MAKING SPACE

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HEALTH

How Virtual Waiting Rooms Empower Patients and Staff During COVID-19

In April of 2020, Ohio Valley Imaging Center closed its doors, just as so many other care facilities did, in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to free up the medical resources to fight it.

But while its imaging machines sat still, its imaging manager, Lacie Cline, and her colleagues planned for the challenges that reopening would bring. "Our biggest fear," says Cline, "was how we were going to keep patients and staff feeling safe once we reopened."

THE NEED

Cline and her team knew that when Ohio Valley reopened, social distancing would be both critical and challenging—especially in the center's registration area, a place where front office team members greeted up to 100 patients a day.

"Even before COVID, our registration area was chaotic," says Cline, describing it as a place where tensions could often collide for both patients and staff. Not only are registration areas relatively small places where patients congregate and wait; they are also areas in which patients (many of whom are there to obtain potentially lifechanging images) must complete detailed paperwork, often right at a staff member's desk.

For these reasons, Cline and her team knew that upon re-opening, they would have to significantly change the registration process in a way that honored social distancing and felt safe to both patients and staff.

WHAT JELLYFISH HEALTH PROVIDED

To create a registration area that met the facility's needs, Cline worked with Jellyfish Health, a digital solutions provider committed to improving healthcare experiences, to implement its Virtual Waiting Room, a customizable offering that enables contactless registration and check-in.

Working with a Jellyfish representative, Cline and her team at Ohio Valley configured their Virtual Waiting Room so that patients could

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>
> Lacie Cline, Imaging Manager
> Ohio Valley Imaging Center

digitally complete and submit key pre-registration paperwork, such as screening and consent forms, prior to their appointments—eliminating the need for the hand-to-hand passing of paper between patients and staff.

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In addition, Cline and her team worked with Jellyfish to customize a contactless check-in flow where patients can check-in to their appointments via text once they are near, but not inside, the healthcare facility. Then, patients can wait not in a waiting room, but in a place of their choosing, such as their car or a park bench, until they receive a text from the facility notifying them that they can come in for their appointment.

OUTCOMES & RESULTS

Since implementing Jellyfish's Virtual Waiting Room on April 29, Cline estimates that 80 percent of patients complete their paperwork before their appointments, significantly reducing the amount of paper passing and physical contact between patients and front office staff.

Perhaps more importantly, Ohio Valley's waiting room is now a relatively empty place. "We hardly ever have patients in the lobby," says Cline.

Not surprisingly, the registration area at Ohio Valley has become a far less stressful—and far more productive—place for staff. "They don't feel that pressure from frustrated patients anymore," says Cline. "They feel safe, and they can focus. We've cut registration times in half."

Amidst the new challenges that COVID-19 presents, these registration and check-in benefits go a long way.

"I don't think we could function without them," Cline says. "Now that we've seen how Jellyfish benefits our registration area, we'll keep it—whether COVID goes away or not. That's especially important because patients want us to continue with the virtual lobby. They love the ability to complete forms prior to their appointment and check themselves in via text message."

Due to the experience in the imaging department, Ohio Valley is now exploring a Jellyfish deployment throughout the enterprise.

Founded in 2014 and based in Panama City, Florida, Jellyfish Health's technology helps savvy care facilities deliver convenient digital experiences that maximize capacity while increasing patient loyalty. Discover more about Jellyfish Health at www.jellyfishhealth.com.