

COVID-19

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# 7 Ways a Healthcare Collaboration Platform Can Assist in a Pandemic

tigerconnect 



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# Introduction

The rapid, global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic is testing the limits of modern healthcare in every way imaginable. While the ultimate containment of this coronavirus will require a clinical solution, the success of near-term efforts by governments, healthcare organizations, and frontline staff can often hinge on frequent, accurate, and real-time communication across both facilities and communities.

As with most crises, weak points are revealed after it is too late, and too many hospitals in the United States are fighting a 21st century outbreak using 20th century communication tools.

Fortunately, the past decade has seen the introduction of cloud-based, smartphone-centric, highly reliable healthcare communication platforms that can be deployed within hours regardless of an organization's size.

Whether your organization has an existing communication solution in place or you need a solution yesterday, this guide will illustrate seven proven ways that a secure, healthcare communication solution can be used to combat outbreaks like COVID-19.



# Before you **start...**

Secure, clinical communication is relatively new technology, so if you have a solution currently, you're ahead of the game. If your hospital doesn't have a formal solution in place, it's not too late, but to roll out quickly and effectively, your ideal solution should be:

- ✓ 100% cloud-based
- ✓ Proven reliability (99.99% uptime as a benchmark)
- ✓ Easy to deploy and use
- ✓ Enabled for group and broadcast messaging
- ✓ Automated by shift and role assignment
- ✓ Able to connect all facilities on one platform
- ✓ Set up for direct patient texting

With a solution in place, you'll want to focus on the critical workflows needed when handling potentially infected patients and exposed staff. Drawn from actual TigerConnect customers, the pages ahead detail specific COVID-19 use cases and workflows being used to expedite treatment and minimize exposure.



## Use Case 1

# Identify cases as early as possible

When dealing with a highly contagious and dangerous virus like COVID-19, patient handling is critical from the moment a person is identified as a potential case. Protocols can be initiated to utilize secure texting to a predefined group with patient name, symptoms, status, and recent history to ensure that all required staff has the same information in real-time, while keeping all PHI secure.

That predefined group can include staff from across the enterprise – nurses, physicians, specialists, supply chain, and even staff outside the hospital. It can include epidemiologists, ICU staff, ED charge nurses, front desk administrators, transport, primary care physicians, and rapid response teams specifically created to address potential COVID-19 cases.

Staff should be able to quickly and easily activate a predefined rapid response team. Equally important is the ability to form groups on the fly when unexpected circumstances require a coordinated response from seemingly disparate departments or individuals. These groups can include staff who need to effectively communicate and collaborate, including disease specialists who can be quickly added to a conversation, as well as any staff who may need to isolate.



## Use Case 2

# Forward and confirm lab results

Once the patient has been identified as a potential case, lab technicians can be notified via secure messaging to ensure the proper CDC protocol is followed and priority is given. Lab alerts from the EHR or lab information system can be automated and sent to specific individuals, roles, or teams the moment they are available, saving valuable time.

In addition to lab alerts, files, photos, or recorded video can be attached securely and sent or forwarded directly to physicians, where they are, to confirm the results. Staff can also engage physicians in live video sessions in situations where a more complex conversation is needed.

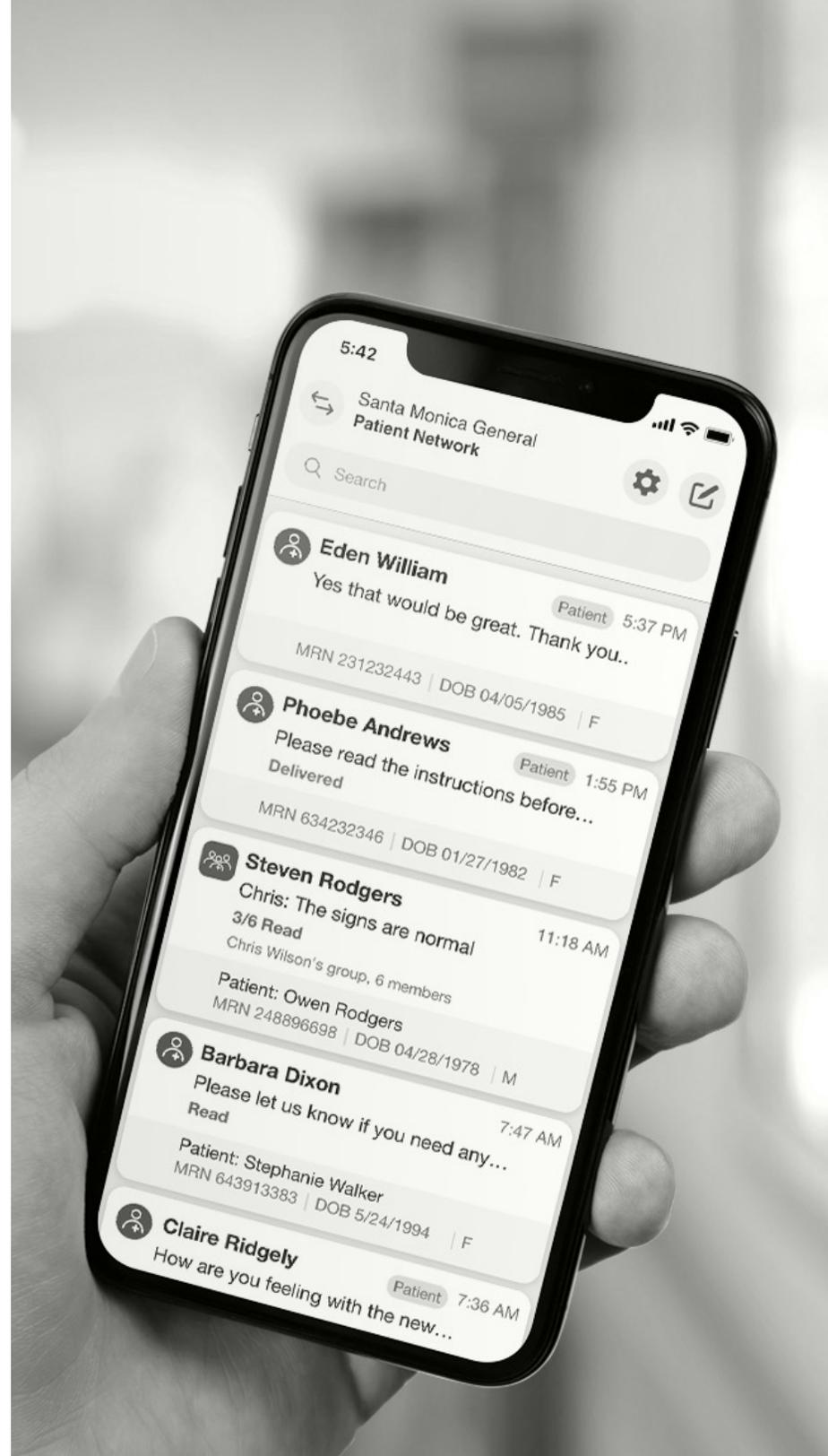


## Use Case 3

# Relay patient diagnosis and next steps

Once positive confirmation is received, all relevant staff and personnel can be notified of the patient's diagnosis through a predefined group to ensure that no one is accidentally left off the chain. A clinical collaboration solution that is integrated with the hospital's EHR can provide accurate and secure communication through a patient-specific section within the app to ensure all documentation of the patient's progress is captured and relayed to staff. The care team can also confirm messages are received and read through delivery confirmation status, giving team members full visibility into the status of the disseminated information.

Moreover, by establishing a defined care team, caregivers with patient contact can be more easily identified and tracked during care delivery, and any subsequent post-care quarantine periods that may be applied to them.



## Use Case 4

# Monitor patient vitals in real-time

Once treatment begins, a care team collaboration platform that is integrated into the nurse call or bedside telemetry system can provide immediate notification when a patient is in distress, if vital signs change, or if possible sepsis signs begin to appear. Critical updates that might otherwise get lost in a sea of alarms or a care provider's Inbox are redirected to the smartphone or desktop communication app for immediate notification and subsequent action.



## Use Case 5

# Communicate with quarantined healthcare workers and patients **under observation**

Finally, there's the situation of patients and staff who are under observation. Similar to previously-described use cases, those isolating at home or in designated quarantine areas at a facility can maintain communication with staff while under observation. This can be done easily and securely through an organization's healthcare communication solution.

Keeping communication channels open during this distressing time can help keep patients' morale high and provide those observing the patient with real-time insights if a patient's condition begins to worsen.

In the situation where a healthcare worker becomes a patient, secure messaging ensures that information about the status change can be relayed to all relevant team members and can help identify co-workers who may have had contact with the staff member.



## Use Case 6

# Update remote staff and patients with **minimum exposure**

Clinical collaboration solutions that support multi-site communication on a single platform can prove especially useful in situations where staff may be forced to work remotely or simply want to limit their exposure within the hospital.

Staff members can receive updates and alerts as well as engage patients in conversations about their symptoms regardless of location or quarantine status. For patients who appear to be symptomatic, staff can reach out via text to gauge the severity of the illness and to send treatment instructions. Staff can also text directions and maps to a designated quarantine site and message receiving teams to help coordinate the patient's arrival. This type of pre-emptive communication helps keep infected patients out of the ED and limiting the disease's spread.



## Use Case 7

# Prioritize alerts for **critical patients and escalate accordingly**

With rapidly spreading infections like coronaviruses, time is critical, and a missed message could risk exposure for both patients and staff. An advanced clinical communication solution supports functionality to help ensure critical messages are received and acknowledged. Priority messaging, unique alert sounds, repeat notifications, automated message escalations, and role-based messaging tied to the shift schedule can keep a patient's assigned staff or COVID-19 rapid response teams fully informed, even in fast-paced, high-pressure environments like a hospital or trauma center.





## Conclusion

Reliable communication plays a critical role in successfully managing a pandemic situation like COVID-19. Having a dedicated channel where care teams, IT, and executives can communicate and/or strategize during a crisis helps ensure proper adherence to the pandemic treatment protocols and reduces the chance for errors during the course of treatment. Teams can react rapidly and share critical information while keeping patient health information confidential. When choosing a vendor, here's a quick recap of key capabilities:

- ✓ 100% cloud-based
- ✓ Proven reliability (99.99% uptime as a benchmark)
- ✓ Easy to deploy and use
- ✓ Enabled for group and broadcast messaging
- ✓ Automated by shift and role assignment
- ✓ Able to connect all facilities on one platform
- ✓ Set up for direct patient texting

Without these criteria met, your communications plan can be vulnerable to underperforming when you need it most.



# About TigerConnect

**TigerConnect** is healthcare's most widely adopted communication platform – uniquely modernizing care collaboration among doctors, nurses, care teams, and patients. TigerConnect is the only solution that combines a consumer-like user experience for both clinical and patient communication with serious security, privacy, and clinical workflow requirements that today's healthcare organizations demand. TigerConnect accelerates productivity, reduces costs, and improves patient outcomes.

Trusted by more than 6,000 healthcare organizations, TigerConnect maintains 99.99% verifiable uptime and processes more than 10 million messages each day. To learn more about TigerConnect, visit [tigerconnect.com](https://tigerconnect.com).

Learn how clients like RWJBarnabas, Geisinger, and LifePoint are using TigerConnect to solve healthcare's biggest communication challenges.



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