



How ProHealth Physicians is driving high patient volume with Optum Patient Access and Engagement

As Connecticut's leading community-based medical provider, ProHealth Physicians offers a wide range of care, resources and programs. With 109 locations throughout the state, ProHealth is empowering physicians and advanced clinicians to better serve its 385,000 active patients through improved care processes and patient outcomes.¹

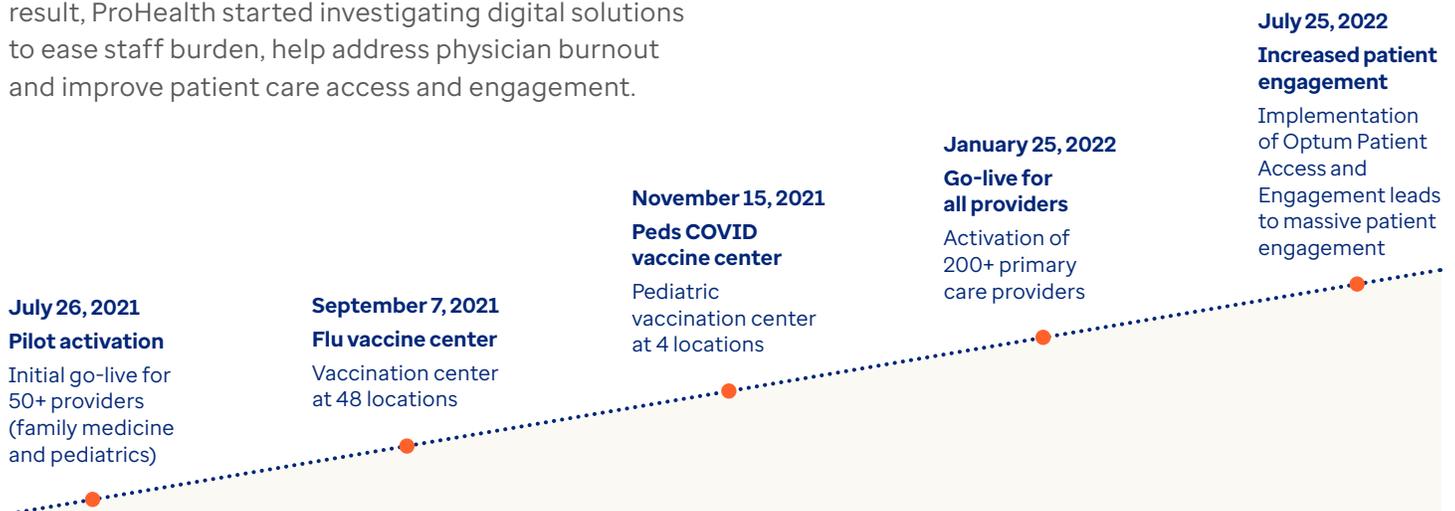
The ProHealth mission emphasizes patient-centeredness. During patient interactions, it determines patient clinical needs, collaborates with patients on decision-making, acts emphatically throughout treatment and improves patient health.



The challenge

The COVID-19 outbreak provided a reality check on many aspects of health care delivery, including technological adaptation by health care providers. Many providers struggled to recover from the massive disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic, which demanded improvements to nearly all aspects of health care delivery. In 2021, ProHealth faced several business challenges, including an office staff shortage, provider retirement and increased administrative burden. As a result, ProHealth started investigating digital solutions to ease staff burden, help address physician burnout and improve patient care access and engagement.

Optum® Patient Access and Engagement partnered with ProHealth starting in July 2021 to implement patient-guided digital scheduling to address these challenges through a pilot that included more than 50 providers. Since the initial pilot, the partnership has progressed in stages, starting with flu vaccine centers and pediatric COVID vaccine centers and eventually expanding to all 200+ ProHealth primary care providers.





The initiative

Timely access to health care services is important for realizing good medical outcomes and improving patient satisfaction.²

The ProHealth Physicians collaboration with Optum continues to enhance patient activation and engagement, improve administrative efficiency and create a better experience by optimizing online appointment scheduling.

Optum Patient Access and Engagement enables online self-service scheduling for new and existing patients via its real-time, self-guided platform, which integrates directly with the ProHealth practice management system. Some of the advantages of seamless EMR integration include:



Patient schedulable blocks are based on **ProHealth's clinical and operational protocols** set by the health care providers, resulting in accurate patient scheduling.



Easy appointment booking for both new and existing patients is **available online 24/7, self-service** – no need for help from ProHealth office/administrative staff.



Providers can **protect their schedules** since displayed appointment times are based on scheduling rules established by ProHealth.



Optum Patient Access and Engagement displays filtering criteria using characteristics already set within the ProHealth system/EMR. This enables the patient to book with providers **based on patient preferences:** race/ethnicity, gender, languages spoken, accepted insurance or cash pay, and more.



Optum Patient Access and Engagement is **highly configurable**, unlike EMR-based scheduling solutions. For instance, ProHealth can add specialty areas of care (for example, orthopedics, cardiology) that are too complex for other online schedulers to handle. The care setting (in clinic or virtual) can also be shown visually, simplifying patient bookings.

Metrics, metrics and more metrics

ProHealth and Optum are monitoring progress since the launch and will use data to drive decisions that improve patient care outcomes and access.

Following are some highlighted results that have been achieved through ProHealth's implementation of online scheduling.

Patients are more likely to show up for online appointments: Low no-show rate

A "no-show" rate is a metric that shows the percentage of time an appointment does not take place due to patient cancellation, provider cancellation or a patient not showing up for the appointment.

These types of occurrences can be costly for a health system like ProHealth. One study by Health Management Technology sets each canceled or missed

appointment at an average cost of \$200 per unused slot, costing the industry an astonishing \$150 billion each year.³ ProHealth saw a no-show rate in May 2022 of 4% (or a 96% "show rate" for scheduled appointments). On average during 2022, ProHealth's no-show rate was 5.8%.³ The industry average no-show rate for scheduled medical appointments can be as high as 18%.³

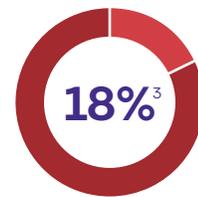
No-show rate comparison



May 2022 ProHealth no-show rate



average ProHealth no-show rate



industry average no-show rate



Patient care access metrics

If patients cannot easily find a provider and book an appointment, health outcomes and patient satisfaction can fall. One of the top advantages of patient-guided scheduling is its availability after normal business hours. Today's consumer wants the convenience of being seen in the evening and/or on weekends, since one can't predict when illness will strike. The following metrics reinforce that Optum Patient Access and Engagement is improving access to care for ProHealth patients.



After-hours bookings

Many Americans do not have a job that allows them to flex their time by making up for lost work hours. This can make it difficult to step away from work responsibilities to take care of personal needs, such as booking a medical appointment. ProHealth's data reveals that over one-third (or nearly 38% on average) of those booking an appointment did so after normal business hours. This data may represent individuals who wouldn't have otherwise been able to find and book an appointment.



average booking after normal business hours

Weekend appointments

Like the demographic factors driving after-hours scheduling, many individuals also need flexibility on days of the week when they can see a doctor. Since ProHealth has a fairly large percentage of physicians who work in family practices and pediatrics, it offers weekend appointments. Family responsibilities, work and/or school make these nonstandard days of the week more consumer friendly. Based on ProHealth data, patients are taking advantage of this fact: In 3 out of the past 10 months, Friday and Saturday appointments were the most frequently selected.¹

3 out of 10

weekend appointments most frequently chosen
3 out of the past 10 months

Visit reasons

Predicting the visit reasons for which patients will be booking appointments can help health systems better operationally and clinically prepare for these visits. According to care delivery patterns captured in appointment scheduling data, ProHealth typically sees 38.8% of patients for general wellness/preventive care visits throughout the year. However, once the fall/winter season hits and viruses become more common, vaccinations are the top visit reason, at 41%.²

Number 1 visit reasons



Typical appointments (Feb.-Aug.)

38.8%

Preventive care



Fall and winter season (Sept., Oct., Jan.)

41%²

Vaccinations

Increases in booked appointments and revenue

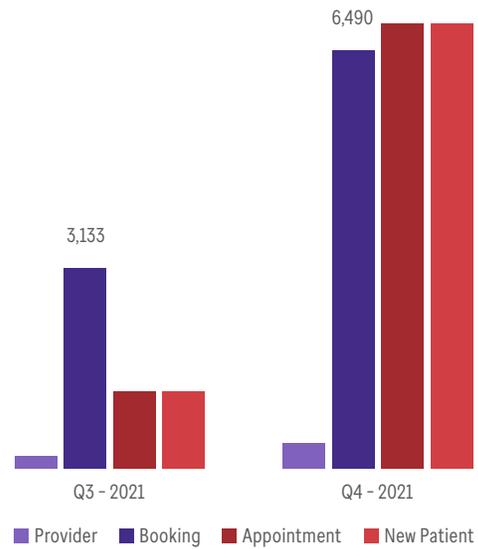
Based on data from the Optum Patient Access and Engagement platform, ProHealth Physicians saw a large increase in average daily appointments booked and unique visitors. In the first fiscal quarter after implementation, ProHealth experienced significant volume changes, up from **3,000 bookings to over 6,400** (108% increase). ProHealth has since seen a **4x increase** in patient bookings, using the first quarter as the baseline (See *Quarterly Report* graph, right).² Many of those bookings result in appointments from new patients, creating additional revenue for ProHealth.

Additionally, average new patients per provider per month has continued to grow during 2022 (See *2022 Patients Per Month Growth* graph, right). ProHealth providers in January averaged just over 2 new patients per provider per month, and increased that rate to 5.23 patients per month per provider by May 2022.

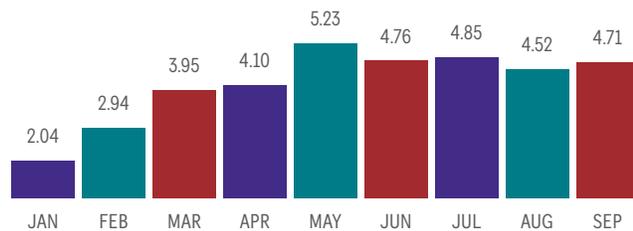
Providers on platform, booked appointments and new patients all continued to grow during 2022 (See *2022 Insights* graph, right). Cumulative totals for the different measure data points are as follows:

Providers: **2,616**
 Bookings: **10,329**
 Appointments: **8,573**
 New patients: **8,158**

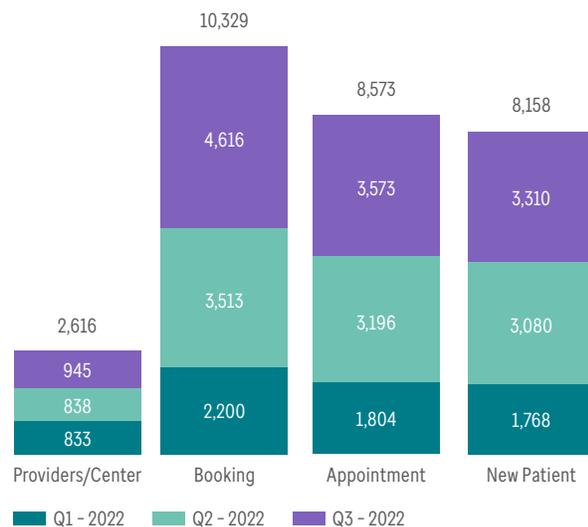
Quarterly report



2022 patients per month growth



2022 insights



Conclusion: Why it matters

Self-guided scheduling helps patients set their preferences and uses AI to match them with the right provider. Using the Optum Patient Access and Engagement platform, ProHealth can accurately determine a patient's clinical needs, collaborate with patients on decision-making and act emphatically throughout care delivery. Since implementing self-guided scheduling, ProHealth has seen improvements in patient care access and easier scheduling.

ProHealth's mission and goal is to become laser-focused on patient centeredness. Along with its other patient initiatives, Optum is working to enable ProHealth to better serve patients through improved care processes and patient outcomes.



About

Optum Patient Access and Engagement is one of the leading patient access and engagement platforms for health systems, health plans and physician groups. Optum Patient Access and Engagement builds unique payer-provider connections with an eye toward simplified access, increased care compliance and improved population risk management. Intelligent patient-provider matching and online appointment scheduling enables patients to connect with optimal care providers to enhance access, improve outcomes and reduce costs.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

Optum

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1. Stats on ProHealth Physicians clinical and providers. At: prohealthmd.com/. Accessed October 2022.

2. The CAHPS Ambulatory Care Improvement Guide. Practical Strategies for Improving Patient Experience, Section 2: Why Improve Patient Experience? Clinical reasons. Accessed November 2022, at ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/2-why-improve/cahps-section-2-why-improve-patient-experience.pdf.

3. Intrado Healthcare. The true cost of patient no-show appointments, May 26, 2021. Accessed at: intrado.com/blog/healthcare/true-cost-patient-no-show-appointments#.

4. Based on Optum Patient Access & Engagement Insights analytics dashboard, January–October 2022, using actual ProHealth bookings and appointment data.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid. Calculated using 3Q 2021 as baseline vs. total YtD bookings.