

Banner Health launches virtual waiting rooms for telehealth and in-person doctor appointments

Conversational mobile technology allows patients to safely access care



PHOENIX (May 14, 2020) -- As part of reimagining the health care delivery experience in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Banner Health has launched a next-generation virtual waiting room across its network of 300 clinics that serve more than one million patients throughout Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming.

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The LifeLink mobile chatbots interact with Banner patients in a conversational style to help complete digitized intake forms, provide education and enable remote check-in capabilities for all telehealth and in-person physician office visits.

“The health care industry must rapidly innovate to ensure all patients can see their doctors again through safe, private and convenient channels,” said Jeff Johnson, Banner vice president of digital business. “The traditional patient

experience of walking into an office, filling out paper forms, reading instructions and then waiting for an exam room had to change. LifeLink chatbots have already helped hundreds of thousands of Banner patients navigate emergency room visits, so the concept of digitizing regular doctor appointment visits with a mobile, virtual waiting room chatbot assistant was a natural extension of the technology.”

The LifeLink chatbots welcome patients for telehealth virtual and in-person visits with primary care physicians and specialists. The chatbots interact with patients on their mobile device or computer using automated conversational messaging to remotely accomplish a number of tasks that were previously handled in-person, including:

- Intake form completion and approvals
- Telehealth technology instructions
- Informing patients when to go directly to their exam rooms.

“The COVID-19 pandemic requires an entirely different level of thinking when it comes to providing routine patient services,” noted Greg Johnsen, CEO at LifeLink. “Like the changes we are seeing in retail, health care providers need to adapt, and the waiting room experience is one area that will need to change. We take great pride in knowing that LifeLink chatbots are providing peace of mind and convenience for patients that need to see their doctors.”

While COVID-19 social distancing guidelines are driving rapid innovation, conversational technology is also delivering significant benefits. At Banner Health, a previous intake automation initiative that focused on Medicare Annual Wellness Visit appointments for seniors resulted in a 70-percent reduction in appointment cancellations.

“One of the key benefits of this chatbot technology is the ease of use,” added Johnson. “Interactions that use natural language eliminate the need for user training and there are no apps or passwords required so it’s simple for patients to interact with us securely, on any device. We have seen high engagement rates as a result.”

About Banner Health

As one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country, Banner Health is committed to ensuring all Banner locations are a safe place for care. Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals and an array of other services, including: Banner Imaging, Banner Telehealth and Banner Urgent Care. Team members are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of patients, be it a routine

checkup, elective surgery or an urgent health service. Waiting room and employee workstation layouts maintain proper social distancing; screenings are conducted at hospital entrances to verify that all employees and visitors are well; and, all Banner physicians are equipped to visit patients remotely. Learn more about Banner's commitment to safety at bannerhealth.com/safecare.

<http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/virtualwaitingroom>