

# Best Practices Guide: **THE IMPACT OF POSITIVE PATIENT EXPERIENCE ON OUTCOMES**

In collaboration with:

Kindred  Hospitals

# INTRODUCTION

Patient experience is coming to the forefront as an important factor in care effectiveness and efficiency. This e-book explores different patient engagement strategies, as well as research demonstrating the positive impact on outcomes, readmissions, and total cost of care.

## Key Takeaways:

- > Patients involved in interdisciplinary care team discussions have more realistic expectations of recovery time, less anxiety about their treatment, and greater adherence to treatment plans.
- > Technologies that can help patients, families, and caregivers communicate and track progress contribute to greater patient satisfaction and enhanced outcomes.
- > Patients that were hospitalized with acute conditions are less likely to readmit if they are contacted as part of an early follow-up program post-discharge.
- > Above-average online reviews of a county's healthcare facilities correlates with a reduction in avoidable deaths.



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# BENEFITS OF PATIENT INCLUSION IN INTERDISCIPLINARY CARE TEAM DISCUSSIONS

In the years leading up to and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers have taken a greater interest in their overall health, especially those with chronic illnesses. In a 2020 survey conducted by The Advisory Board, 66% of respondents with chronic conditions were more interested in taking a proactive approach to health, and 56% were more interested in managing their underlying conditions than prior to the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

**Research has revealed that increased patient involvement leads to greater satisfaction and improved outcomes, thereby reducing total cost of care. Payers should consider providers with innovative programs to engage patients and families in their care.**

## RESEARCH ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PATIENT INCLUSION IN HEALTHCARE DECISION MAKING

One innovative approach to improving patient satisfaction and outcomes is to establish protocol for including the patient in typical care team discussions. Interdisciplinary care teams bring together physicians, therapists, nurses and other caregivers in a coordinated approach to the patient's treatment. This improves the efficiency

and quality of care and minimizes the risk of miscommunication between all parties. This is essential, as communication failure is one of the most common causes of patient setback and delayed discharge.<sup>2</sup>

When providers establish rigorous practices encouraging patients to participate in these conversations, coordinated care becomes even more effective. Patients involved in care decisions have:

- > More realistic expectations of side effects or recovery time
- > Less anxiety about their treatment
- > Greater adherence to their treatment plans

These benefits all contribute to greater patient satisfaction and improved outcomes, thereby reducing total cost of care.<sup>3</sup>



## KINDRED HOSPITALS PATIENT INCLUSION STRATEGY: INTERDISCIPLINARY CARE TEAMS

Kindred Hospitals' interdisciplinary care teams of physicians, nurses, dietitians, skin specialists and rehabilitation therapists collaborate to coordinate patient-specific care plans. As part of our advanced care delivery model, Kindred's interdisciplinary care teams go above and beyond by conducting their daily meetings at the bedside of the patient whose care plans they are discussing. Previously, such meetings were conducted in a conference room away from the patient and family. Kindred, however, recognized the immense benefit of transparency during the care plan creation and progress, as well as patient and family inclusion, and therefore moved these meetings to the bedside.

Kindred Hospitals is committed to engaging patients in their treatment as a method for improving outcomes. ■

# TECHNOLOGIES THAT CONNECT AND INFORM PATIENTS CAN IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Compounded by the pandemic and driven by increased consumerism, patients are more interested in their healthcare than ever before. With a growing importance placed on patient satisfaction, providers and payers are seeking ways to engage medically complex patients and finding that this involvement can improve outcomes.

In fact, patients with a lower Patient Activation Measure (PAM), which measures patient involvement, are more likely to experience “major medication errors, emergency department visits, and/or unplanned readmission.”<sup>4</sup>

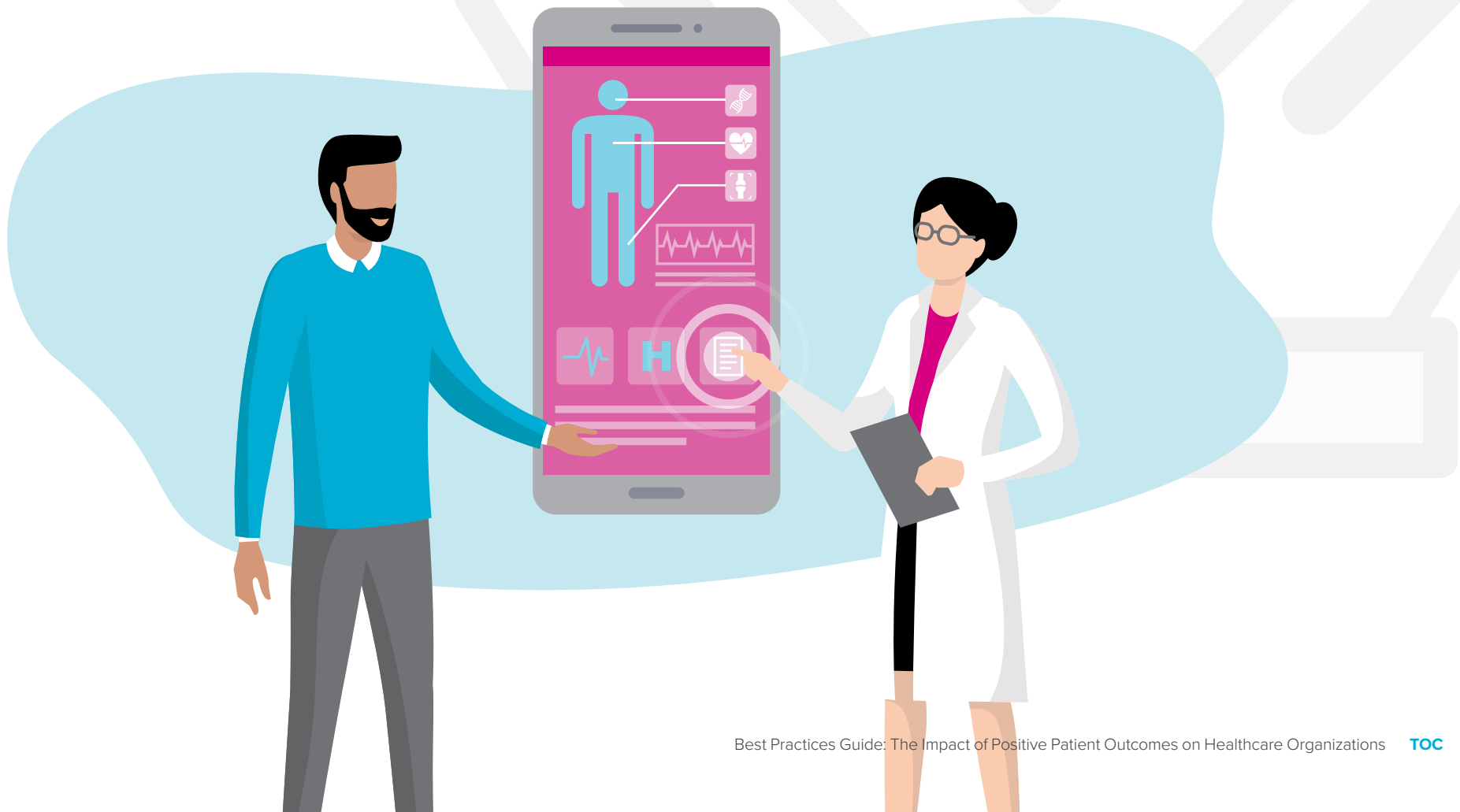
**One strategy for increasing patient engagement, and thereby driving optimal outcomes and lower costs of care, is to incorporate the use of technology in treatment plans.**

## RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE BENEFIT OF TECHNOLOGIES THAT ENGAGE PATIENTS AND FAMILY

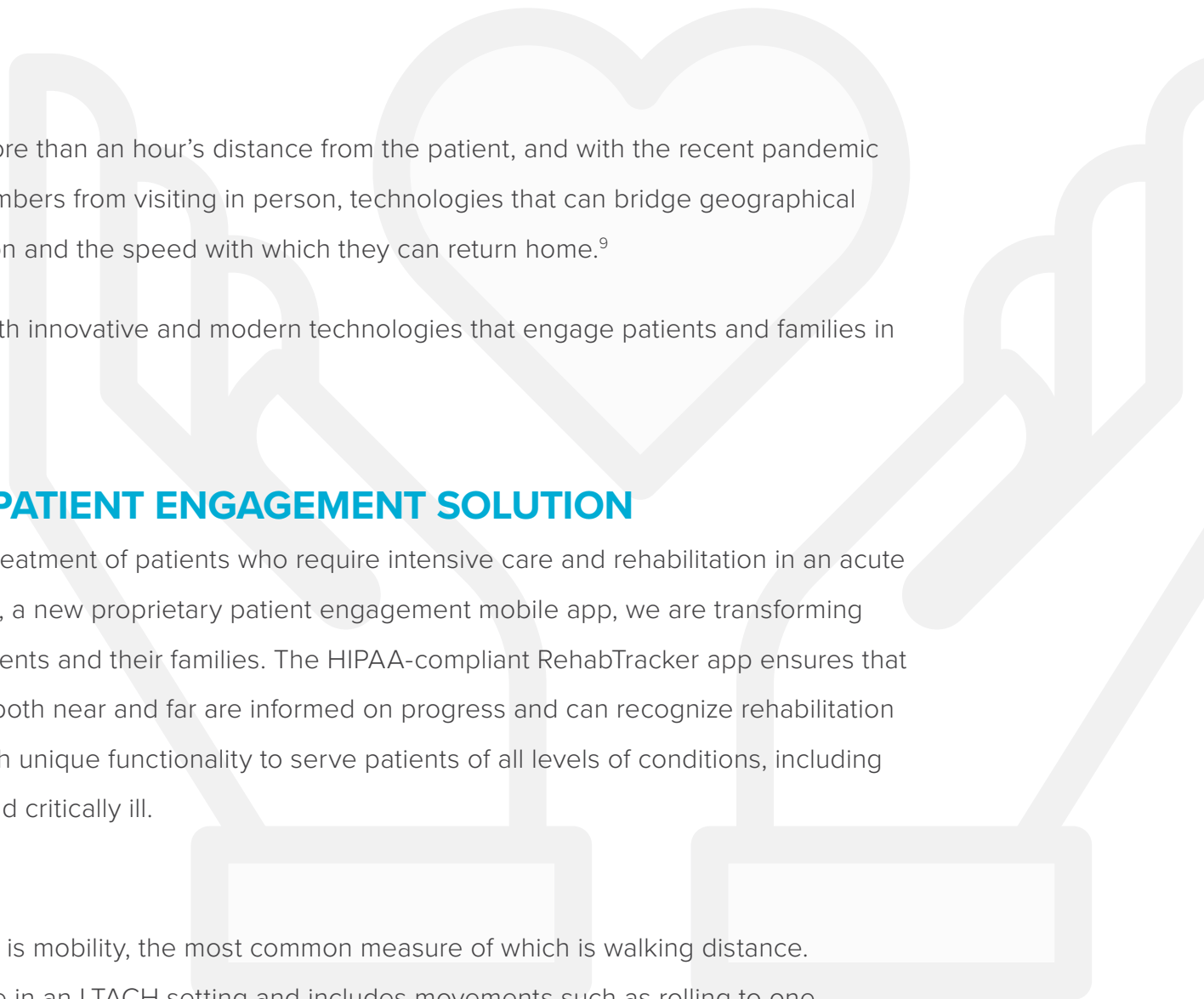
Technologies that can help patients, families and caregivers communicate and track progress are contributing to effective patient-centered care. Mobile apps that allow patients and caregivers to set and track goals, or access care notes, can help patients visualize the next step in their recovery.

### Studies have shown that:

- > Informed, engaged patients are likely to be more confident regarding their care and rehabilitation and more likely to be satisfied with their overall experience and outcomes.<sup>5</sup>
- > Patient engagement is associated with improved self-care and recovery.<sup>6,7</sup>
- > Strong patient and family engagement in clinical care positively contributes to a favorable experience, as well as improved health outcomes and reduced costs.<sup>8</sup>







With 11% of family members living more than an hour's distance from the patient, and with the recent pandemic that prevented even local family members from visiting in person, technologies that can bridge geographical gaps are critical to patient satisfaction and the speed with which they can return home.<sup>9</sup>

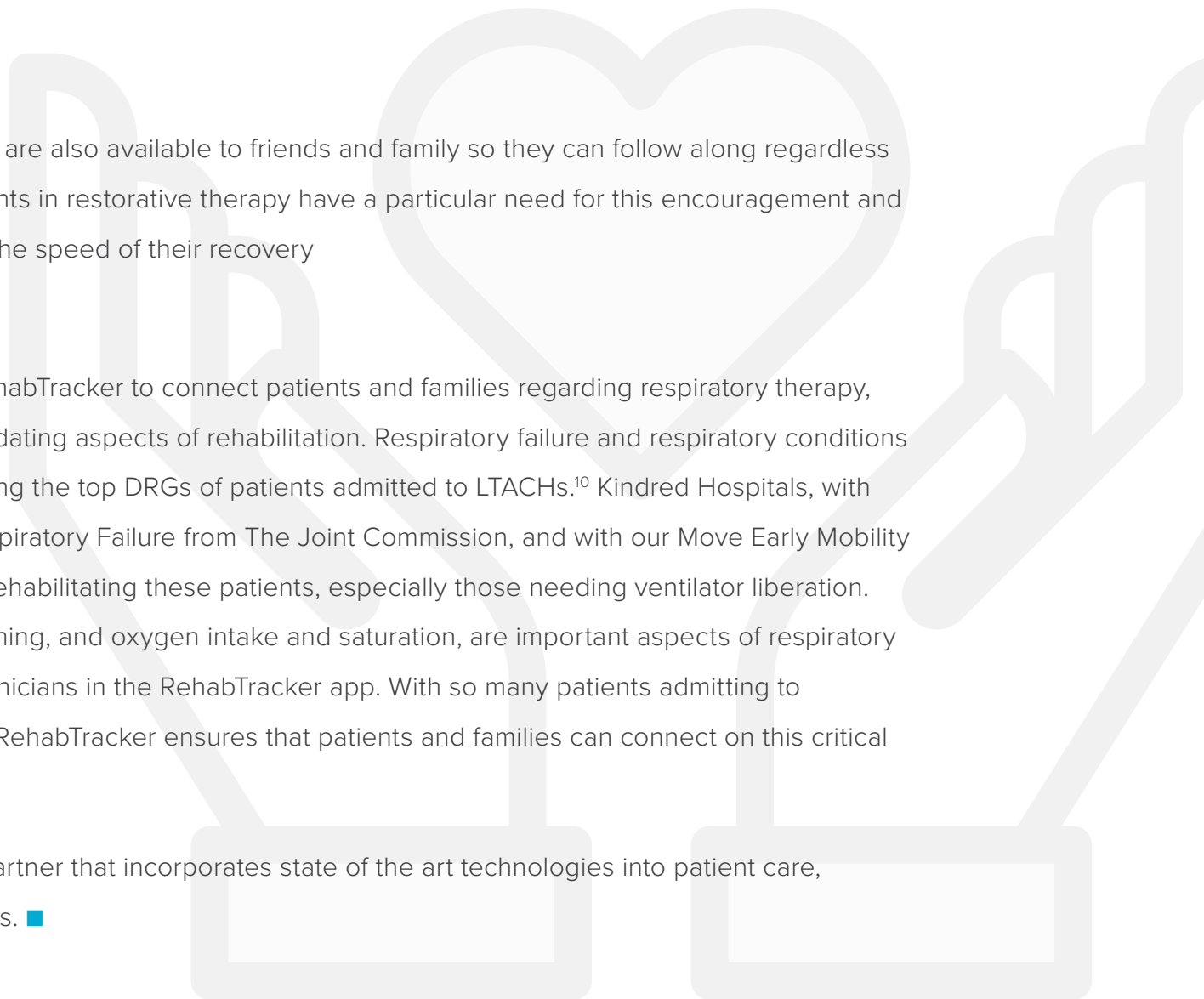
Payers should consider providers with innovative and modern technologies that engage patients and families in their care.

## **REHABTRACKER AS A PATIENT ENGAGEMENT SOLUTION**

Kindred Hospitals specialize in the treatment of patients who require intensive care and rehabilitation in an acute hospital setting. With RehabTracker®, a new proprietary patient engagement mobile app, we are transforming the way caregivers engage with patients and their families. The HIPAA-compliant RehabTracker app ensures that the patient, clinical team and family both near and far are informed on progress and can recognize rehabilitation milestones. RehabTracker is built with unique functionality to serve patients of all levels of conditions, including those who are medically complex and critically ill.

### **Restorative Tracking**

One key component in rehabilitation is mobility, the most common measure of which is walking distance. However, mobility means much more in an LTACH setting and includes movements such as rolling to one side of the bed or sitting up. For critically ill patients, clinicians use RehabTracker during sessions to monitor progress in areas such as range of motion exercises and time spent sitting at the edge of the bed. While these are seemingly minimal actions, our clinicians explain these critical accomplishments to patients during sessions



using visuals in RehabTracker, which are also available to friends and family so they can follow along regardless of their location or time of day. Patients in restorative therapy have a particular need for this encouragement and motivation, which can contribute to the speed of their recovery

## **Respiratory Therapy**

Clinicians can also use Kindred's RehabTracker to connect patients and families regarding respiratory therapy, which can be one of the more intimidating aspects of rehabilitation. Respiratory failure and respiratory conditions requiring ventilator support are among the top DRGs of patients admitted to LTACHs.<sup>10</sup> Kindred Hospitals, with disease-specific certifications in Respiratory Failure from The Joint Commission, and with our Move Early Mobility Program, specialize in treating and rehabilitating these patients, especially those needing ventilator liberation. Patient progress in unassisted breathing, and oxygen intake and saturation, are important aspects of respiratory therapy that can be monitored by clinicians in the RehabTracker app. With so many patients admitting to LTACHs with pulmonary conditions, RehabTracker ensures that patients and families can connect on this critical component of their recovery.

Kindred Hospitals is an innovative partner that incorporates state of the art technologies into patient care, thereby helping to improve outcomes. ■

# THE IMPORTANCE OF POST-DISCHARGE FOLLOW-UP IN PATIENT OUTCOMES

With consumers' growing interest in their care, physicians and payors are increasingly seeing the benefits that greater involvement can have with regard to patient satisfaction and outcomes—even after discharge and especially when discharged directly home.

**As consumers grow more involved in researching their care choices, physicians and payers are learning to channel that interest into improved patient satisfaction and outcomes—even after discharge and, especially, when the patient returns home.**

That's why payers should consider providers with innovative programs that engage patients and families in their care.

## RESEARCH SHOWS THE BENEFITS OF POST-DISCHARGE FOLLOW-UP

While many strategies of increasing patient-centeredness are being applied during the patient's time in the hospital, it is important to continue this level of care after discharge. Research on the subject reveals that:

- > Patients who were hospitalized with acute conditions are less likely to readmit if they are contacted as part of an early follow-up program post-discharge.<sup>11</sup>



- > 20% of readmissions are likely to be prevented in patients with three or more chronic conditions if they are contacted by a provider of care within 14 days of discharge.<sup>12</sup>
- > There is no significant difference in satisfaction between nurse-led telephone follow-ups and outpatient visit follow-ups, suggesting that telephonic programs are effective patient engagement tools.<sup>13,14</sup>

Implementing post-discharge follow-up services not only improves patient satisfaction, but can also reduce total cost of care over time as rehospitalizations or other major setbacks are prevented.

## AFTERCARE PROGRAM SUPPORTS PATIENTS AFTER DISCHARGE

Recovering patients can benefit from the Kindred AfterCare program, which is designed to help patients heal and to provide the support they need once they have discharged to home from our hospitals. Clinically trained RNs review patient charts and call patients within 12–48 hours, 7 days, 14 days, and 30 days post-discharge. RNs discuss in detail with patients DME and medication needs and education, PCP appointments, and any additional post-discharge services needed.

This program is one part of Kindred Hospitals' commitment to patient recovery and reduced readmissions. ■

# UNFILTERED ONLINE REPOSITORIES SUCH AS REVIEW SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA CAN CONTAIN VALUABLE PATIENT FEEDBACK, RESEARCHERS SAID

## Key Takeaways:

- > U.S. counties with healthcare facilities with the greatest share of 1-star Yelp reviews had the highest death rates.
- > Online reviews of healthcare facilities provide insight in patients' care experience, researchers said.
- > More than 95,000 facilities that provided some form of care recognized by the Affordable Care Act were included in the study.

**U.S. counties with healthcare facilities with the greatest share of 1-star Yelp reviews had the highest death rates, and a difference of just one point—roughly one star—between counties' average scores could indicate a mortality rate that is better or worse by dozens of lives, according to researchers at the Penn Medicine Center for Digital Health.**

Yelp is a review website that uses a five-star rating system to evaluate businesses, with one star rating the lowest and five stars rating the highest.



“Many of the facilities that provide essential care may not otherwise have standardized measures or approaches to collect data about patients’ experience of care. This is a missed opportunity,” the study’s senior author, Raina Merchant, MD, director of the Center for Digital Health and a professor of emergency medicine in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, said in a press release.

“Much of the focus in healthcare is on quality and outcomes,” she said. “Patient experience is also critically important and should be factored into how to improve care across the board. This appears to be one novel data source for doing that.”

More than 95,000 facilities that provided some form of care recognized by the Affordable Care Act were included in the study led by Merchant and its lead author, Daniel Stokes, MD, a researcher with the Center for Digital Health and an internal medicine resident at UCLA Health.



**“Online reviews of healthcare facilities provide direct insight into patients’ experiences of care and can be a powerful force in shaping the care we provide to be more patient-centered,” Stokes said. “This has important implications for both individual and community health.”**

The researchers determined that if a county’s health facilities’ reviews were a star higher than their average—one point on the scale—models indicated that it translated to 18 fewer deaths per 100,000 residents. But when the study was refined to include counties with three or more healthcare facilities, the impact was greater, indicating a reduction in roughly 53 deaths per 100,000. Refined even further to counties with five healthcare facilities or more, the impact grew to about 60 preventable deaths.

Each facility included in the study had at least three reviews between 2015 and 2019 on Yelp. Each healthcare facility’s ratings were also coded to the specific U.S. where it was located, resulting in more than 1,300 counties—roughly a third of the country—being represented in the study.

Overall, healthcare facilities achieved an average 2.9 score out of 5 stars, but reviews were weighted very heavily to either side of the scale: five-star reviews account for 52.9% of all reviews, while one-stars made up 33.3%.

But when researchers looked at the county-level data of reviews, they found that five-star reviews within the group with the lowest death rates made up 55.6 percent of their total, while one-star reviews were at just 29.1



percent. In the group of counties with the highest death rates, five-star reviews made up only 42.9 percent of the total, compared to 38.8 percent one-stars.

Yelp reviews provide narratives, which was particularly useful to the study. The researchers used natural language processing algorithms to gain special, categorical insights. They showed that the types of words most associated with one-star reviews related to time [such as “hours” and “waiting”], payment [“money” and “pay”] and interpersonal interactions [“rude” and “told”].

Common language in five-star reviews changed depending on location. In high-mortality counties, “friendly,” “nice,” and “staff” were all typical, while low-mortality counties were associated with “Dr.,” “helpful,” “question,” and “pain.”

The researchers believe their work, published this week in the JAMA Network Open, adds evidence that unfiltered online repositories like review sites and social media contain valuable patient feedback and are an untapped resource for informing healthcare providers about what they do.

“Patient experience is also critically important and should be factored into how to improve care across the board. This appears to be one novel data source for doing that.”

*Raina Merchant, MD, is the Director, Center for Digital Health, Professor of Emergency Medicine, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.* ■

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Kindred Hospitals specialize in the treatment of medically complex patients who require intensive care and pulmonary rehabilitation in an acute hospital setting. With daily physician oversight, ICU- and CCU-level staffing, 24/7 respiratory coverage and specially trained caregivers, we work to improve functional outcomes, reduce costly readmissions and help patients transition home or to a lower level of care.

Kindred's long-term acute care hospitals strive to be a valuable partner for providers and payors alike and are committed to an innovative approach to managed care. Health plan partnerships are customized by product and can be built on DRG or negotiated per diem rates.

Visit [kindredmanagedcare.com](https://www.kindredmanagedcare.com) to request a conversation about how Kindred Hospital's level of service can help manage your critically complex patients.