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Identify – Intervene – Engage

## How Baystate Health thinks outside the box with Aerial InCircle™

An ICD-10 code is a perfect example of healthcare data. It's easily captured, discrete and structured. But, what good is an ICD-10 code—or any other healthcare data—if you don't do anything with it?

The explosion of healthcare data opens new opportunities to improve patients' health, but not if data points are collected just to be collected. To truly manage patient health, data must be action-oriented. It must reveal gaps in care so providers and patients together can work toward healthier behaviors and more effective interventions.

Sometimes, that means thinking outside the box. As Baystate Health is learning, even simple text messages and pictures can become valuable "data."

### Building collaboration through alignment

Baystate Health is a not-for-profit, integrated healthcare system serving over 800,000 people throughout western New England. Since August 2016, its Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine - High-Risk Pregnancy (MFM) - has used Medecision's Aerial InCircle app to better coordinate care for patients with gestational diabetes.

It all began when MFM nurses and nurse practitioners joined a focus group for TechSpring Innovation Center, a collaborative initiative between Baystate and Medecision that enables the development, testing and piloting of emerging technologies to improve health outcomes.

The nurses faced a straightforward, yet critically important challenge: getting patients' daily blood glucose readings—which are vital to care planning—easily, accurately and regularly.

Historically, patients did finger-stick tests 2-4 times each day at home and sent their blood sugar measurements by fax, patient portal or even unsecured email. MFM nurses spent hours on the phone chasing down missing test results.

“What the nurses really wanted was a more collaborative and patient-friendly approach to care management; a way to positively influence their patients' behavior with clear, timely data and communication.”





### Putting patients first

Too often, healthcare technology accommodates provider workflows, but overlooks the patients at the heart of it all. The MFM nurses, in partnership with TechSpring and Medecision, realized that raising the bar on quality care requires more than just provider teamwork and efficiency. A nurse practitioner championed the idea that solutions have to be useful to and work for patients as well.

They looked to target a meaningful opportunity to implement a patient-centered care management process by opting to pilot test a communication solution built around Aerial InCircle's user-friendly text messages.

Patients diagnosed with gestational diabetes and referred to MFM typically sit down with a nurse manager to discuss their conditions. They receive an informational packet during that initial visit that describes how and when to test their blood sugars. Today, they're also told to send the results to their entire care team simply by snapping a picture of them and sending it via InCircle group text.

A sheet in the information packet provided to each patient explains the app and how to log on. In addition, a TechSpring staff member calls patients a day or two after their initial visit to assist and answer any questions. This process of aligning patient needs with clinical workflows has been a key to the pilot program's success.

### Strengthening care coordination

While the project started as a way to streamline the process of getting blood sugar data, the team now knows it's really about strengthening patient conversations. Taking measures to improve care coordination in a personal way provided nurses access to direct communication with patients in a collaborative non-evasive environment. The concept of data has taken on new meaning as MFM nurses use texts to guide patient care and influence patient behaviors in real time. Some examples include:

- "You do have elevations this week. Can you increase your testing back to 4 x day? We just want to make sure we are not missing anything."
- "Your fastings are creeping up a little. Are you doing anything different the night before? Eating a snack? I will give these to Kathy to review and get back to you later today."

### Patients, too, now find InCircle a convenient way to reach their providers. Here's one recent exchange:

- "I'm sorry I just had my appointment and forgot to ask about scaling back checking sugars to 2x/day. Can I relay this question now? He seemed to think they were fine and to continue diet control. - K
- Hello K - We will have you plan on keeping your appointment tomorrow with Dr. P. He will review your blood sugars and let you know his thoughts about cutting your testing back to 2 x day."



### Delivering real value

It takes human-centered technology design to create patient-centered care. Some of Baystate's MFM patients validate this belief in their reviews of InCircle:

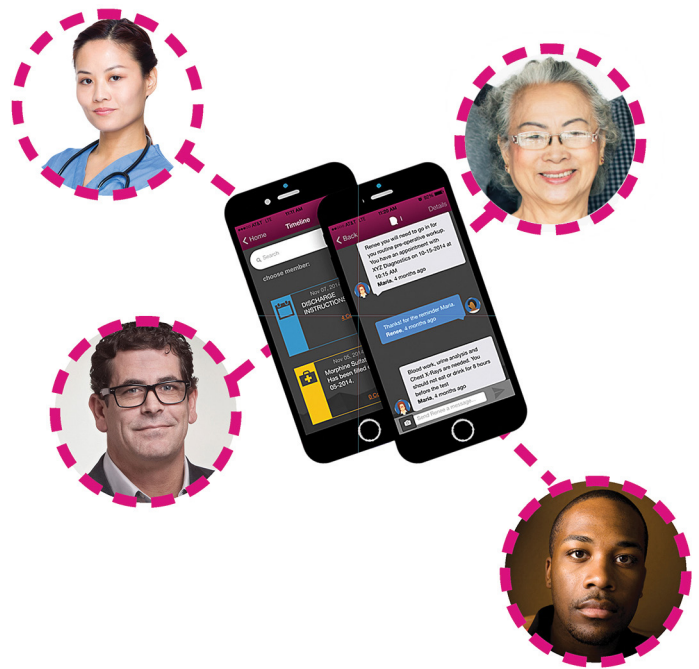
- "Much easier than calling with questions and concerns. They respond promptly and I can check at my convenience rather than disrupting my work day."
- "More convenient than a secure website."
- "I love the easy communication and the fact that I don't have to go to the clinic as often, or make as many phone calls."

The Baystate InCircle pilot program illustrates how hospitals and health systems that address their workflow demands by meeting their patients' needs can also improve patient engagement and experience. Baystate stepped outside the box to recognize that "data" doesn't always have to be discrete or structured to improve the quality of care. It just needs to provide real-time, actionable information that drives effective intervention.

**The result is true value for both patients and providers.**

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