

# Understanding the Point of Care Ecosystem

Many dermatologists may realize the interaction between the patient and caregiver at the point of care is a foundational element of effective healthcare. However, some dermatologists may not fully recognize how the entire point of care ecosystem, which includes patient-caregiver interaction, equipment, room layout, technology and processes, has an effect on improving the overall experience. As engaged dermatologists work to better understand the point of care ecosystem as a complex integrated system, they are more easily able to identify possible barriers that could prevent a well-coordinated patient experience and lead to inefficiencies.

For instance, when viewed from the lens of a point of care ecosystem, the patient-caregiver interaction becomes every touch point that the patient has with the dermatology practice. Take the waiting room. While traditionally not viewed as part of the patient-caregiver interaction, it could potentially have a negative impact on patient experience and efficiency – especially if the patient wait time is too long or the room is not seen as being comfortable or inviting.

As workflow software continues to advance, dermatologists can gain a better understanding of how rooms and equipment are being utilized and the amount of time patients and staff spend with specific processes. Technology such as real-time locating systems (RTLS), which have been used in hospitals for many years, can tell dermatology practices how much time a patient spent in the waiting room before being called to an examination or procedure. It can also provide visibility into the patient experience when they leave the waiting room and are taken to the dermatology room.

Armed with this type of information, practices and clinics can make decisions based on historical data to shorten wait times, or even eliminate the waiting room altogether. With RTLS, the status of dermatology rooms is always known, and patients can be immediately directed to an available room. This self-rooming workflow eliminates one of the most frustrating aspects of the patient experience while also freeing staff to focus on value-added activities.

The situational awareness brought about by RTLS enables the staff to collectively deliver a true patient-centered experience at every encounter. Care teams can align their efforts to ensure the appropriate staff persons are serving the needs of the patient at every turn. With RTLS, team members, including care coordinators, can align their efforts in real time to increase efficiencies further.

## Connecting the Ecosystem

As new technologies with greater connectivity and functionality are introduced to the industry, a fully connected point of care ecosystem is becoming more of a reality. A connected ecosystem integrates processes, equipment and caregivers at the point of care to significantly increase efficiencies and enhance the patient and caregiver experience. It also ensures a more satisfying and seamless patient experience by providing a platform where organizations can leverage new technologies, incorporate best practices and employ greater standardization to improve care and outcomes.

**Benefits resulting from a fully connected ecosystem include:**

1. **Greater Visibility** into existing work processes that gives organizations the insight they need to make data-driven business decisions that will ultimately enhance patient care. As organizations gain a greater awareness of the entire ecosystem, they are in a better position to make additional optimizations.
2. **A Standardized Approach** enables organizations to develop clinical protocols that drive better outcomes. It helps eliminate human variables that often increase the likelihood of errors and contribute to inaccurate diagnoses.
3. **Greater Efficiency** is achieved by allowing healthcare organizations to identify opportunities to enhance and improve processes and workflows. Caregivers and practice administrators can better track the progress and success of initiatives designed to increase efficiencies and cost savings.
4. **Enhanced Patient-Caregiver Interaction** is essential to improving outcomes. By understanding the time patients and staff spend on specific activities within the clinical space, as well as how rooms and equipment are utilized, healthcare organizations can make better decisions and deliver a patient-centered experience at every encounter.

