

Automating Patient Contact After ED Discharge Enhances Safety and Reduces Risk

Thomas A. Scaletta MD, ED Medical Director, Edward Healthcare, Naperville IL

Background

While most claims against emergency departments (EDs) are closed without a payment to the plaintiff (70 percent), the amount of indemnity per paid claim averaged \$188,572. Of all claims, the top two are:



Source: Brown TW, Mccarthy ML, Kelen GD, Levy F. *Acad Emerg Med.* 2010;17(5):553-60.

A system that contacts a patient after an ED discharge to assess well-being, understanding of aftercare instructions (including follow-up and prescription compliance), and satisfaction with ED providers, may both enhance safety and mitigate risk.

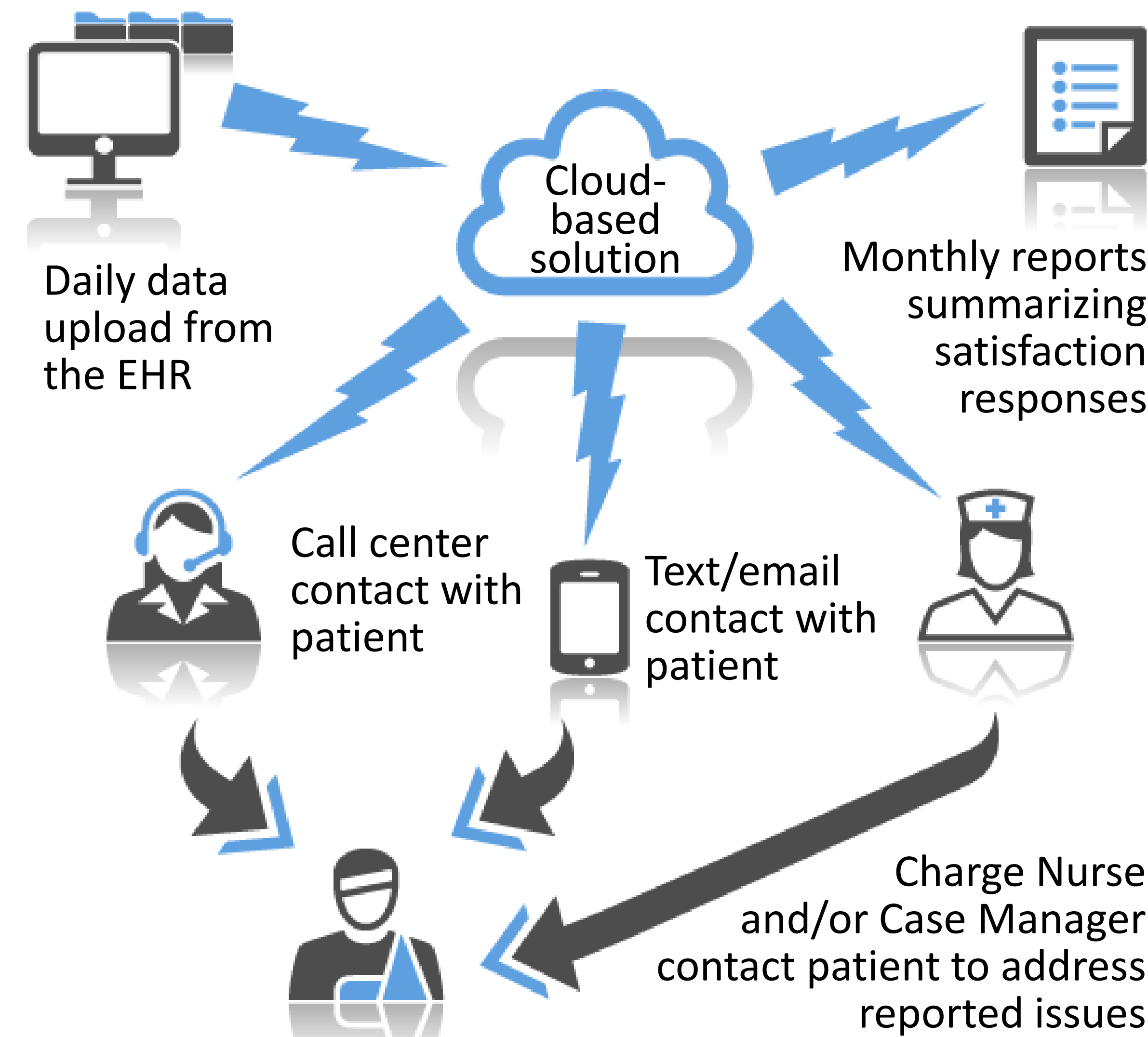
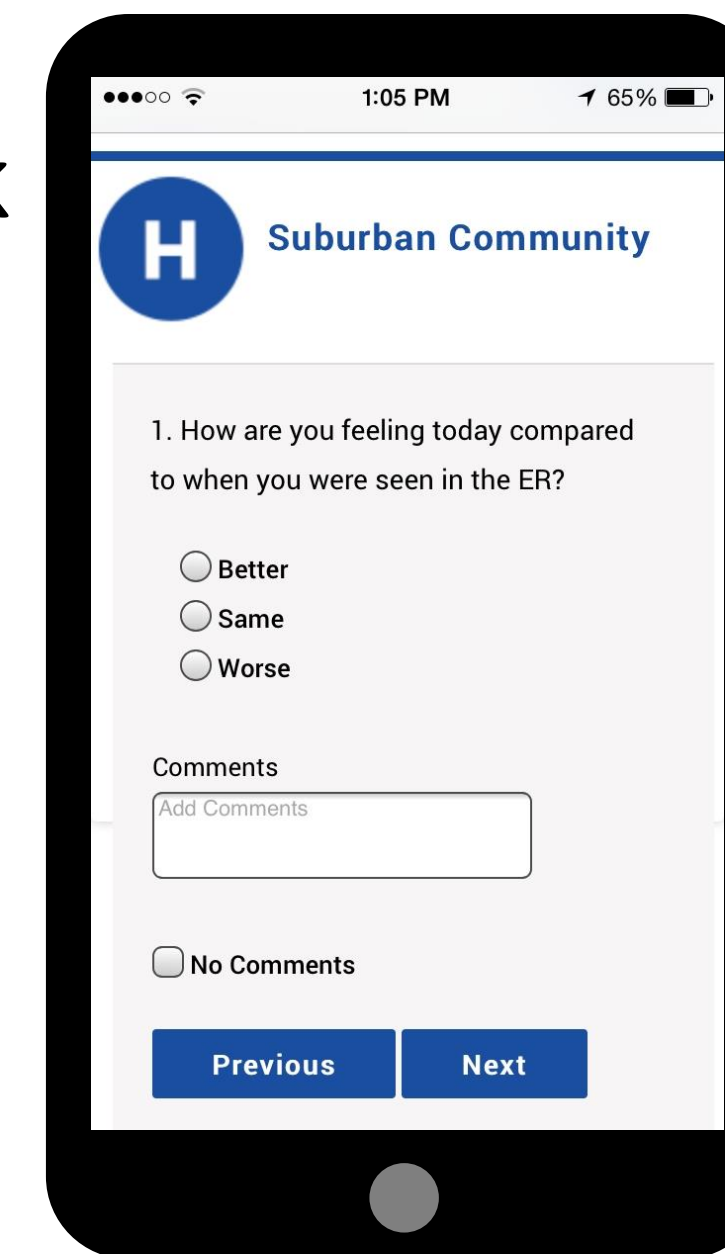
Objectives

- Efficiently assess patient wellbeing on the day after discharge.
- Alert providers to gaps in understanding of aftercare instructions.
- Document patient satisfaction with providers and the overall ED experience.

Methods

Deployed a cloud-based feedback solution (SMARTworks® EffectiveResponse, Standard Register Healthcare, Dayton, OH) in a suburban health system with 90,000 annual ED visits.

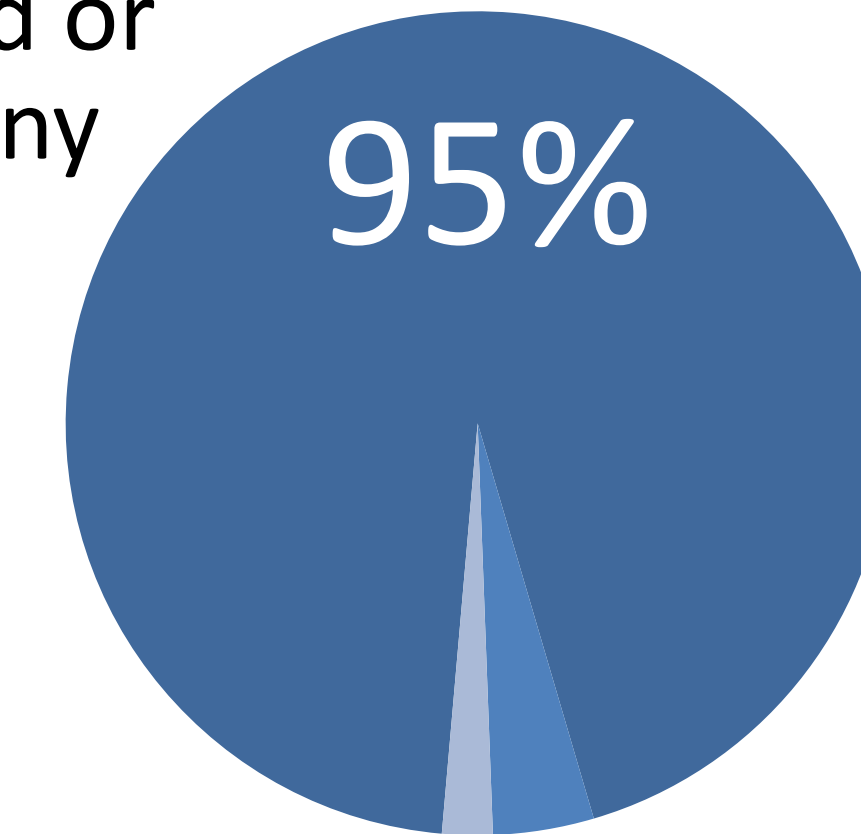
Five self-assessment questions are deployed to assess patient wellbeing and satisfaction.



Results

- Patients who respond electronically to requests for feedback:

Report unchanged or improving and deny aftercare barriers (percentages do not equal 100% as some patients answer "yes" to both queries)



- 2% Report feeling worse and charge nurse is notified
- 4% Report an aftercare problem and case manager is notified

- Addressing service issues and other non-clinical complaints in a timely manner reduces the burden of non-meritorious claims mainly by correcting misperceptions and deescalating angry patients.

Conclusion

Reaching a large cohort of patients electronically and responding to a wide variety of issues improves outcomes, enhances patient safety and satisfaction, and may reduce costs associated with claim litigation.