

Reducing Emergency Department Readmissions and Costs Through Automated Care Interactions



THE NEED

Spectrum Health is the largest health system in Michigan, employing 31,000 employees across 15 hospitals and 150 ambulatory sites. With more than 200,000 adult emergency department (ED) visits annually, Spectrum Health knows from experience that many patients will likely need additional care in the weeks after their ED visit. **These patients often fall into two categories:**

- Patients who lack home support to follow through on their care plan
- Patients who have a change in symptoms during the weeks following the ED visit but are unsure if their experience is cause for concern

With the health system's geographical reach and population rapidly expanding, it needed a way to scale their care teams to match demand, while also improving patient ED outcomes critical to its role as an Accountable Care Organization.

THE PROGRAM

Spectrum Health deployed Amwell's automated ED follow-up program, which provides patients with a virtual companion that performs frequent, automated, chat-based, empathetic check-ins, to help care teams catch problems earlier and intervene sooner.



MEET JAMES: "James" is a Spectrum Health patient who resides in adult foster care. Just two months after a six-day inpatient admission for a leg infection, James received IV antibiotics at a Spectrum ED. After this most recent ED visit, James was enrolled in the automated ED discharge program. Three days post ED visit, James reported several barriers to obtaining the pills he needed to finish his course of antibiotics, including that his foster care home was not able to provide the support he needed. This automated care interaction was escalated to a nurse care manager. The nurse care manager connected him with a community organization that helped him obtain the medication. The care manager also looped in James' sister to help with his housing situation. And when the patient's symptoms continued without improvement, the care manager arranged a next-day primary care appointment.

THE OUTCOMES

After one year of using Amwell's ED discharge program, Spectrum Health saw:

20k
PATIENTS
ENROLLED

5%
REDUCTION IN
ED READMISSIONS

\$1M
IN COST
SAVINGS

90%
PATIENT
SATISFACTION RATE

"There's just a ton of satisfaction for my nurses and social workers who are working with this program because they feel that they're being impactful and effective in every hour that they're working."

Tricia Baird, MD, FAAFP, MBA, Vice President, Care Coordination, Spectrum Health