

Automating the Business of Healthcare for Patients and Providers Transcript

To begin, can you tell us about CommerceHealthcare®? What should listeners know about your organization and the financial partners it services?

CommerceHealthcare® solutions, which are offered by Commerce Bank, are really about automating the business of healthcare for both the patient and the provider. There's a lot of friction in healthcare today, so we've tried to uniquely position ourselves by using the core of our banking platform to be as efficient as possible and provide the technology to providers to use in whatever capacity they see fit.

Banking has been good at payments for a long time and Commerce specifically has invested significant time, effort and capital into providing this same platform for healthcare. So if we're talking about patient financing, remittance receivables, accounts payable or patient refunds, we play a hand in all the various capacities that healthcare organizations to move money around. In the traditional landscape of healthcare, automation has been a key initiative, and being a payments bank, we've been well-positioned to help providers drive the money flow between providers and payors, patients and providers and anywhere in between.

How do your payment providers leverage technology for financial engagement with patients? How do you support them in these efforts?

Providers today are leveraging technology (like text-to-pay, online bill pay and self-service options such as scheduling, etc.) to make the patient engagement as easy as possible and meet them where it is convenient for the patient, not the provider. With consumer-centric financial strategies on the rise, hospitals must be nimble in their approach with the patients. We must ask, how are providers driving the patients to their facility while, more importantly, keeping them satisfied and life-long patients of the system while also trying to deliver on a collection process that is more efficient and very consumer friendly.

With that in mind, hospitals are making significant investments in technology infrastructure and process redesign in the pursuit of that aim. And we're supporting them by being technology agnostic. Our key strategy is to integrate into those existing technology investments that otherwise would remain untapped, opposed to being an additional technology in itself. We are simultaneously delivering untapped value and simplifying workflow processes, all while minimizing the addition to the technology stack that needs to be maintained by the provider. One item that is pressing today in healthcare are the regulations and laws. For example, upfront cost estimates or price transparency. This is a big push today because patients want to know what it's going to cost them before they have their service. One example of leveraging the technology for financial engagement as it relates to this is a very consumer-friendly approach that involves broadening the range of financing options available to help patients manage their cost of care. Doing so helps customize to individuals' needs and ensures the maximum number of patients obtain the clinical and financial care they need.

What are the prominent trends in patient payments you're seeing? What do these trends mean for the future and how are you helping financial partners prepare for that future?

Electronic, mobile and real time payments. How do most Americans pay for things today? Onlinethat's our core business as a healthcare bank....issuing and accepting payments. We automate payments and reconciliation for our financial partners by leveraging the appropriate vehicles and

payment rails for any type of payment including patient payments and receivables. So for example, leveraging the use of text message outreach to increase the patient financial engagement and payment options, including patient financing. If I use myself as an example, with three kids and a day job, I pay my bills online at night after everyone gets to bed. I don't want to have to pick up the phone and make any sort of payment and I'm not unique in this way. Just look at how much our society is on their phones. If we can meet patients where they want to be and empower them with the tools and means to pay, we feel that we're contributing to the betterment of the patient financial experience.

Finally, the trend in patient payments has changed drastically in the last decade. The traditional way of sending bills and waiting until the patient calls or sends you a check is over. Also, with the rise in high deductible health plans, patient self-pay is becoming a higher percentage, so there's a lot more focus on this today. When I started in healthcare, the self-pay payor mix was typically 2-3% and now it can be as high as 7 or 8%. Healthcare has been archaic in the way they collect money. Nobody wants paper anymore. As a bank, we know how consumers want to pay, so we're taking that data and helping healthcare providers think more detailed in their approach to engaging with the patient mindset.

What have been the results of your work with providers, both for the organizations themselves and for their patients?

For providers — we've been able to streamline and automate a lot of workflows leveraging basic payment technology (not fancy AI or robotic process automation) which in turn frees up much needed staff capacity. With our payments technology and financial partners, we've seen a significant increase in collections by leveraging forms of mobile payment methods. A lot of hospitals don't have a great platform with detailed information on what the patient owes, so using our technology can provide an increase in the patient payments when they don't rely on the patient statement.

For patients – it creates a much more convenient and faster way to receive funds or make manageable payments for their out-of-pocket costs. It helps remove the financial unknown of receiving medical care and provides an additional service/option for them to use from the provider. If you read anything about healthcare, medical debt is a common theme. I've seen so many recent studies and trends with Americans delaying care due to it being unaffordable. Americans in turn are getting a lot sicker by skipping necessary procedures or delaying paying for medication due to cost. We like to think we're helping by providing measurable solutions and giving patients the dignity to know they have a way to pay their medical bills.