

SNI Webinar Recap: Patient Portal Engagement During COVID-19

On October 21, 2020, SNI hosted the webinar, Patient Portal Engagement during COVID-19 with Jim Meyers as a part of a [series of offerings on telehealth](#). The webinar slides and recording are available [here](#). Below are key takeaways that emerged from the session.

Public health care systems (PHS) have historically low patient portal uptake, and many have attempted to increase enrollment with little success. With COVID-19, PHS are seeing new demand from patients and providers to use the portal as a "one stop shop" for virtual care.

Strategies to Increase Patient Portal Engagement:



Engage Patients and Providers

Survey patients and providers about their top priorities to build a portal that is responsive to users' needs.

PHS identified the top functionalities providers and patients would want for the portal:

1. View lab results
2. View and schedule appointments
3. Secure message/e-mail
4. Request medication refills
5. Connect with video visit



Break Down Digital Barriers

People with limited access to technology can still access the portal through smartphones, library computers, or by designating proxy access to a trusted friend or family member.



Build a Strategic Governance Structure

Senior leadership buy-in and a dedicated action team increases accountability and prioritization of the portal.

PHS are using different governance structures to embed new Patient Portal Oversight Teams:

- 64% Within the IT Department
- 27% No plans for a Patient Portal Oversight Team
- 9% Within a (new) Virtual Health Department



Activate New Portal Functions

Emerging portal functions to boost engagement include flu vaccine reminders, pre-visit check-in and screening, COVID-positive patient education, adolescent portal use, and behavioral health integration.



Steal Shamelessly

See our [Playbook of Resources](#) for implementation guides, case studies, videos, and communications materials on patient portal engagement.

"Once we get patients in the digital front door they see that there are so many tools they can use to keep track of their health. It's really the foundation for our health system and where we do a lot of our work around patient engagement."

—Dr. Anshu Abhat, Internist & Patient Portal Team Leader, LA DHS