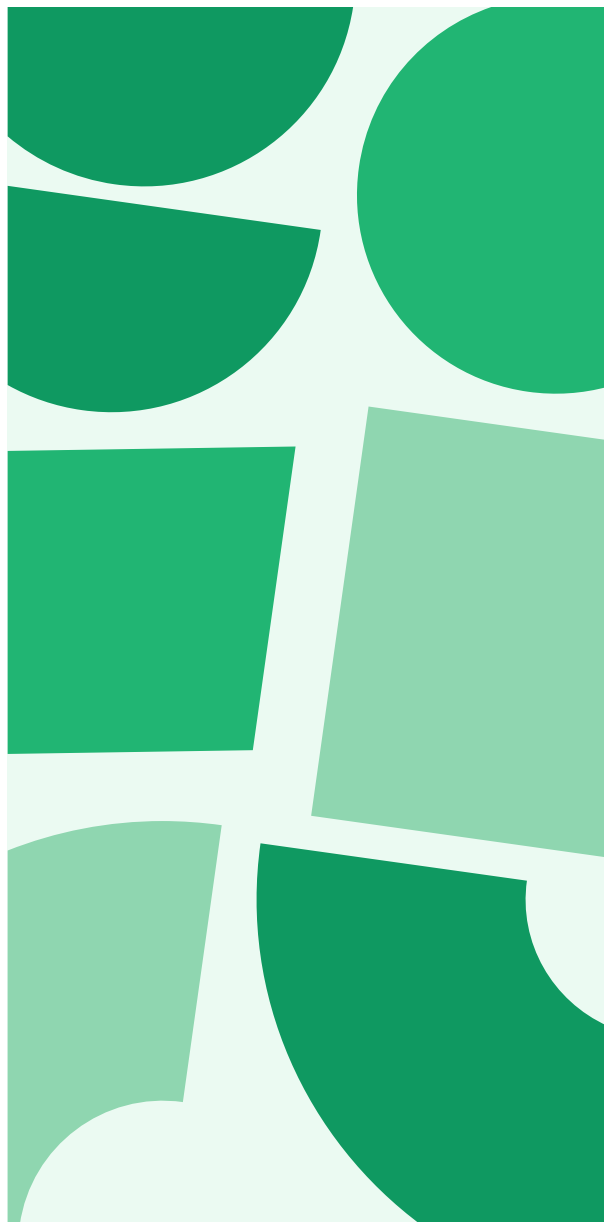


GUIDE

The Power of Digital Healthcare Workflows

A White Paper for Practice Managers,
Call Center Leaders, and IT Directors



Overview

If there's one challenge every healthcare practice faces, it's this:

Managing patient data is hard.

Paper forms get lost, insurance cards are forgotten, and—perhaps most worrisome of all—sensitive data is continually being re-entered into filing systems that may or may not be secure. The poor flow of information that results impacts everything from wait times and patient satisfaction to physician burnout, all the while putting providers at greater risk of Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) violations, fines, and lawsuits.

The digitization of healthcare documentation was supposed to ease many of these problems. But so far, the very technology meant to usher in the future of healthcare has had some unintended consequences: Doctors are devoting more time to PCs than patients,¹ lag times for first-time patients² are on the rise, and security breaches are more frequent than ever.³

Thankfully, there is a solution. Mobile health web forms, documents, and digital signature collection pave the way for improved patient data management and smooth clinical workflows.

This white paper details the ability of HIPAA compliant digital workflows to help practice managers, call center leaders, IT directors, and others charged with managing sensitive patient data solve many common challenges related to:

- Capturing, storing, and sharing secure patient data
- Streamlining eSignature collection
- Reducing administrative costs
- Enhancing the patient experience

Introduction

The mobile health (mHealth) industry is exploding, and it's not just because more Americans than ever own smart devices. Providers and patients alike are realizing real value in mobile health technology as advancements ease the path to greater efficiency and lower costs: 52%⁴ of smartphone users gather health-related information through mobile healthcare apps, and 93%⁵ of physicians believe these mHealth apps benefit patient care.

But as mobile health funding approaches \$1.3 billion⁶ and the number of mobile health apps exceeds 165,000,⁷ one disconnect remains. According to the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS),⁸ no mobile medical device will be meaningful until it's able to "capture and exchange information with key systems." In other words, mHealth must connect to eHealth in order to be beneficial.

For that, there are online healthcare form solutions.

Recent advancements in mobile medical forms and documents make it possible to consolidate disparate patient data and healthcare processes into one streamlined system in ways that other mobile technology can't.

The Challenges of Digital Documentation

As providers move away from the quantity of patients seen to the quality of care received, one mission-critical component still stands in the way for even the most prepared practices: digital documentation. Despite the rapid growth of electronic health records (EHRs), many systems remain shrouded by a cloud of tedious, time-consuming tasks and security concerns.

Without the ability to capture patient data before and after care, providers are often forced to click their way through patient visits. And as the amount of time clinical staff devotes to manual data entry increases—physicians are currently spending two-thirds of their time on paperwork—so does the likelihood of user error.⁹ Add in the fact that healthcare information is 100x more valuable than stolen credit cards, and the risk of a healthcare hack magnifies with each unintentionally exposed patient record and unencrypted storage drive.¹⁰

With clinical staff continually crunched for time when recording patient interactions, it's becoming increasingly difficult to keep these dangers at bay. It's a vicious cycle, but it doesn't have to continue.

For healthcare technology to be effective, simplicity and security are key. And that's where mobile-friendly, HIPAA compliant online form solutions come in.



The Power of Mobile Workflows



If you're ready to upgrade your office to mobile-friendly workflows, there are a few things you should look out for. First and foremost, make sure you're considering a secure, HIPAA compliant option. Then, you'll want to identify a solution that can modernize multiple aspects of your workflows and ensure you are meaningfully using the technology within your office.¹¹ Ideally, you'll choose a solution that can collect, manage, and share data, gather electronic signatures, and generate important documents.



HIPAA compliant mobile healthcare workflows remove the burden of many repetitive tasks and time-consuming paperwork while addressing several mission-critical areas:

Patient Data Security

An unsecured network is a big risk in any industry, but for healthcare providers, the dangers of a data breach are especially grievous. The fines alone for violating HIPAA can reach millions, and there's no relief for "unwitting" offenses caused by human error and oversight. Yet research shows that these are two of the biggest causes of healthcare hacks.



No matter how unauthorized access to protected patient records occurs—whether through intentional snooping on the part of an employee or forgetting to shred a piece of paper—the consequences are the same.¹² And they are serious.

At best, a breach of medical information causes patients to go elsewhere for providers and insurance. At worst, it leads to lawsuits and settlements as high as \$115 million.¹³

HIPAA compliant online forms can help reduce security risks through:

Continual updates: Annual audits and new employee training ensure HIPAA compliance remains intact.

Access controls: User-level permission settings and password protection helps keep patient information safe from potential internal leaks.

Advanced data encryption: All data collected through an online form solution should be protected by mandatory encryption technology that's compliant with HIPAA and HITECH (Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act).

Security testing: Simple security tests can be created and sent to in-house staff as a way to help train employees to recognize and protect against phishing scams and attempted data breaches.



What Happens When You Fail to Comply with HIPAA?

HIPAA violations are no joke. A lack of knowledge is never an excuse, no matter how complex the legislation, and violations can easily lead to settlements in excess of \$2.5 million.¹⁴



When a facility is audited and violations are discovered, the typical result involves a mix of corrective action plans and fines as high as \$55,000 per violation.¹⁵ These fines can be issued even when there's no breach of electronic protected health information (ePHI). Failures to maintain proper security documentation, train employees on privacy practices, or acquire Business Associate Agreements (BAA) with third-party vendors are all grounds for hefty financial penalties.

That's why it's essential for online data management solutions to be continually updated with mandatory measures, including data encryption, access controls, auditing, and logging. Some online tools will claim HIPAA compliance without putting any of the actual security features in place—requiring advanced IT coding and maintenance on your part. A truly HIPAA compliant platform will include features designed specifically to ensure ePHI remains secure as it's captured, stored, and routed.

Administrative Costs

Let's face it: Collecting patient information is no easy feat. Paper forms and documents are often met with resistance, and once they're finally collected, the answers can be difficult to decipher.

Capturing this data electronically—let alone routing it to the right departments and providers—is often a tiresome, time-consuming process that takes up increasingly disproportionate amounts of time. And each time data is transferred from one location, system, or stakeholder to another, problems associated with mistyping and missing information increase.

Mobile online workflows reduce administrative costs by:

Increasing accuracy: Short-answer fields, radio buttons, and checkboxes eliminate the need for handwritten information and drastically reduce the likelihood of transcription errors.

Ensuring completeness of records: Required fields ensure a form won't be submitted until all necessary information has been captured, and email and text notifications remind patients to quickly sign important documents.

Streamlining interdepartmental communications: Secure emails and automatically generated documents streamline the data sharing process, putting less stress on all departments.

Facilitating provider-patient communications: Mobile-friendly forms empower patients to communicate with providers as questions and concerns arise, reducing the frequency of phone calls and unnecessary visits.

Reducing paper processes: Automatically generated documents and mobile-friendly online forms can replace many paper-based filing systems that lengthen patient onboarding and increase security risks.



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Patient Experience

As an increasing number of payers and providers take steps to accelerate the transition from fee-for-service models to value-based care reimbursement contracts, inefficiency is the enemy.¹⁶ Too much cumbersome technology and too many time-consuming processes can get in the way of providing the kind of patient experiences that lead to better outcomes.

Mobile solutions can improve the patient experience by:

Providing easy access to health information:

Empower patients to take control of their health by providing access to medical information that's vital to improving outcomes.

Improving patient flow: Collect health history data and critical signatures before the patient arrives reduces wait times and patient flow bottlenecks.

Collecting real-time feedback: Send quick post-visit surveys that automatically route answers to appropriate staff—whether it's an employee in charge of handling customer service issues or a care manager who will benefit from additional insights.



Highly Secure Healthcare Workflows That are Easy to Implement

Formstack's cloud-based, HIPAA compliant healthcare workflows are designed to be set up quickly and implemented easily. Great caution is taken to safeguard potential security breach points through comprehensive, ongoing IT support.

Hassle-free forms , documents, and eSignature collection means there's no need to worry about:



IT maintenance

There's no hardware to maintain or ongoing IT updates to worry about.



Email security

Patient data can be passed securely from one user to another using your SMTP server.



Software updates

All security updates and feature enhancements are handled behind the scenes by Formstack's HIPAA-trained development team.



Database security

All ePHI is secured in Formstack's HIPAA compliant digital database, with password protection protocols in place. Advanced data encryption technology and HIPAA compliant connections are used any time data is passed from the Formstack database to another system.



Business Associate Agreements

Formstack provides a standard BAA to meet HIPAA compliance regulations, and the company evaluates custom BAA requests on a case-by-case basis.

Formstack in Action

Formstack simplifies healthcare workflows, from new patient registration and patient discharge to billing and post-visit follow-ups and care management.

- Eliminate tedious paper-based paper processes
- Improve the flow of patient information
- Create exceptional patient experiences

1. Visit is scheduled.

A new patient schedules an appointment by completing a form on the website. The appointment is automatically added to the practice's Google Calendar.

2. Online registration forms are completed.

The new patient receives a link to mobile-friendly medical forms that can be filled out and signed from any device.

3. ePHI is captured.

When the forms are submitted, all ePHI is sent to Formstack's secure, digital database and instantly made available for easy access by authorized staff.

4. ePHI is shared.

Notification of the new patient's information is automatically routed to front office staff, billing, intake specialists, and other care providers via email so insurance can be pre-verified and preparations can be made for a smooth first visit.

5. ePHI is routed.

Meanwhile, secure webhooks are used to map Formstack form fields to the correct EHR settings, automatically routing patient data to the appropriate electronic health record.

6. ePHI is reviewed.

The physician uses a special password to access the new patient's information before the appointment to prepare for the visit.

7. Prescription is processed.

During the visit, Formstack is used to systemize the flow of information from the exam room to an onsite pharmacy.

8. Referral is made.

A mobile form automatically generates an electronic referral document within 60 seconds, with all necessary patient information supplied to the specialist.

9. Follow-up question is answered.

When the patient has a care question post-visit, an online contact form is used to communicate with clinical staff, who respond at the time of day that's most convenient and least distracting.

10. Patient feedback is obtained.

A Formstack satisfaction survey is sent for feedback on the new patient's first visit. A low score is automatically routed to the employee responsible for customer service and patient communication. A high score generates an automatic email response encouraging the patient to rate the practice on an important review site.

At each step of the process:

- Data is encrypted.
- Logins and other user activity are logged and audited.
- Users are automatically logged out after a period of inactivity.
- Access is limited to authorized users.



Conclusion

As the challenges of digital documentation persist, providers need a reliable way to manage critically important, and highly sensitive, patient data. Formstack's HIPAA compliant workflows make it possible to collect and share information across devices and systems, without having to worry about security or IT maintenance. Tasks that would normally begin in person, on paper, or over the phone can now be accomplished in the cloud through Formstack's unique mHealth solution.

Learn More About Formstack

Your job is to care and cure—not click your days away through cumbersome data management technology. Formstack simplifies healthcare data collection, transforming piles of paperwork and manual entries into automated workflows that are easy to administer and 100% HIPAA compliant.

Visit formstack.com/healthcare to learn more.

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