



Actionable strategies for home infusion

4 Greatest challenges

in home infusion (and how to tackle them)

Home infusion providers play a crucial role in keeping patients safe and helping to deliver life-saving medication—an often-undervalued healthcare sector that has played a significant role in the care delivery evolution.

The recent shift of care being delivered to the home is the result of several factors:

- **The pandemic has increased demand for treatment in the home.**
- **Patients prefer being treated in the comfort of their homes.**
- **The home is the safest and lowest cost site of care.**
- **Digital health technologies are paving the way for care in the home.**
- **The adoption of telehealth has made care more accessible.**



With hospitals experiencing capacity issues, they're recognizing the value of home infusion providers to free up beds. The spotlight is now on home infusion and stakeholders are starting to understand the benefits of this sector of care—which is exciting for home infusion pharmacies and the patients they serve.

While it seems that home infusion providers have only recently gained the spotlight in home-based care, the truth is they've been leading this evolution for years. These providers have recognized that care in the home is more convenient, it results in more positive outcomes with patients being empowered to take part in their care journey, and it increases patient satisfaction.





Home infusion is growing rapidly, but it's not immune to the challenges that face home-based care.

The good news is technology can help care teams, partners, patients and their families seamlessly connect and collaborate—replacing the burden of phone tag, paper-based workflows, and delayed care with a convenient solution that offers instant communication and collaboration—all in one platform.

In this eBook, we discuss **4** of home infusion's greatest challenges and how technology can provide solutions.

1.

Staffing shortages

While there are more patients being referred to home infusion, there is also a shortage of staff to take care of them. How do you do more with less?

Staff is your number-one asset. If they're not happy, then it's difficult to satisfy patients and referral partners. Burnt out staff are less productive and less engaged, and as a result, patient care is impacted. The ideal solution is to hire more staff. When that can't happen, the next best thing is to create more time for the staff you already have.

When onboarding patients, many home infusion providers rely heavily on email, phone calls, and disparate applications that don't integrate with pharmacy dispensing systems. Using a digital tool that puts all communication in one platform and having those threads go into the system of record—eliminating the need for duplicate entry in two systems—makes everyone's lives easier.

Many home infusion providers also have dedicated “fax wranglers” who manage paper coming into the organization and scan it into the system. Having solutions that eliminate the need for paper by electronically sending forms, capturing eSignatures from patients, caregivers or providers, and transferring it to the pharmacy system with the click of a button saves a significant amount of time.

Home infusion staff also often spend hours on the phone managing administrative tasks. By reducing this burden with a platform that allows patients to input data themselves and do the work for your staff, you can repurpose time for your pharmacy team to take on more patients and to focus on the most valuable activities that will drive growth.

How technology can help:

- Reduced emails to coordinate patient onboarding with Patient Discussion Groups
- Decreased time to start therapy
- Less chasing paper with eSignatures
- Accelerated billing and improved cash flow
- Repurposed staff time for higher value-add activities

2.

Retaining top talent

Retention of staff is one of the top challenges always on the minds of business leaders, as there's nothing more expensive than employee churn. So how do you retain staff you already have?

First, having the right company culture from the top down is key to ensuring employees stay happy. Everyone wants to feel like they're doing meaningful work and that they're appreciated.

Another thing to consider is making sure your teams have what they need to be successful. With the right tools, staff can end their day feeling satisfied. But when tools are disjointed, fail to integrate with each other, and keep data from flowing seamlessly, it can be hard to manage.

With all communication and documentation in one platform, staff knows what's going on with the patient, care history, and their next role in the treatment journey. Data must be easily accessible so each member of the care team knows what needs to happen and when. This approach results in less frustrated staff who feel like their happiness is a top priority.

How technology can help:

- Reduced non-clinical workloads
- Tighter communication
- Enhanced remote clinical support
- Less burden for on-call staff due to patient access to education
- Improved care coordination
- More satisfied clinicians and patients
- Elimination of multiple systems

3.

Meeting higher expectations

Care delivery in the home has been on the rise for years, but the pandemic fast-tracked the need for remote capabilities in every facet of life—especially healthcare. When companies in almost every industry went remote during COVID-19, they quickly realized the benefits their employees experienced when working from the comforts of home. They had a better quality of life and it was more cost effective for employers.

Just like ordering food, getting a taxi, accessing your bank account, or video chatting with a friend, the desire for convenience has accelerated since the pandemic began. As these expectations for instant gratification and accessibility continue, it's also being translated to healthcare. Consumerism has caught up to our industry, and patients now expect everything to be easy—including access to care, patient support, and treatment information.

With the progression of digital health technology, the rising demand for treatment in the home, and patients' growing expectations for remote care, providers will need to meet these expectations. Digital tools can remove the friction that's common in many healthcare experiences. And while it can't do everything, it can ease the administrative burden that distracts clinicians from focusing on quality care.

How technology can help:

- Better collaboration
- Enhanced remote clinical support
- Reduced unscheduled visits
- Less patient concerns
- Quicker billing
- More satisfied clinicians and patients
- Maintained safety of team and patients

84% of patients had a virtual care visit for the first time during COVID.

In 2019, approximately 11% of consumers used telehealth—compared to now **76%**

90% of surveyed patients agreed that telemedicine or digital health would help them adhere to their care plans.

4.

Satisfying referral sources

It's a competitive landscape for home infusion providers. And just like patient expectations have shifted, so have those of referral sources. How can you stand out?

For more local, regional providers, competing with national providers can seem impossible. But if you can't beat them on size, you can focus on beating them on service. Delivering superior care can make a significant difference to referral sources.

One of the most important things to referral sources is getting patients started as quickly as possible—faster than your competitors. To do that, it becomes a race of collecting information from the patient, the payor, and physicians, then disseminating it, processing it, and getting that patient to the start of care. This is no easy feat—especially with only phone, email, and fax at your disposal.

Referral sources also like to know that patients are doing better under your care compared to competitors. You can showcase this with outcomes data collected directly from the patient, which can show tolerance to therapy, side effects they may be having, etc. When patients are more satisfied, it gets back to the discharge planner.

Keep in mind patients also complain back to referral sources about their care. That voice is going to matter more than ever because there are more choices than ever.

How technology can help:

- Improved care coordination and collaboration
- Faster patient onboarding
- Enhanced remote clinical support and instant help
- Increased patient confidence with access to education
- Better clarity with visit scheduling and delivery coordination
- More patient and caregiver satisfaction with streamlined communication

Message Center

This center gives patients, family caregivers, and care teams a quick and secure way to communicate with each other in real time to discuss plans of care and address issues or concerns. This enhanced communication increases transparency, improves patient and family engagement, and helps ensure quality and continuity of care.

- Secure instant messaging with patients, family caregivers, staff, and even partners in groups or individually
- Various capabilities through image sharing, video chat, broadcast messages, patient discussion groups, and tagging progress notes back to the EHR with one click
- Customized clinical coverage through on-call message routing, which allows the patient message to be routed directly to on-call nurses (if that nurse does not answer, it will be escalated to manager)
- Automatic translation to preferred language through Google Translate integration
- Improved internal communications from intake to billing, while adding and dropping members in the PDG chat as the care progresses
- Tracked engagement through read receipts

Document Center

This center supports secure digital signatures instantly through app-less technology.

- Accelerated billing, as some signatures are needed to drop a claim
- Instant signature on an order via email or text to physicians
- Less of a burden on your team from spending time chasing paper signatures
- Real-time integration into the EHR
- No password or login required to sign

Forms Center

This center allows you to stay close to patients and collect structured data in between visits through a user-friendly forms builder. Create custom forms for all your information and data needs, including COVID-19 screenings, disease-specific statuses, state-specific requirements, and more.

- Unlimited forms can be created and sent to the patient and/or family at any time via text or email through app-less functionality
- Digital patient assessments and surveys
- Rehospitalization prevention through more regular status updates
- Improved patient satisfaction with more regular interactions
- Automatic attachment to the patient record

Education Center

This center provides patients and families with on-demand, digital access to customized educational materials any time from any device.

- Patients and families can stay closer to treatment plans
- Less operational lift for your organization
- Higher CAHPS scores due to patient and family caregivers receiving digital education

Why CitusHealth?



"I want as few people in my home as possible. I want you to do as much as you can digital health, because I don't want my mom to have this potential exposure to COVID, and I just don't have the time or the energy. I spend all of my energy taking care of my mom. So, how can you make this easier for us?"

Patient

"One of the biggest challenges we faced was an overwhelming amount of email. A single referral could bring as many as 10 emails per day to onboard one patient. We knew we had to advance our technology portfolio to reduce the negative impact this was having on both the staff and patient experience."

Erica Smith, *Director of Nursing, Intramed Plus*

"We were really at a tipping point of trying to figure out how to do all of these new things, keep doing what we're doing, and keep our staff? Because we need to make sure that our staff are happy, and that we're not overloading them while they're working. We're always asked to do more with less."

CitusHealth Customer, *Western U.S.*

"We had a system going where the nurses were emailing us everything. With Citus, we have a method that can easily be transferred into our billing system and integrated into a progress note."

Rachel Gallagher, *Pharmacy Manager, PromptCare*

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