

# A Safe Start to Every Office Visit

Practices of all kinds are using healow CHECK-IN™ to maintain continuity of care to patients while meeting their expectations for convenience and safety.

### How healow CHECK-IN offers greater convenience and safety

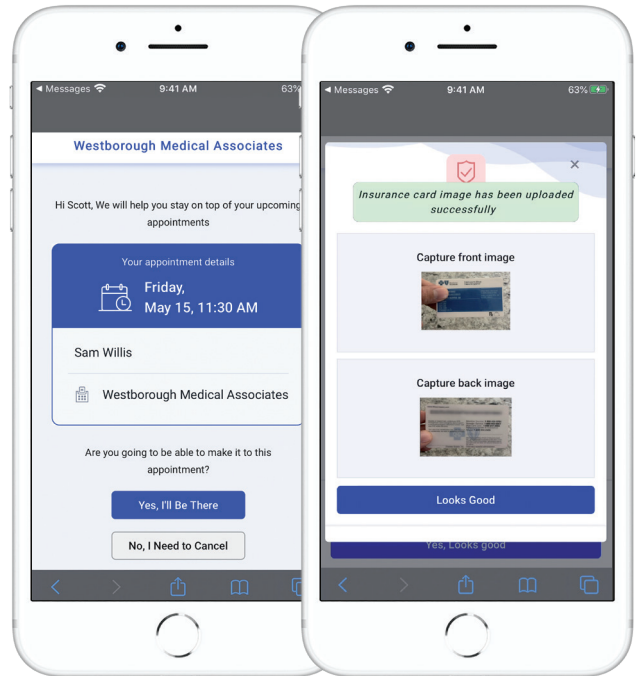
The first rule of any medical practice is the same one that physicians recite in the Hippocratic Oath: First, do no harm. With the COVID-19 pandemic having made such a profound impact on medical practices during the last year, putting safety first is now standard in every aspect of the patient's visit and treatment.

Practices nationwide have been implementing solutions to make it easier for patients to check in for their appointments, provide the information their doctors need, and reduce or eliminate the time they used to spend in a waiting room.

### A fresh start for two practices

Best Start Pediatric Clinic, a small practice in Springdale, Arkansas, wanted to make it easy for patients to observe social distancing protocols without hampering the way they deliver care.

“One of our biggest challenges was that we typically would have everyone come into the clinic, check in at the front desk, and wait in the waiting room, which is typical of most practices,” said Dr. Susan Averitt, pediatrician and owner. “We had to reevaluate the way that we scheduled appointments so that the healthy children that were here for check-ups wouldn't be here at the same time as the sick children. We also wanted to prevent patients from coming in, checking in at the front desk, and waiting in the waiting room.”



Shown above are two smartphone screens displaying two steps of the contactless check-in process.

“Once patients were able to check themselves in, they were able to save copies of their insurance cards for us directly through the check-in process. We then added healow Pay™, and that enabled us to collect copays from the patients while they were in the check-in process.”

— Susan Averitt, MD



Even something as severe as patients needing to be scoped for forms of hoarseness or difficulty swallowing would be something that through the televisits they might be able to treat without the scope until they were physically able to get the patient into the office.

— Stacey Locker, executive director, ENT and Allergy Specialists

Stacey Locker, executive director at ENT and Allergy Specialists — with three locations and 14 providers in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area — said she and her colleagues not only shared the goal of improving safety but also faced the challenge of reducing paperwork.

Locker said that new patients would be given a packet of information that could be 10 pages long, including lengthy questionnaires. Once the pandemic struck, it was neither practical nor desirable to have patients filling out lots of paperwork at the office.

### **healow CHECK-IN makes a difference**

healow CHECK-IN has helped practices meet their goals.

“Once patients were able to check themselves in,” Dr. Averitt said, “they were able to save copies of their insurance cards for us directly through the check-in process. We then added healow Pay, and that enabled us to collect copays from the patients while they were in the check-in process, so they didn’t have to go to the front desk, and the front desk staff did not have to go into the patient’s room after they checked in to get their copy or their insurance information.”

For ENT & Allergy Specialists, contactless check-in has saved lots of time.

“We’ve been able to have the patients fill out information online, through their text messages,” Locker said, “and they were able to just input

that information into the chart. So, once the patient comes into the office, there’s less contact with that patient.”

Locker said that while a lot of patients had questions at first, they are generally tech-savvy and are now more than willing to complete the entire check-in process electronically.

“Honestly, they prefer to do that with everything going on right now with COVID-19,” she added.

### **Promoting continuity of care**

Locker said her practice sees patients for everything from simple earaches and nosebleeds to conditions that require scoping and testing. Physicians have been able to meet patients’ needs for a broad range of conditions.

“Even something as severe as patients needing to be scoped for forms of hoarseness or difficult swallowing would be something that through the televisits they might be able to treat without the scope until they were physically able to get the patient into the office,” Locker said. “We would highly recommend contactless check-in.”

The safety aspect has been greatly increased now that our patients can check in from their cars,” Averitt said. “One thing that I think will happen going into the future is that even after the pandemic, people are really going to enjoy the aspect of checking in and waiting in their cars when they come to the doctor.”