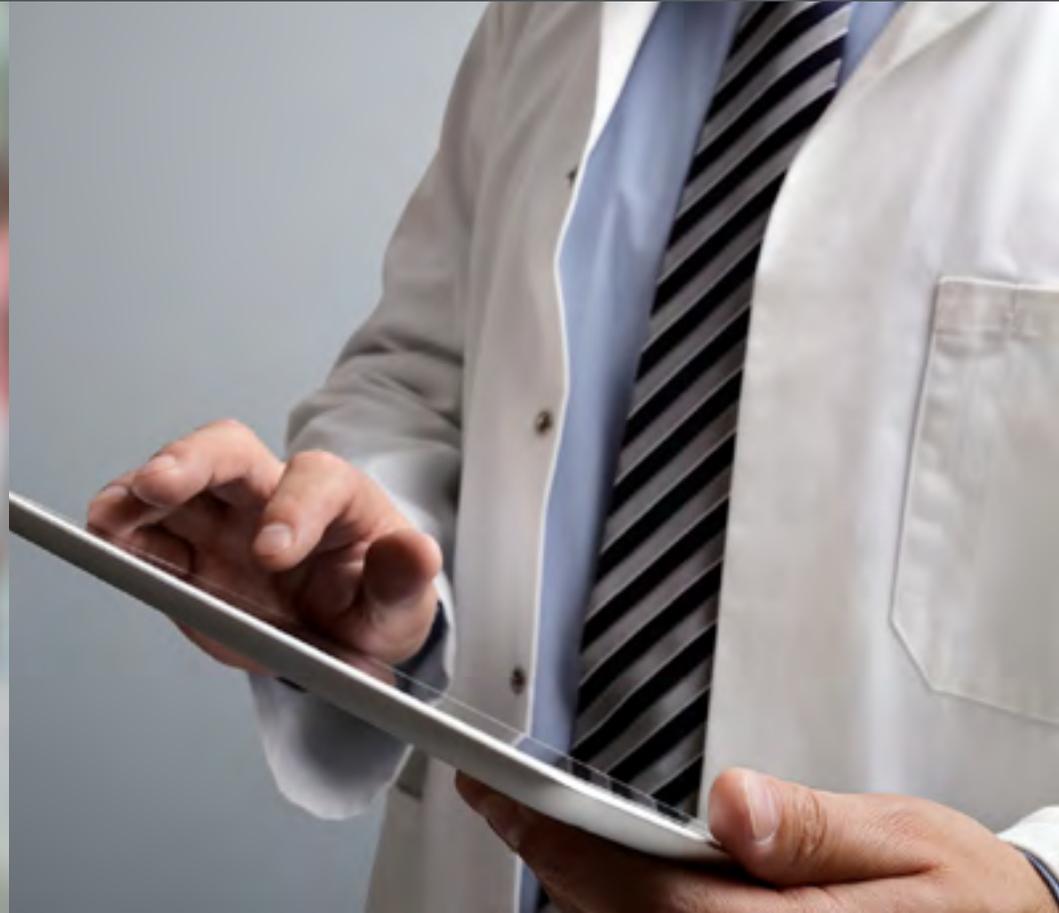
# Communications should be in as near real time as possible

We all know how frustrating it is to contact a healthcare provider in traditional methods. Call the office and leave a message. Try to remember your login for the patient portal to send a note through there and hope it gets through. Wonder if that prescription refill request has actually gone to the pharmacy.

When a patient has a question about an emerging medical condition, a potential healing complication or some other medical situation, he wants answers now—not sometime over the remainder of the healthcare work day.

A unified communications platform can consolidate text messages and other forms of communication in one place where the appropriate staffer can respond. Physicians can answer questions between patients, instead of keeping patients waiting until the end of the day.

Rather than fielding, prioritizing and triaging phone calls one at a time, a communications platform allows for one-to-many conversations that are quicker for both patients and staff.



# Help patients on their health journeys

Your most engaged patients are likely to be your most compliant patients, which can bring benefits in value-based or population-based health arrangements. Diabetes patients, for example, can receive weekly tips on what health conditions require an immediate doctor visit, healthy recipe ideas or other information. A telehealth communications platform can facilitate those communications in a repeatable and reportable way that is stored

as part of a patient's health information.

A communications platform can also support remote patient monitoring, which is now a covered benefit for Medicare patients. Using CPT code 99091, monitoring covers such data as ECG, blood pressure or glucose monitoring. Providers can use the code once per patient per month as long as the required monitoring takes place.

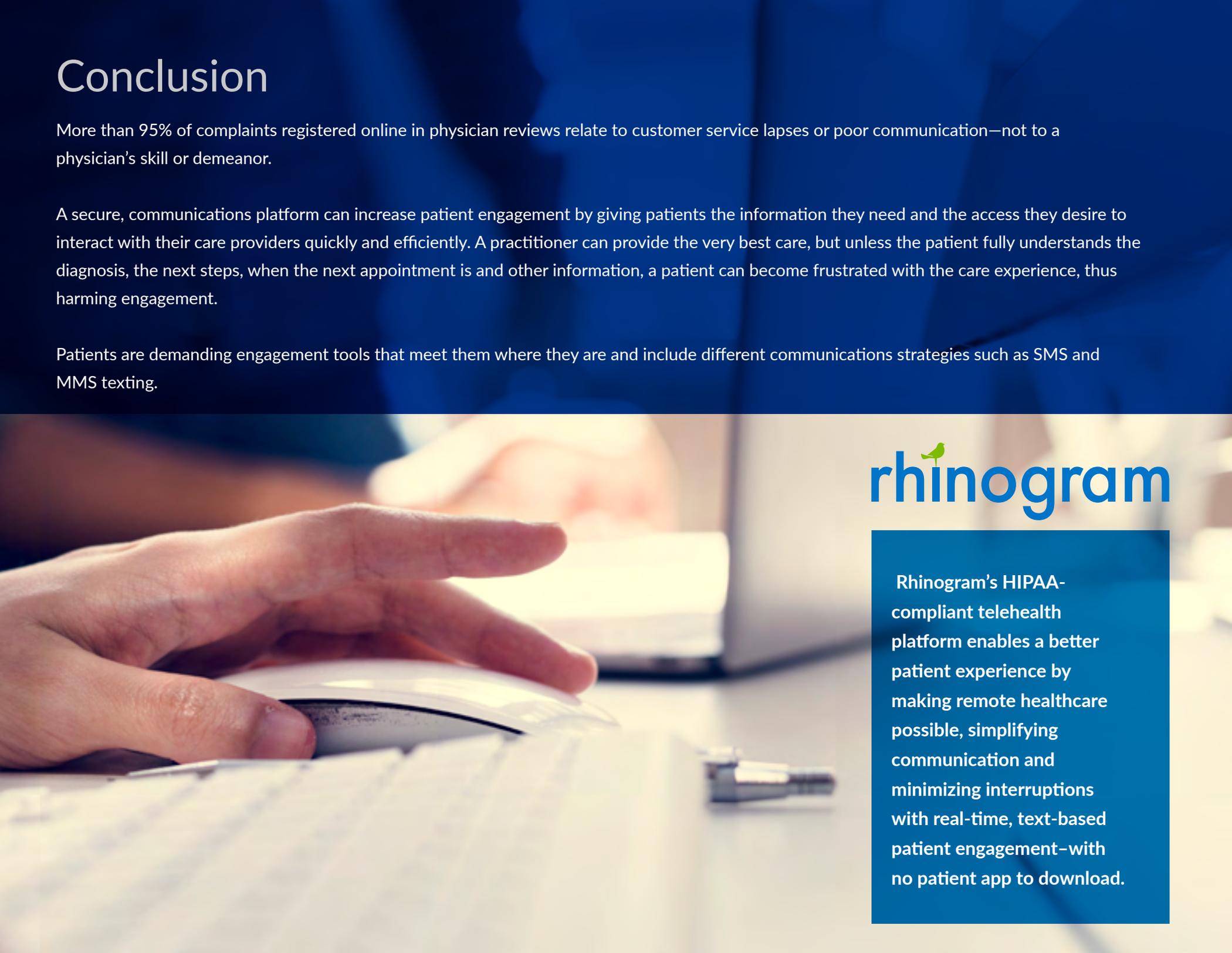


# Conclusion

More than 95% of complaints registered online in physician reviews relate to customer service lapses or poor communication—not to a physician’s skill or demeanor.

A secure, communications platform can increase patient engagement by giving patients the information they need and the access they desire to interact with their care providers quickly and efficiently. A practitioner can provide the very best care, but unless the patient fully understands the diagnosis, the next steps, when the next appointment is and other information, a patient can become frustrated with the care experience, thus harming engagement.

Patients are demanding engagement tools that meet them where they are and include different communications strategies such as SMS and MMS texting.



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Rhinogram’s HIPAA-compliant telehealth platform enables a better patient experience by making remote healthcare possible, simplifying communication and minimizing interruptions with real-time, text-based patient engagement—with no patient app to download.