

WHITEPAPER

**Digital Solutions:**  
that Provide Business  
Continuity for Hospital's  
RCM During the  
COVID-19 Pandemic &  
Beyond

# Key Points

•COVID-19 has changed how businesses operate as people are compelled to work from home.

•Firstsource has responded to the COVID-19 crisis by expanding its digital offerings to reduce the need for face-to-face interactions and support work-from-home efforts.

•Firstsource's enhanced digital solutions encompass the following:

- Digital Patient Eligibility Screening
- Our Proprietary Mobile App for Document Transfer & Repository with DocuSign® integration
- Digital POS (Point-of-Service) Collections

•Given the efficiencies of these new digital opportunities, Firstsource believes providers and patients will continue to embrace them even after this crisis draws to a close.

# The Challenge

The COVID-19 outbreak is taking a mental, physical, and fiscal toll on the entire world as we all struggle to adapt to this unprecedented global crisis. As of April 15, in the U.S. alone, there have been more than 609,600 confirmed cases of people infected with the virus and over 26,000 COVID-19 deaths.<sup>i</sup> Cases of the disease have been reported in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.<sup>ii</sup>

To quell the virus's rapid spread, the CDC (as well as state and local authorities) has urged people to stay home, avoid public places, and put distance between themselves and others. Suddenly, people across the U.S. and all over the globe are working from home—from dining tables, home offices, kitchen counters, and other makeshift spaces. And IT departments and decision-makers are working feverously to make “work from home” functional.

In healthcare, the challenges presented by COVID-19 are amplified exponentially and have affected the hospital market's operations in wholly unprecedented ways. Dedicated healthcare professionals are fighting on the frontlines, working tirelessly to save lives and combat the virus. And healthcare leaders are making critical

## PROFILE



Hospitals and Health Systems



50 States and US Territories



All Regions



All Bed Sizes



All Facility Types

decisions about who must remain on-site and who can carry out their jobs remotely.

Hospitals are pulling out all the stops to create the necessary physical, clinical, and financial capacity to care for the sick and manage this crisis. Patient care is always paramount for hospitals, but the Revenue Cycle Management (RCM) process is, nonetheless, a lifeline. Indeed, RCM is not just a matter of profit and loss but often the difference between a provider's ability to continue operating and having to shut down.

## The Solution

In response to providers' new, immediate, and critical needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, Firstsource has enhanced and expanded the digital footprints of our Eligibility Screening and Point-of-Service Collections solutions.

Firstsource's augmented digital offerings are as follows:

### Digital Patient Eligibility Screening

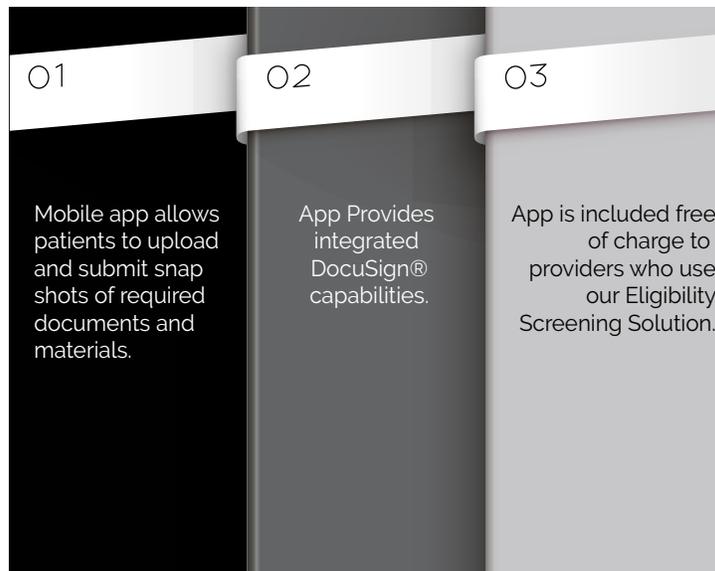
•Digital portal enables patients to log in and respond to screening questions at their convenience, from their own device.



•Firstsource representatives follow-up with qualified patients via telephone for full screening.

•If they wish, patients can download and use our free proprietary Mobile App to submit documents and sign forms.

### Proprietary Mobile App for Document Transfer & Repository with DocuSign® integration



### Digital POS (Point-of-Service) Collections supported by M GAGEMENT<sup>SM</sup>

•Hospital-branded portal determines patient co-pays and processes payments.

•All-in-one portal offers comprehensive service while eliminating the need for face-to-face interactions.

•The portal's service offerings include self-pay collections and communications (letters, texts, etc.), ability for patients to make payments, update insurance, review statements, file disputes, and more.

These digital solutions will help providers address several of the critical challenges they're currently

facing. For one, implementing tested digital solutions that enable the Revenue Cycle Management process to continue functioning is key to maximizing eligibility screenings, qualifying patients for Medicaid, and efficiently collecting patient responsibility.

Plus, the digital solutions alleviate the need for in-person interactions while continuing to provide the same level of co-operation, engagement, and communication with patients that is typical in a face-to-face setting. The solutions enable Eligibility Services employees, Point-of-Service Collection associates, and even hospital registrars to support patients offsite while also eliminating the need for layoffs or staff reductions.

Firstsource remains committed to providing on-site staff for face-to-face patient engagement and screening. However, in situations where such interaction is not possible, the digital solutions offer alternative means to connect with patients and support their needs.

## Security

Security is paramount in a healthcare setting, so all of Firstsource's digital solutions bring the very highest levels of security. Firstsource has a comprehensive



work-from-home model in place that includes data security and performance standards to achieve a secure working environment. We've also implemented thorough training and performance review measures.



## Productivity & Quality

Firstsource has also executed on workflow processes and technology to ensure that providers and patients receive exceptional service. Firstsource supervisors track, review, and report on daily productivity using our suite of productivity tools. And although representatives do their work remotely, their calls continue to be recorded and monitored via a VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) solution.

## Future State

Firstsource believes that providers and patients will continue to embrace these new digital opportunities and the remote-work model they support, even as we begin to see the light at the end of the COVID-19

tunnel.<sup>iii</sup> And we're not alone in our assessment. A recent Gartner survey of several hundred CFOs found that 74% of respondents plan to make permanent the change from on-site to remote for some employees, once the COVID-19 crisis passes. And analysts at Global Workplace Analytics are forecasting that 25-30% of the workforce will work remotely several days every week by the end of 2021, compared to the only 3.6% of employees who do so now.<sup>iv</sup>

Moreover, in healthcare specifically, it's hard to imagine the head-spinning eruption of telehealth offerings and activity returning to the pre-COVID-19 status quo. Just consider these numbers: according to analysts at Frost and Sullivan, telehealth visits increased 50% in March, and according to a Forrester Research report, virtual healthcare interactions will likely surpass one billion by the end of 2020.<sup>v</sup>



One reason that companies will continue to embrace work-from-home, even after COVID-19-related restrictions lift, will be the recognition that working remotely does not reduce productivity. During the current crisis, managers (who have traditionally been resistant to an untethered workforce) will see that their at-home employees achieve the same results as when they work on-site. Plus, as they themselves begin to work from home, they'll see how productive

they are and recognize the improvement to their quality of life.<sup>vii</sup> They'll experience firsthand what a variety of surveys have revealed: remote employees are just as, if not more, productive than on-site employees. For example, Airtasker's study of 1,004 full-time and remote employees across the U.S. found that remote employees work 1.4 more days every month (16.8 more days annually) than people who work on-site.<sup>viii</sup>

We believe healthcare providers will also immediately recognize the benefits achieved through these digital solutions and the remote work options they facilitate. Patients will receive superior service while also enjoying the anytime/anywhere availability of the digital solutions. And providers will be able to count on the support provided by a robust and efficient Revenue Cycle Management process while also being able to expand their clinical capacity as they reduce their non-clinical/administrative space requirements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed nearly every aspect of our lives. When we finally emerge from this crisis, Firstsource hopes that the efficiencies achieved through its digital solutions continue to benefit providers and patients long into the future.



i Johns Hopkins University, Whiting School of Engineering COVID-19 dashboard <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

ii Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Apr 9, 2020) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html>

iii Larry Dignan, "CFOs looking to make remote work, telecommuting more permanent following COVID-19, says Gartner survey," ZDNet (Apr 6, 2020) <https://www.zdnet.com/article/cfos-looking-to-make-remote-work-telecommuting-more-permanent-following-covid-19-says-gartner-survey/>

iv Work-at-home after COVID-19—our forecast," Global Workplace Analytics (GWA), <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/work-at-home-after-covid-19-our-forecast>; GWA, press release (Apr 1, 2020) <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/brags/news-releases>

v Bertha Coombs, "Telehealth visits are booming as doctors and patients embrace distancing amid the coronavirus crisis," CNBC (Apr 4, 2020) <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/04/03/telehealth-visits-could-top-1-billion-in-2020-amid-the-coronavirus-crisis.html>

vi Our forecast," GWA, <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/work-at-home-after-covid-19-our-forecast>

vii Airtasker, "The benefits of working from home" (updated Mar 31, 2020) <https://www.airtasker.com/blog/the-benefits-of-working-from-home/>. See also, "Costs and benefits," GWA, <https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/resources/costs-benefits>

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