




# Finding the Right Balance:

How to Improve Patient Access and  
Optimize the Clinician Experience





Improving patient care delivery is a top priority for most health system Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) and their clinical leaders. But so is enhancing organizational efficiency. The delicate balance between the two is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain for three reasons:

**1. Clinical workforce shortages persist.** Significant shortages of healthcare professionals, including nurses and physicians, are exacerbating clinician workload and increasing burnout among clinical staff. Contributing factors include expansions in Medicaid, population growth and aging, and a significant portion of practicing physicians nearing retirement age. As a result, **63%** of healthcare organizations cannot meet patient access demand. Meanwhile, up to **40%** of doctors say they're planning to leave their current practice within the next two years. Given these pressures, health systems face significant patient access challenges, especially those systems that struggle to balance capacity between physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs).

**2. Competition from nontraditional players.** New entrants in the healthcare market, including technology and retail giants such as Amazon and CVS, are disrupting traditional models of primary care. Patients are seeking care through CVS Minute Clinics and other in-person and online venues because they fill gaps in the health system, providing convenient, accessible, and often lower-cost options. To remain competitive, health systems must act quickly and create (or optimize) similarly convenient experiences, such as digital self-scheduling and virtual care.

**3. Increasing patient expectations.** As healthcare shifts toward consumerism, patients view themselves as customers who are paying for a service. And with co-pays, co-insurance, out-of-pocket maximums, and high-deductible health plans all increasing, many patients must reach into their own pockets to pay for their healthcare. As a result, patients expect the same convenience, quality, and customer service from their healthcare providers that they receive in other venues. For example, patients expect care that meets their schedules, with 4 in 10 saying they'd be willing to pay extra for more convenient care access. Yet, patients currently have to wait 26 days on average to see their preferred primary care provider.

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<sup>1</sup>KaufmanHall, [https://www.kaufmanhall.com/sites/default/files/2023-10/KH-Report\\_2023-State-Healthcare-Performance-Improvement.pdf](https://www.kaufmanhall.com/sites/default/files/2023-10/KH-Report_2023-State-Healthcare-Performance-Improvement.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>AMA, <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/sustainability/40-doctors-eye-exits-what-can-organizations-do-keep-them>

<sup>3</sup>Med City News, <https://medcitynews.com/2023/04/the-next-generation-of-healthcare-payments-convenient-seamless-simple/>

<sup>4</sup>Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2023/10/30/medical-appointments-avoiding-long-waits/>

## Ending the tug-of-war between patient convenience and provider preference

CMOs often find themselves in a no-win situation as they try to simplify their patients' journeys and reduce the burden on their clinical workforce. But there is a way to achieve service optimization and provide patients with convenient digital access — all without straining providers. By embracing a concept called digital care orchestration, health systems can:

**1** Make it easy for patients to discover care

**2** Balance workforce challenges while preserving provider autonomy

**3** Match the right patient with the right provider — at the right time

**4** Use data to improve operations and optimize capacity

Let's explore each area and see how leading health systems are using digital care orchestration to balance digital patient access and provider preferences.

### What is “digital care orchestration?”

It's the use of technology and data to streamline the coordination, delivery, and overall experience of healthcare services. Digital care orchestration aims to balance the supply and demand of care by improving the efficiency, accessibility, and quality of healthcare delivery. This leads to better health outcomes and patient satisfaction, without overextending resources.

## 1. Make it easy for patients to discover care

For the last two decades, health systems have focused on improving their websites in an effort to attract new patients. However, the rules of patient engagement are changing, and [Google is the new battleground](#).

Research conducted by Community Health Network (CHN), a nonprofit system with more than 200 care sites across Indiana, bears this out. CHN's leadership team found that 75% of consumers searching for on-demand primary care at a CHN location began their search on Google, while just 17% started their search on the CHN website.

As patients shift their care journey to Google, they also want to find a doctor conveniently, with as few button taps (or mouse clicks) as possible. To meet these expectations, health systems are seeking new ways to make their providers and services easily discoverable on Google. They're also leveraging online tools that help patients find the exact care and provider they need quickly, and even schedule an appointment within the Google search page on their device of choice.

By taking these steps, health systems can provide better care to their patients and attract more patients, while also using clinical resources efficiently.

<sup>5</sup> DexCare, “[Unlocking the Benefits of a Digital Front Door in Healthcare.](#)”

## Case study: CHN Optimizes Virtual Care Capacity

CHN sought to create a frictionless patient experience. “Our patients already have that experience outside of healthcare, so we wanted to duplicate that,” said Patrick McGill, MD, MBA, CHN’s Chief Transformation Officer. To achieve this goal, CHN partnered with DexCare, creating a connection between Google Search and booking an appointment. “It’s kind of like the OpenTable online restaurant reservation system, only for healthcare,” Dr. McGill said. Through improved consumer-facing mobile and web experiences, CHN:

Increased virtual care capacity by  
**300%**  
allowing the organization to expand care access statewide

Increased net-new patients to the health system by  
**12%**

\*\*Decreased median virtual visit time by  
**40%**  
improving patient throughput.

## 2. Empower and leverage the existing provider workforce

As patient care, EHR, and administrative demands increase in their everyday practice, providers seek more autonomy over scheduling — not less. That’s why they may be reluctant to give patients full control over online scheduling.

Their concerns are well warranted. If a specialist needs to treat 20 complex patients in a single day, that demand increases their risk of burnout and can negatively impact the care quality and patient experience. Ideally, health systems should help their providers achieve a more optimal balance, so they can see a mix of high- and low-acuity patients while still operating at the top of their license.

CMOs can help their providers solve this challenge. The first step is to consolidate provider data throughout the organization so teams can examine practice staffing trends and provider preferences in greater detail. Then, look into digital care orchestration tools that can help organizations balance supply and demand.

Solutions like DexCare enable health systems and providers to coordinate and deliver clinical care more efficiently, while enabling patients to own their healthcare journey. With DexCare, health systems can achieve tight orchestration of limited resources to balance capacity, optimize costs, and delight consumers.

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\*\*Additionally, fully 50% of CHN patients now return for a retail or video visit within 12 months of their initial visit.

## Case Study: Texas Health Resources Balances Resource Utilization

Healthcare systems like Texas Health Resources (THR) are actively integrating omnichannel strategies, providing seamless consumer experiences across various touchpoints. "At Texas Health Resources, we're moving beyond a one-size-fits-all approach," said Winjie Miao, SEVP and Chief Operating Officer, THR. "By leveraging consumer preferences and segmentation, we're personalizing care to meet diverse patient needs and harmonizing fee-for-service with value-based models effectively." THR partnered with DexCare to achieve better balance for providers and educate patients on best-fit care options. Together, they achieved:

**56%** increase in appointments booked online

**25%** of patients booking online are net new to the health system.

### 3. Match the right patient with the right provider — at the right time

Patients today have more options than ever to seek care. Estimates indicate that more than 11,000 urgent care centers now exist nationwide, with an anticipated 7% year-over-year growth.<sup>6</sup> Add in competition from telehealth startups and retail giants like CVS and Amazon, and it's becoming even more challenging for health systems to attract and retain patients.

Health systems have the benefit of meeting patients at multiple points in their healthcare journey. Yet, that advantage also makes it difficult to match the right patient to the right provider at the right time. Historically, health systems have tried to match patients with best-fit care online using templates and decision trees built into their EHR or websites. But these rigid systems end up limiting patient choice, not enhancing it. What's more, if these systems aren't built and maintained properly, they run the risk of disrupting provider schedules and negatively impacting provider compensation.

Digital care orchestration offers a modern approach to connecting patients, providers, and care levels seamlessly. Health systems using DexCare can surface right-fit care options for patients at the right time during their digital journey, guiding them to the most clinically appropriate care. This helps direct low-acuity cases to the most appropriate and cost-effective provider, saving organizations both time and money.

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<sup>6</sup>CNN, "Why Urgent Care Centers are Popping Up Everywhere." Jan. 28, 2023

## Case Study: Virtual Care Success for Kaiser Permanente

As a major integrated, nonprofit care and coverage organization, Kaiser Permanente aims to make life easier for its 12.6 million members nationwide. "We strongly believe that at one end of the stethoscope is the physician, and at the other end is the patient," says Raghu Raman, Digital Health Leader at Kaiser. "In between, we want to digitize everything that enables convenience for consumers and that optimizes the experience for physicians." As Kaiser's leaders examined its virtual care services after the COVID-19 pandemic, they saw many areas for improvement. Some states offered e-visits online. Others provided nurse advice lines or chats with clinicians at extended hours. There was no uniform approach. To match its members to affordable, seamless, high-quality virtual urgent care, Kaiser partnered with DexCare and:

## Case Study: Virtual Care Success for Kaiser Permanente continue:

Launched cross-market virtual coverage in all

**50** States

Extended after-hours care to a total of

**10** Hours of available care per day

Accommodated

**40K** patients after hours nationwide

Maintained an above-average patient net promoter score of

**87** for virtual care

## 4. Use data to improve operations

Solving supply and demand challenges within health systems isn't a one-and-done initiative. Instead, it takes ongoing commitment. As a result, organization leaders need effective ways to forecast various evolving metrics, including workforce utilization, facility congestion, revenue projection, and seasonal demand fluctuations.

For this reason, health systems are investigating solutions that can help them convert their raw data into actionable insights. With the right platform, health systems can obtain the tools they need to anticipate seasonal spikes in demand for care based on their historical data. They can also set capacity limits based on demand to help minimize provider burnout, while ensuring patients get the care they need when they need it.

DexCare enables health systems to capture these types of forward-thinking insights from historical data. The platform can even make near-real-time recommendations around capacity use, helping leadership determine which care makes the most sense for patients now and in the future.

## Case Study: Providence Streamlines the Patient Experience and Maximizes Resources

Providence, a national not-for-profit Catholic health system with more than 1000 clinics and 51 hospitals, had a fragmented and inefficient digital health environment. For greater operational efficiency and effectiveness, it needed advanced data-driven technology to help obtain new patients and direct them to the most appropriate care. Since implementing DexCare's platform powered by data intelligence, Providence has improved digital access to care for consumers and made continued data-driven improvements, resulting in a:

**30%**

increase in net-new patients

**65%**

scheduling increase in digitally enabled visits, beyond COVID

**30%**

new patient retention rate

**91**

average patient net promoter score

"Platforms like DexCare aggregate and match digital demand with health system capacity across all lines of care, streamline the experience for both patients and providers, and maximize resources," says Sara Vaezy, Chief Digital Officer, Providence. "At Providence, DexCare has enabled service lines to drive new customer acquisition into a single service, capture a much greater amount of downstream revenue and generate a higher per-patient encounter in cost savings."

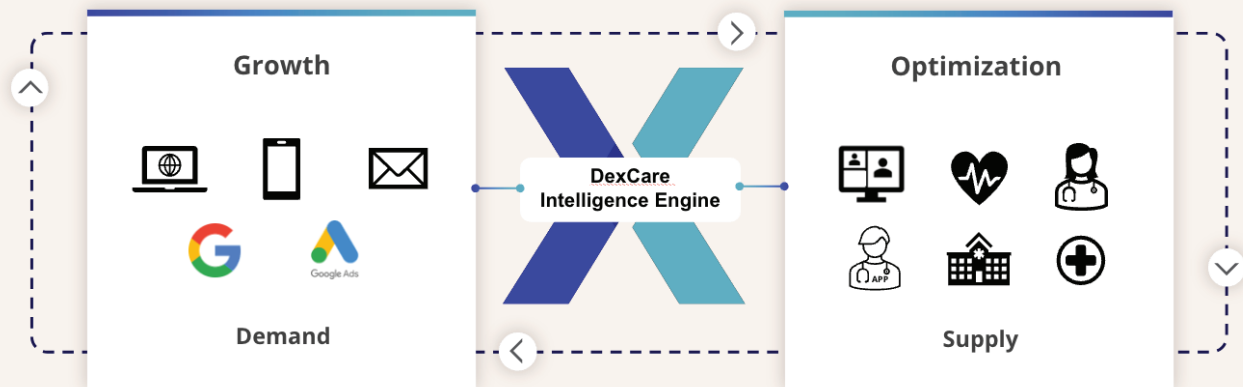


## Real-time digital care orchestration — the path to balanced, best-fit care.

Digital care orchestration helps health systems achieve the balance between patient access and provider needs. It employs ecommerce-inspired workflows to optimize capacity while guiding patients to their best-fit care. At the same time, providers can work at the top of their license, increasing job satisfaction and efficiency while minimizing the risk of burnout.

# DexCare Digital Care Orchestration

Value: Finding time to drive more patient volume and sustainable growth



Orchestrate care at the intersection of demand and access

Health systems leverage all available resources in the most sophisticated ways to gain customers, meet demand, balance capacity, and deploy best-fit, cost-effective care — ultimately to compete and grow. They can also lay the groundwork for a future where compensation models are aligned to support getting the right patient the right care at the right time, driving volume for all stakeholders within the health system.

### Achieve the Proper Balance with DexCare

Deliver the best possible experience while solving for clinical labor shortages, evolving patient expectations, and provider burnout challenges. With DexCare, health systems can achieve the perfect balancing act by delivering on both enhanced healthcare delivery and improved operational efficiency.

Visit [dexcare.com](https://dexcare.com) to learn more.