



The Point of Care Ecosystem:
Increasing Efficiency While
Creating a Seamless Experience
for Podiatry Patients



COVID-19 has profoundly changed the ambulatory environment. These changes have challenged healthcare organizations and providers to think differently about delivering healthcare experiences that are both effective and seamless. The pandemic also put a spotlight on the importance of the point of care ecosystem to the healthcare journey. The disruption of routine office visits caused by the pandemic illustrated how vital regular checkups and physician visits can be for the delivery of care and patient outcomes, especially for podiatry patients.

This Midmark white paper takes a look at the point of care ecosystem and how podiatrists can increase efficiency while creating a seamless patient experience that is conducive to the quality of care provided.

The Podiatry Workflow and the Point of Care Ecosystem

The point of care ecosystem can encompass everything that happens within the practice or clinic, as well as patient touchpoints and experiences occurring outside this environment. These touchpoints include any interactions, equipment, room layout, technology and processes.

For many healthcare organizations, procedure rooms are comprised of disconnected processes and components that often negatively impact patient experiences and create inefficiencies. By understanding that better care starts with a better designed care environment, podiatrists can create a point of care ecosystem that promotes a patient-centered approach.

An approach that focuses on how care is delivered can increase efficiencies and create a seamless, well-coordinated patient experience. This approach can also help ensure existing workflow designs are a right fit for staff and patients, and make it easier to incorporate new workflow designs as needs change and the facility grows.

For instance, the digitization of healthcare is enabling the expansion of the point of care ecosystem outside the traditional model. This shift has been further accelerated by the pandemic as podiatrists look to deliver safe, accessible and effective care under COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, telehealth has quickly become a more viable, acceptable and long-lasting option for many podiatry practices and clinics. In most cases, this means considering a new workflow design.



Increasing Efficiency and Creating Seamless Experiences



While the pressure to be more efficient has been growing in recent years, there have always been podiatrists who excelled at increasing throughput to maximize revenue or focused their efforts on enhancing the patient experience.

The difference now is that many in the industry are realizing that it does not have to be an “either-or approach,” but rather a balanced approach that places equal weight on patient experience and increased efficiency as a way to grow the practice and provide better quality patient care.

The challenge is being able to balance experiential qualities such as inviting environments, pleasing aesthetics, safety and comfort with efficient qualities such as minimal wait times, high room utilization, enhanced workflow and access to supplies.

The key to successfully achieving this balance is adopting an approach that views the clinical space, procedure rooms and caregiver-patient interaction as part of the connected point of care ecosystem. This provides a framework for placing equal emphasis on the healthcare experience and increased efficiency.

Following are five key components of the connected point of care ecosystem that are central for podiatrists who are considering a more balanced approach to patient care.

1. PODIATRY ROOM DESIGN

The integration of new technologies and advancements with in-office procedures are shaping the future of the podiatry practice. Since this is the area where patients and podiatrists spend most of their time, having the right design and equipment configuration can help attain the needed balance between efficiency and experience. The essential component of a good podiatry room design is a procedure zone that puts the caregiver in the center.

Enhancing Experience:

- An inviting environment helps patients feel comfortable and safe while supporting patient privacy.
- Correctly configured rooms accommodate wheelchair turnaround.
- A dedicated public zone, separated from the procedure zone, provides an area to comfortably conduct telehealth visits and remote patient monitoring.
- Adequate lighting increases the podiatrist's ability to see clearly and accurately during procedures.

Increasing Efficiency:

- Room size comfortably accommodates patients and providers, and allows procedures to be properly performed.
- Procedure chair position within the room gives podiatrists easy access around the entire chair.
- Room configuration and size allows versatility for introducing new equipment and enabling future growth.
- An abundance of streamlined, well-organized storage creates an efficient, decluttered environment to easily store and reach supplies.

2. PROCEDURE CHAIR

The primary focal point of the podiatry office is the patient chair. It allows podiatrists to position the patient to efficiently deliver quality care, while also offering comfort. As more procedures are performed at the point of care and greater emphasis is placed on ergonomics, podiatrists are choosing procedure chairs over exam chairs; specifically, those that offer the functionality of a clinical device with the design elements of a chair to provide comfort during lengthy procedures.

Enhancing Experience:

- Powered base, back and tilt provide effortless positioning, while easy-to-reach release handles on both sides of the foot section allow smooth, one-handed operation.
- Low, 19-inch seat height allows the patient to access the chair with little to no assistance, increasing comfort and protecting patient dignity.
- Natural chair-like position and ergonomic foot section design keeps patients comfortable during procedures.

Increasing Efficiency:

- Programmable, one-touch patient positioning allows all sections of the chair to move simultaneously.
- Power height, back and tilt allow podiatrists to move patients quickly and precisely into the most effective position for procedures.
- Aseptic design of the foot section glides simplifies cleaning and maintenance by helping prevent debris and dirt build up.

3. MOBILE WORKSTATION AND PROCEDURE CART

Workstations and procedure carts have been a central fixture in most procedure rooms for years. When using a mobile workstation or procedure cart, workflows are streamlined and interactions at the point of care are unobstructed. Mobile workstations and procedure carts are easily adjustable and can support interactions within the procedure room, including telehealth and virtual visits.

Enhancing Experience:

- Mobility can provide the flexibility needed for podiatrists to deliver care anywhere and fosters a more accessible, patient-centered experience while bringing needed supplies and tools closer to the patient.
- Adjustable, mobile workstations allow podiatrists to maintain a proper, ergonomic working position while maintaining eye contact with the patient during data entry.
- 180° of monitor rotation can help podiatrists remain engaged with patients and share content when needed.

Increasing Efficiency:

- Versatility enables podiatrists to easily integrate advanced technology such as cameras, digital instruments and expanded monitors.
- Mobility provides the flexibility to customize rooms and take spacing-saving measures.
- Thermofoil seamless surfaces are resistant to spills, chemical degradation and delamination, enhancing cleaning and infection control processes.

4. REAL-TIME LOCATING SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY

Real-time locating system (RTLS) technology makes capturing accurate workflow data possible, communicating in-the-moment patient and staff locations, wait times and staff interactions as well as a vast amount of retrospective detail. Badges worn by patients and staff, and tags affixed to equipment communicate with a sensory network installed throughout a facility.

Enhancing Experience:

- Data empowers care teams to make informed decisions at every step of the visit to enhance the patient experience.
- RTLS-enabled self-rooming eliminates the waiting room, improving wait times, enhancing the patient experience and strengthening infection prevention efforts.
- Enhanced communication allows for streamlined orchestration of caregiver interactions, reducing overall alone time for patients.

Increasing Efficiency:

- RTLS technology can automate the labor-intensive process of contact tracing, helping increase the speed, effectiveness and accuracy of monitoring efforts.
- Asset tracking dramatically reduces the amount of time staff spends searching for mobile equipment.
- Insight into key activities, such as room utilization and patient-caregiver interactions, leads to informed decisions to increase efficiencies and reduce bottlenecks.

5. CABINETS

Unlike common wood cabinetry, cabinetry designed specifically for medical environments, such as procedure rooms, is often more durable to not break down under medical use conditions. To help reach a balance, it is important to have cabinetry that offers multiple style options while being flexible and durable enough to meet the highly specialized needs of clinical work.

Enhancing Experience:

- Easy-to-clean, seamless design and antimicrobial pulls and surfaces help protect patients and staff from infections.
- Styling options allow podiatrists to create a consistent brand while establishing a warm, inviting environment.
- Proper height for sinks and base cabinets helps ensure accessibility for patients and staff.

Increasing Efficiency:

- Specialized modular designs maximize floorspace, eliminate dead space and are easy to configure to fit workflow.
- Flexible designs help improve accessibility to necessary supplies when and where they are needed.
- A dressing nook maximizes privacy and storage in a small, easy-to-clean footprint.





As podiatrists feel increasingly pressured to improve efficiencies within their practice, it is important they balance efficiency gains with the healthcare experience. Viewing the clinical space as a connected point of care ecosystem can provide a framework for choosing the right equipment to help ensure a balance that can ultimately impact the quality of care delivered and outcomes realized.



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