

3fivetwo Healthcare, part of the Kingsbridge Healthcare Group has been delivering public health services across surgical, medical and diagnostic disciplines for over a decade. This experience has shaped our expertise to achieve efficiencies through technology enabled healthcare and innovation.

Our team harness analytics, technology and apply our expertise to find new opportunities to help improve clinical, operational and financial performance.

About Health Innovation Hub Ireland

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI) was established by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health, supported by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to drive collaboration between the health service and enterprise.

We offer companies the opportunity for pilot and clinical validation studies and the health service access to innovative products, services and devices that they may not otherwise be exposed to.

HIHI is built on the recognition that collaboration with enterprise can benefit patient care, patient pathways and outcomes.



The Healthcare Challenge

Annually, approximately 500,000 outpatient appointments go unattended and are recorded as a Did Not Attend (DNA) in the Irish Health Service. These DNA's lead to unutilised system capacity and ultimately contribute to the lengthy outpatient waiting lists experienced across the Irish Health Service. In Cork University Maternity Hospital the DNA rate for the Gynaecology Outpatient Services was approximately 27% during 2019. This high rate had a knock on impact on the hospitals' ability to reduce its overall waiting list number.

In 2017 the CUMH outpatient gynaecology waiting list stood at nearly 5,000. It was one of the biggest risks to the South/Southwest Hospital Group and was the highest waiting list for outpatient gynaecology in Ireland (representing 17% of the national total). Many of these patients were waiting long periods (18-36 months) for an appointment.

The team in CUMH led by their Clinical Director Professor John Higgins embarked on the Gynaecology Waiting List Initiative

in 2017 aimed at addressing this backlog with a target of reducing the overall list to under 1000 patients and average wait times to under 12 weeks. The initiative has successfully reduced the waiting list to 900 as at February 2020 with average wait times now at 10 weeks. The waiting list now represents just 4% of the national waiting list total for gynaecology. This material reduction was achieved through extraordinary efforts by the team at CUMH involving a number of key initiatives such as the #GynaecologyWeek in 2019 (seeing 500 extra patients over 5 days), additional evening and weekend clinics at CUMH, new clinics at primary care centres and streamlining the clinics at CUMH.

In parallel, a new electronic booking system was introduced to CUMH, by 3fivetwo Healthcare and HIHI to build on the backlog elimination initiative undertaken by the staff at CUMH.

The Healthcare Solution

Digital technologies have transformed how most industries communicate and engage their customer base. They offer customers greater choice, flexibility and 24/7 visibility and control over their appointment. The team in CUMH were partnered with 3fivetwo Healthcare, a Northern Ireland based healthcare provider who have researched and developed a suite of digital products which they now utilise to support the delivery of their clinical services. One of these systems is a platform called "Engage", a Patient Engagement Platform. The platform has been designed to facilitate, simplify and streamline waiting list management and validation, whilst also incorporating an appointment booking module to offer patients greater choice, access and flexibility in managing their appointment.

Over a 6 month period, 500 patient appointments were managed through "Engage". Patients continued to receive the standard appointment letter. But rather than receiving a fixed date and time for their appointment they were asked to go online and login to "Engage" where they entered their demographics and confirmed or cancelled the need for an appointment. Once confirmed they were offered the option to select an appointment from a range of dates and times.

The following were the key objectives for the pilot:

1. Measure the impact a digital solution has on the DNA rate
2. Measure the patients uptake of a digital solution
3. Measure the value patients place on having choice with appointment scheduling
4. Measure the impact a digital solution has on a waiting list
5. Measure the impact on administration staff
6. Present timely and current trends for analysis

HIHI Role

Health Innovation Hub Ireland forged the partnership between CUMH and 3fivetwo Healthcare and continued to act as a broker between both parties for the duration of the pilot. The HIHI project manager supported the development of the Project Initiation Document which clearly outlined the scope of the project and responsibilities of all parties. Key milestones for the project supported by HIHI included:

1. Ensuring the technology was accessible to all users
2. Development of a communication strategy for engaging patients
3. GDPR compliance
4. Managed communication with external stakeholders to the project
5. Testing of the application
6. Patient surveys
7. Data analysis
8. Completion of Project Report



Outcome Report

Patient's adoption rate of the online booking platform was high, with 65% of patients using the "Engage" platform to book or cancel their appointment. A significant finding was that during the pilot 55% of patients that utilised "Engage" did so outside of the core working hours i.e. 9am to 5pm. This was identified as one of the key advantages to online booking systems.

The following were the key outcomes:

1. DNA rate reduced from 27% to 3%
2. 65% of patients chose to book online
3. Clinic Utilisation ran at 97% during the pilot
4. 98% of patients would like to use "Engage" in the future
5. 94% of patients prefer using "Engage" to phoning

From an operations perspective the use of an online tool such as "Engage" offered the team access to real time activity data which significantly improved their ability to maximise the available capacity and plan and forecast activity levels weeks in advance and review the overall performance of the system.

Testimonial

Working with the Health Innovation Hub Ireland has been an exciting experience from pitch process to pilot. The Hub are a very experienced and knowledgeable team who have opened doors for us to provide innovation to the Health Service. They paired us with a fantastic team at Cork University Maternity Hospital who embraced the project and helped us achieve amazing results.

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