



Patient flow management guide

to support social distancing and safe queuing in healthcare facilities



Introduction

This guide aims to give you an insight into the common challenges faced by healthcare providers today (specifically during the pandemic) and how to implement safe queuing by doing efficient patient flow management and optimizing virtual queuing solution.

Contents:

- Challenges for healthcare providers – in general and specifically during the pandemic)
- How to manage patient flow efficiently to support social distancing in healthcare facilities
- How to optimize virtual solution to implement safe queuing when the demand is high
- Patient journey with virtual solutions
- Tips for implementing virtual queuing for safe patient journeys



Background: Strain on healthcare providers and increasing demands

In the last few years, hospitals and healthcare facilities has always been under the strain of increasing patient demand, and subsequently, the increasing staff workload. With the need to care for hundreds, or even thousands of people, there are often inadvertent delays, long waiting times and long queues.

During the pandemic, these challenges are exacerbated by an even greater increase of patients, and the need to implement social distancing, often in small or limited spaces.

It's important to keep both patients and staff safe, while also making sure they also feel safe and comfortable.



Challenges for healthcare providers

To summarize, these are some of the challenges faced by healthcare providers today:

- Increasing patient demand
- Limited staff
- Pressure to improve quality of care and to increase efficiency
- Crowded and limited waiting space
- Overcoming patients' fear of visiting
- Taking care of the health needs of patient & staff
- Having to adapt quickly to the current situation

In this guide, we will explain how you can manage patient flow and optimize virtual queuing to provide a safe environment for patients and staff.

Managing patient flow efficiently

to support social distancing in healthcare facilities





Six ways to manage patient flow efficiently

With efficient patient flow management, it's possible to keep patients moving through your healthcare facility, implementing social distancing by keeping your waiting area clear and reducing wait times.

1. Empower staff

Your staff are critical to providing a better experience. Invest in technology that enables staff to see where holdups are, where they need to deploy resources and staff to get the best results. Reduce the time needed for administrative tasks. Make healthcare less reactive, improving the patient journey.

2. Smooth out digital

Around 2.5 billion people currently own a smartphone and have access to the internet. Reduce cancellations, save time and show an up-to-date register of what to expect when. Save administrative staff time by reducing workloads. Enable self-service for or patients and dramatically improve the experience.



Six ways to manage patient flow efficiently

3. Remove hurdles

Queue management software improves the patient journey. Enable patients to confirm attendance from a kiosk or remotely from their phone. Save the queues of people waiting for a receptionist to tell them where they need to be. Reduce the demands on administrative staff. Enable staff to focus on providing a higher standard of support to patients.

4. Invest in technology

Data and insights to improve service satisfaction and operational efficiency. Keep track of what's happening, who's waiting and how long it will take. Real-time views and insights allow staff to drive, control and measure service quality and better manage a hospital. Use data to identify trends and improve overall standards. Technological improvements will upgrade public service environments significantly – and might just save money in the long-term.



Six ways to manage patient flow efficiently

5. Improve the overall experience

An experience is only as good as the weakest part. Adopt efficient techniques and ensure citizens are generally well cared for. Don't neglect the journey a patient goes on from pre-booking to the end of their experience. Keep patients informed and progressing, don't leave them in the dark.

6. Increase patient satisfaction

Happy patients mean an easier experience for the hospital. Avoid bottlenecks and frustrations to improve overall satisfaction. Happy and motivated staff provide an even more positive service to patients. A happy patient is one who is more willing to come back, rather than look for alternatives. Patient satisfaction is a factor that's too big to ignore for any institution.

Optimizing virtual solution for managing patient flow

to implement safe queuing when the demand
is high





What is virtual queuing?

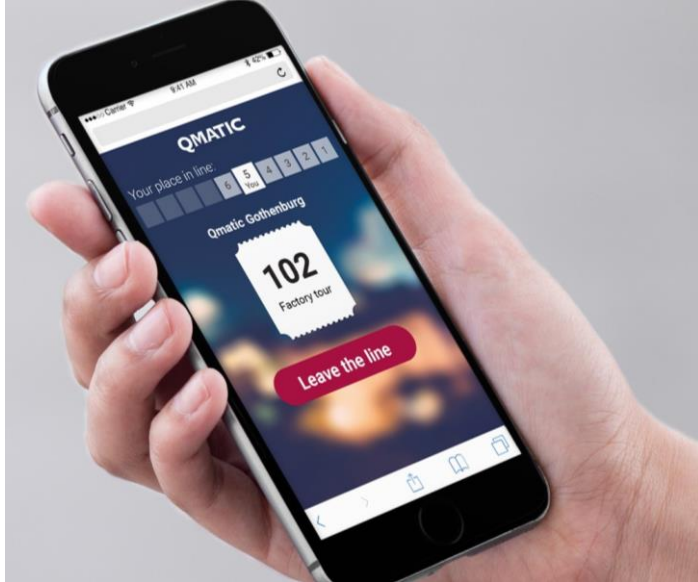
Virtual queuing is a practice where customers - or patients - don't have to physically wait in line to get a service. In virtual queuing, a system is used to place patients in a virtual queue. The patient's place in the virtual queue is secured by an identifier like a printed ticket or managed through their mobile phone as an SMS, mobile ticket or queuing app. The identifier is often given upon arrival but can be provided in advance when booking an appointment. Because the place in the queue is secured, there is no need for a physical waiting line.

In healthcare, virtual queuing is about managing patient flow in the digital space, so they have minimal close interactions with either staff or fellow patients.

A few ways virtual queuing solutions can help with social distancing:

- Regulating the number of patients visiting your premises
- Keeping close interactions to a minimum
- Reducing the time patients have to spend on-site
- Managing patient flow

Optimizing virtual queuing for safe patient journey



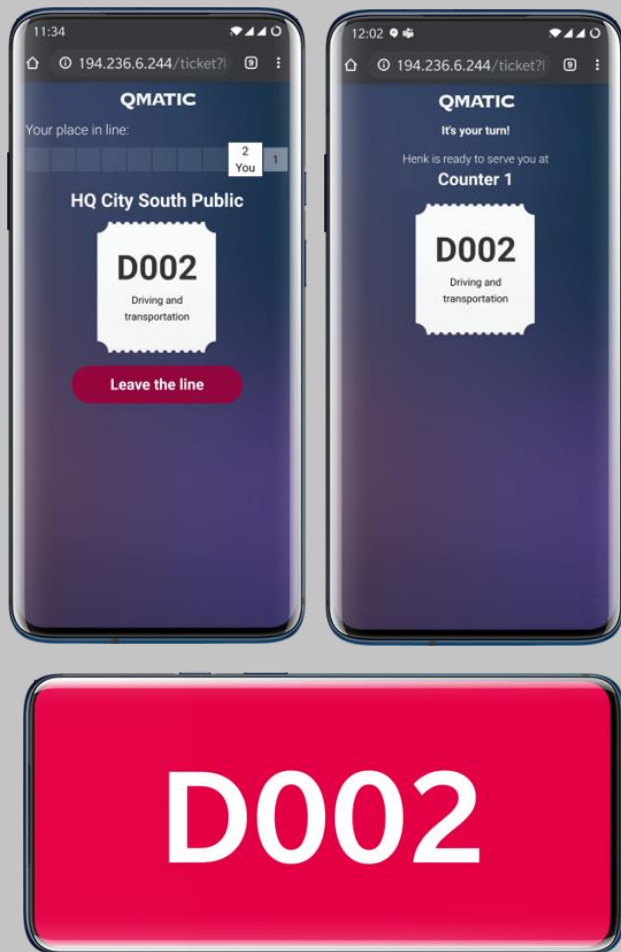
Below is a few suggestions on how you can optimize a virtual queuing solution to implement social distancing and provide a safe hospital environment for patients and staff.

Avoid crowding your waiting area with appointment booking solution

Appointment booking is the simplest way to manage patient flow, as you have the option to control the number of slots you want to open, and when. You can regulate this with the consideration of the staff/resources, expected peak or quiet times, and other things to make sure you manage patient flow as efficiently as possible.

Enable remote waiting with Mobile Ticket

Mobile Ticket can be used for both walk-in patients or patients with appointment scheduled. Allowing remote waiting will considerably free up space in your waiting area. Patient can be notified through SMS so they know when to make their way to the premise. If possible, provide notifications on details such as what they need to bring, safety precautions for when they arrive, current waiting and transaction times etc.



Optimizing virtual queuing for safe patient journey

Gear your staff with a flexible concierge solution

Connect a mobile concierge solution to your solution. With a concierge app, staff can greet and assist patients at a safe distance, and even outside the building, and help with tickets and services. Patients can also call in to receive a mobile ticket.

Improve patient flow with self-service kiosks

Install a self-service kiosk that can be used to schedule appointments and issue mobile tickets for those that missed to do that in advance. Then patients can get in line and leave the waiting area again until it is their turn, without any interaction with the staff, apart from the caregiver.

Provide safety information through digital signage

With digital signage, you can provide important information to your patients that can easily be updated. For instance, place a screen at the entrance with safety information and instructions on how to get in line, to avoid people moving into the waiting area. You can also use digital signage to show who is next in line and provide information on how to navigate to the right counter/location for the person who is next to be served.

Optimizing virtual queuing for safe patient journey



Use a messaging service to prepare patients

With a messaging service connected to your queuing system, you can send text messages to your patients. For patients that have a scheduled appointment, you can send reminders and a link to self check-in for their arrival to avoid no-shows and reduce interaction with front-line staff. For patients with a mobile ticket, send an automated SMS when they are next in line to make sure they don't miss their turn.

Other possibilities could be to provide safety instructions in advance or prepare the patient with information ahead of their visit. This will improve safety and satisfaction for both patients and staff.

Using virtual queuing solution to improve the quality of care



Get patient feedback to improve service and safety

Was the service satisfying? Was the service provided in a safe manner? Add a patient feedback module to your queuing system to improve service and safety. Use the messaging service to send feedback forms to your patients. Since the feedback is connected to the system, you can track back the answers to the unique visit.

Monitor your waiting situation with operations panel

Since not all patients will not be waiting in your waiting room, you need to be able to monitor the waiting situation in a different way than checking the waiting area. Provide your staff with an operations panel that shows real time data on waiting times and number of patients waiting. This way you can quickly adapt to unexpected peaks and distribute staff.

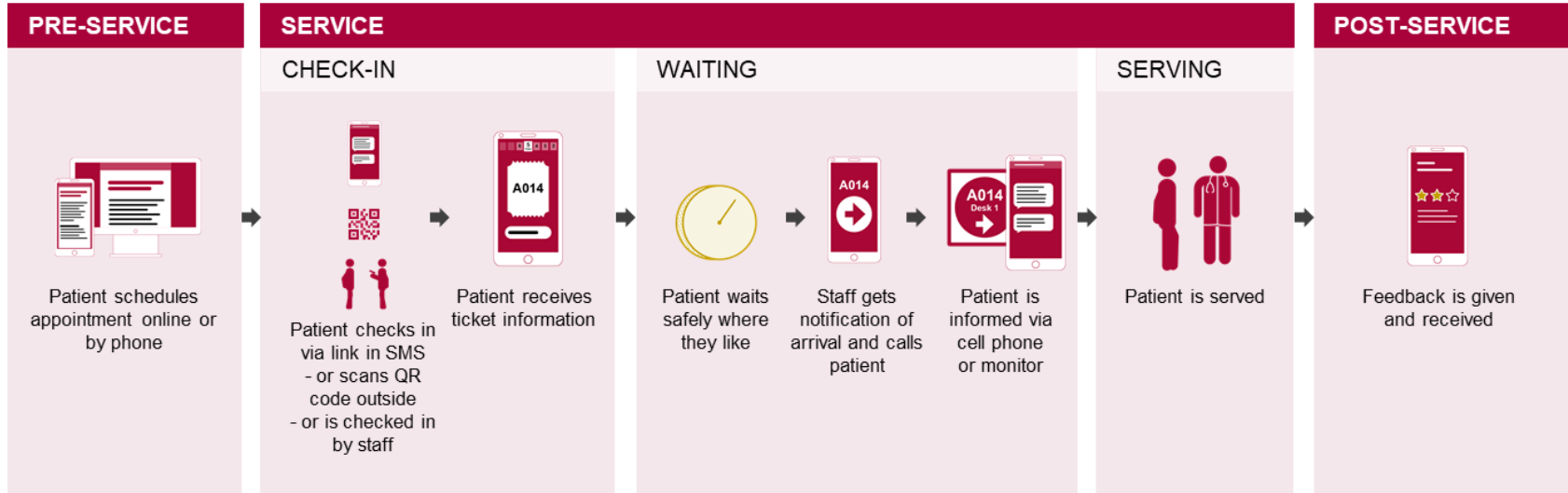
Analyze and optimize to maintain social distancing

Analyze your data with business intelligence and improve the waiting area situation moving forward. With statistics on your customer flow, you will be able to identify bottle-necks that could hinder social distancing. You will also be able to plan better to release pressure off staff and still increase efficiency.

Safe patient journeys with virtual queuing

Virtual queuing solution enables patients to book appointment in advance and wait remotely with Mobile Ticket.

To check in, patients can do it themselves by clicking a link in SMS, get assisted by staff, or by scanning a QR code outside. Once they've done the check-in, they will receive a Mobile Ticket.





Tips for implementing virtual queuing for safe patient journeys

Optimize appointment booking

Encourage patients to book appointments so you can estimate the expected number of patients for the day and plan ahead.

Plan staff allocation

With most (if not all) appointments booked in advance, plan resource allocation to get a balanced and controlled waiting period.

Segment patients on their bookings

If you provide different types of services, segment patients in different queues if appropriate, rather than entering all patients in the same line.

Keep patients informed

Use email and/or SMS notifications to keep patients updated with booking confirmations, reminders, expected waiting times, or any changes.

Manage patient flow efficiently

Control the number of patients by managing the appointment slots you have available or creating a different set of calling rules to decrease the number of people waiting.

Reports and follow up

Analyze the data of the waiting and service times, the number of waiting patients, and patients' satisfaction to improve the service performance.





Let us help you

Efficient patient flow management, coupled with virtual queuing solutions, is significantly valuable in helping your facilities implement social distancing and providing safe environment for everyone. It helps to reduce virus spread in your premises, protect patients and staff from infection risk, and ensure the safety and comfort for everyone.

Click on the button below if you want to talk to an expert about how to implement safe queuing in your healthcare facility.

Contact us



CXM SOLUTIONS.
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT