

EBOOK

# 5 Reasons Why Healthcare Organizations Are Creating Digital Front Doors

Transforming the Patient and Member Experience at Pace with Hitachi Solutions and Microsoft



# Creating a digital front door to improve **consumer access and engagement**

Healthcare providers and payors are developing digital front doors to create a better patient and member experience, as well as increase their market competitiveness.

Digital front doors provide single-point access to a wide array of services, enabling patients and members to use self-service capabilities to complete medical and insurance-related tasks. They also link healthcare teams to collaborate on care and operational processes, improving service and patient outcomes.

The good news is that 55 percent of healthcare organizations have already made progress in creating a digital front door, while another 45 percent are setting strategy.<sup>1</sup>

If you've moved ahead, you can build on what you have. If you haven't begun, now is the time to start. This eBook will help you understand the business opportunities with developing a digital front door. It will also help you craft a winning strategy and use technology to engage consumers and optimize critical business processes.

Hitachi Solutions and Microsoft have partnered with healthcare organizations to develop digital front doors to engage consumers, improve clinician productivity, and deliver better outcomes for patients and members. With our iterative development processes, Microsoft cloud services, and no-code development platforms, organizations can reap rapid value for their investments and build capabilities over time.

## 5 reasons to create a digital front door

- **Increase** patient and member engagement and retention
- **Leverage** telehealth delivery to achieve strategic goals
- **Achieve** value-based outcomes for healthier patients and happier members
- **Improve** clinician and team productivity with digital workflow
- **Decrease** operational costs by automating processes

# Trends driving **digital front door** investment

Multiple industry trends are driving healthcare organizations' investments in developing digital front doors.

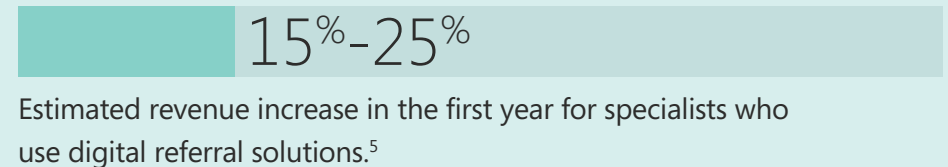
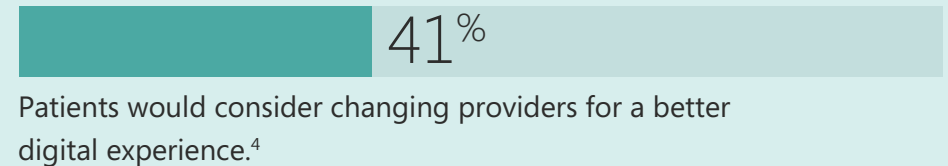
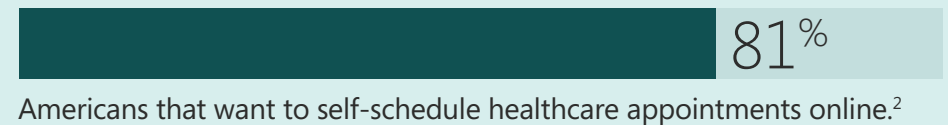
Patients and members want healthcare organizations to provide a digital experience that rivals what they experience in their personal lives. They're tired of initiating most interactions and bootstrapping fractured processes.

Digital front doors can also improve health access and equity. Patients can make and hold telehealth appointments on smartphones, removing barriers such as the need to take time off work or school, travel to appointments, or sit in crowded waiting rooms.

These services also support payors, clinicians, and operational staff, who have been pushed to their limits over the past two years. Digital processes streamline member and patient interactions, enabling staff to reduce document and data gathering and clicks, focusing on the work that really matters.

With integrated digital resources, payors and providers can work together to achieve value-based outcomes. Payors can push targeted messaging and reminders to members, helping them proactively schedule routine services, maximize benefits, and manage health conditions better. Providers can conduct proactive outreach, use nudges to prompt desired behaviors, and perform analytics on patient data and care notes.

## See how a digital front door accomplishes key business goals



# Healthcare is experiencing more competition, driving innovation

Developing digital front doors enable payors and providers to compete with a wider range of players in the healthcare market.

Amazon, CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart now all offer health clinics. Amazon has purchased primary care provider One Medical. Meanwhile, CVS and Walgreens have made home-healthcare acquisitions, aligning with the growing trend of having the home serve as the site of virtual or in-person care delivery.<sup>6</sup> With ongoing investments and acquisitions, healthcare and technology companies are seeking to deliver a continuously improving experience.

In addition, trends such as integrated patient data, telehealth, remote patient monitoring, digital therapeutics, and clinician workflow enable organizations to improve service delivery and enrich digital front door offerings.

Payors and providers can access industry innovation by building and integrating new services into their digital front door. With low-code/no-code platforms, they can deploy solutions such as self-service portals, chatbots, and virtual agents for members and patients, as well as mobile apps and automated workflow for clinicians.

So, how will your organization capitalize on digital front doors? Let's look at five significant opportunities.



*Digital front door investments soared to \$2.5 billion in 2022, from \$1.9 billion in 2021.<sup>7</sup>*

# Capture a world of digital front door **opportunities**

The opportunities for digitizing healthcare include:

- Offering online insurance plans, provider directories, and education resources
- Digitizing scheduling and patient onboarding/intake forms
- Providing digital symptom checkers, telehealth services, and referrals
- Offering online payments
- Streamlining clinician-patient communications with text updates and asynchronous messaging
- Creating a living health history



Other tech includes virtual assistants, chatbots, virtual waiting rooms, and text- and email-based surveys.

## Digital front doors are unique to every organization

They reflect each organization's:

- Business and service delivery model
- Aspirations for the consumer experience
- Operations
- Current digital capabilities
- Security requirements

The goal is not to digitize all services, but to fully integrate digital and physical services to provide consumers with greater choice and voice in how they use them.

**77%** of healthcare organizations are investing in technology to win new customers.<sup>8</sup>

# Increase patient and member **engagement** and **retention**

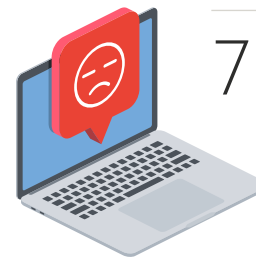
Like other industries, healthcare organizations are transforming the patient and member experience. They're doing so to improve consumer engagement and satisfaction and retain patients and members.

Patients and members want the same personalization, ease-of-use, and convenience they receive with other services, like Amazon, Apple Pay, and even OpenTable. They want to seamlessly schedule services, obtain referrals, communicate with caregivers, track their health conditions, and pay for bills. Today, this is a fractured experience for people, involving a revolving door of phone tag, emails, letters, and waiting. With a digital front door, individuals can proactively initiate many services and complete them in a single interaction, such as scheduling a new appointment.

Digital front doors for healthcare providers provide the ultimate personalized experience: care records, service, and messaging that is truly one-to-one. Patients gain greater autonomy in managing their own care, while care staff can collaborate more easily on diagnosing and treating patients' health conditions.

Health plans typically have a more transactional relationship with members. Digital front doors enable them to develop deeper connections, automate the delivery of policy documentation and updates, and motivate desired behaviors.

For example, insurers can offer benefits, such as gym discounts, to encourage consumers to adopt healthy new behaviors. They also can encourage members to use services, such as annual exams, improving member wellness and enabling earlier detection of health conditions.



71% Of US consumers who reported experiencing frustration with accessing healthcare services in 2021.<sup>9</sup>

**Healthcare organizations are moving to a proactive outreach model**



# Leverage telehealth delivery to achieve key goals

Patients value telehealth for its convenience, with the ability to attend appointments on any device: at home, on the go, or even while traveling. It's not surprising that 88 percent of US healthcare consumers want to continue using the telehealth services they have become accustomed to accessing during the pandemic.<sup>10</sup>

Telehealth services connect patients and caregivers to improve care delivery and outcomes. Patients are more likely to keep virtual appointments than in-person ones,<sup>11</sup> as long as they receive appointment reminders.<sup>12</sup> They can freely share personal information, including mental health challenges, in the privacy of their own homes. And they're more likely to comply with treatment regimens, such as taking medication.<sup>13</sup>

Providers can use telehealth to work more efficiently, seeing more patients and driving more revenues. Clinicians can triage patient needs virtually, reducing unnecessary visits to urgent care centers and emergency rooms.

While research on the benefits of widespread telehealth is in its infancy, increasing patient access, appointment attendance, and compliance with treatment regimens could ultimately decrease payor costs.

*\$106 billion of current U.S. healthcare spend could be virtualized by 2023.<sup>14</sup>*

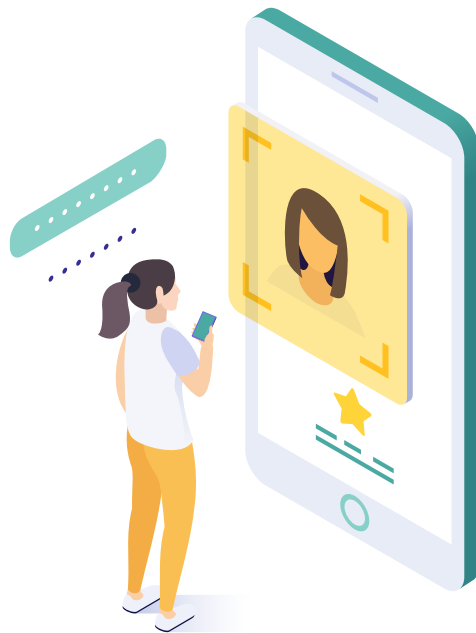


# Achieve **value-based outcomes** for healthier patients and happier members

The U.S. healthcare industry is transitioning away from fee-for-service cost models to value-based care models, where providers are paid more when they achieve better patient outcomes. For example, clinicians who identify patient conditions early can treat them more effectively and may avoid expensive tests and procedures. Those who can improve patient compliance with treatment regimens may be able to reduce hospital admittances or readmissions.

In a value-based care model, teams and organizations collaborate to deliver and improve patient care and receive reimbursement in a variety of ways. They may participate in accountable care organizations to serve Medicare patients, receive bundled or capitated payments, or manage pre-set budgets for care.<sup>15</sup>

Many of these models involve careful planning and effective risk management to ensure providers receive incentives and avoid the downside of soaring delivery costs.



Organizations can achieve better outcomes multiple ways. Here are just a few:

- Sharing patient data across providers to improve collaboration on treatment plans
- Using analytics to improve population planning and care protocols
- Improving patient health, with offerings such as telehealth, translators, multi-lingual websites, wearables, remote monitoring of health conditions, and more
- Using telehealth to support regular mental health care treatment and enable patients to more easily refill their prescriptions

*40.9 percent of US healthcare payments are now value-based.<sup>16</sup>*



# Improve clinician and team productivity with **digital workflow**

Electronic healthcare records (EHRs) and digital desktops have done much to empower clinicians by providing follow-me access to patient data and tools. Yet, clinicians still spend much of their time on paperwork, whether it is completing patient visit documentation for billing, submitting referral paperwork, faxing in prescription requests, or more. Their staff also play phone tag with patients, who typically expect a same-day or next-day response.

Digital front doors provide clinicians with greater flexibility and automated processes. Pre-visit data, such as patient self-diagnoses, is integrated into EHRs. Physicians can automatically refill prescriptions online, routing them to pharmacies patients have designated in their profile. And they can move most patient Q&A online with asynchronous messaging, saving time every workday.

Providing clinicians with better data and tools enable staff to see more patients while preventing burnout. That is especially important because there is a growing shortage of healthcare workers. Hospitals have reported losing 105,000 employees since the beginning of the pandemic,<sup>17</sup> and experts predict widespread shortages of nurses and healthcare workers over the next decade.<sup>18</sup> Enabling clinicians to easily access EHRs as they move across locations, quickly review patient data, and complete charting duties can help them serve more patients.



# Decrease operational costs by automating processes

Digital front doors link both front-office and back-office staff to deliver exceptional service and automate manual tasks. Artificial intelligence (AI) can help prioritize work with nudges, while redesigned processes reduce the number of clicks required to complete tasks.

## Front-office staff

### Now

- Receive high call volumes, predominantly for visit scheduling.
- Process paperwork onsite, including patient onboarding documents, visit check-ins, and payments.

### Tomorrow

- Patients receive texts and are guided through completing onboarding documents and visit check-ins online.
- Front-desk staff can easily monitor who has completed paperwork and paid visit fees.
- Staff can focus on greeting all patients and serving those who still need check-in assistance.

## Contact center staff

### Now

- Provide a standard service experience.
- Bootstrap platforms and processes to serve customers.
- Offer generic upsell/cross-sell pitches.

### Tomorrow

- Use AI to anticipate patient or member requests and predict their intent.
- Leverage online collaboration platforms to share information about these customers, improving service.
- Offer incentives or new services to improve patient or member loyalty and drive revenues.

## Back-office staff

### Now

- Mail policy documents, education, and other literature.
- Oversee large-scale billing and invoicing operations.

### Tomorrow

- Reduce mailings with self-serve patient and member access to online resources.
- Digitize billing and payments, reducing processing costs.
- By realizing faster payment revenues, teams can potentially improve organization working capital.

# Envisioning the digital healthcare experience with **Hitachi Solutions and Microsoft**

Hitachi Solutions helps healthcare organizations including insurers, hospitals, medical groups, and more develop digital front door strategies with Microsoft technology. With our healthcare expertise and strategic relationship with Microsoft, we can help you transform customer-facing, clinician, and back-of-fice processes.

Hitachi Solutions helps you set strategy for your digital front door and achieve it through obtainable wins. We work to understand your desired user experience, business goals, and technology requirements, using this information to craft a business case and roadmap.

Next, we'll use Microsoft technology, collaborative user experience design workshops, and design sprints to begin building new capabilities. You'll achieve rapid value, providing your staff with better data visibility and tools.



**Transform your business processes with Microsoft Dynamics 365**, gaining intelligent customer relationship management (CRM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) applications that work seamlessly together in the cloud.



**Improve your contact center service** with Microsoft Digital Contact Center Platform, which uses conversational AI, security, and automation to improve patient and member interactions. With optimized processes, you'll also be able to acquire and manage more customers, driving revenue.



**Use Microsoft Power Platform** to develop low-code/no-code business applications that automate processes and workflows. Any team member can create an application, making it easy to enhance capabilities without IT support. You'll be able to collect data faster, surface real-time insights, enable users to make more informed decisions, and improve communications and collaboration.

# Build your digital front door to reap more value

Healthcare organizations are building and extending their digital front door to meet patient and member needs, equip clinicians and staff with better data and processes, and achieve better outcomes.

There is a wealth of opportunity to anticipate and meet patient needs, use insights to develop products and services, and optimize processes at your organization.

## Build or extend your digital front door today

- **Contact** [a Hitachi Solutions digital healthcare expert](#)
- **Learn more** about [how healthcare organizations are using digital front doors](#)
- **Read our article** [Digital Front Door: Improving Patient Experiences in 2022](#)
- **Email us at** [NA.Marketing@hitachisolutions.com](mailto:NA.Marketing@hitachisolutions.com)

<sup>1</sup> Becker's Health IT  
<sup>2</sup> Medical Economics  
<sup>3</sup> MHealthIntelligence  
<sup>4</sup> Hitachi Solutions  
<sup>5</sup> Healthcare Finance

<sup>6</sup> Fierce Healthcare  
<sup>7</sup> Health Journalism  
<sup>8</sup> Telemedicine and e-Health  
<sup>9</sup> Redpoint Global Survey  
<sup>10</sup> Healthcare Finance News

<sup>11</sup> Liebert Publications  
<sup>12</sup> DocASAP  
<sup>13</sup> National Library of Medicine  
<sup>14</sup> Healthcare Dive  
<sup>15</sup> Oak Street Health

<sup>16</sup> RevCycle Intelligence  
<sup>17</sup> American Hospital Association  
<sup>18</sup> Becker's Hospital Review  
<sup>19</sup> Mobius MD