

SOFTWARE BUYER'S GUIDE: KEY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR CHOOSING CARE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

As a care management enterprise, you understand that selecting the right remote care management software is crucial for optimizing your organization's care delivery model. You're ready to grow your business while mitigating the cost of delivering care, and you likely need a wide scope of EHR and device integrations.

This buyer's guide will provide you with key questions to ask potential software partners and the context to help you decide. This approach focuses not only on technology adoption but also on achieving your organization's specific goals, such as improved workforce distribution, supporting more patient volume, and a strong return on investment.

Goals

It's likely that you're beyond the design-build stage of your remote care program and are looking for software that takes your business to the next level. However, articulating your organizational priorities is a best practice and allows you to tailor the application workflows from the start and track its operational effectiveness.

In our experience, these have been the commonly desired goals for the care management companies we support:

- Grow your service lines to support more practices
- Support more patients while controlling costs
- Enable complete integration with multiple EHRs
- Effectively manage patient care 24/7/365
- Support multiple devices and technologies
- Manage and support hundreds of patient conditions
- Adapt and manage many patient actions simultaneously
- Have greater workforce visibility
- Improve care delivery team satisfaction
- Manage turnover and workforce processes
- Demonstrate healthcare cost savings and efficiencies for your clients, and aid them in transitioning to Value-Based Care

Prioritizing these goals can help build a must-have checklist for your potential software partner's offering.

Scalability

The ability to scale is essential for care delivery organizations. To scale effectively, your remote care platform must have capacity for growing patient populations, tools for distributed workforce enablement, and intelligent pathways for many use cases. Choosing a scalable platform that handles complex operations and patient populations with multiple conditions will be critical for success today and tomorrow. As your patient population expands, the platform should seamlessly adapt to increased demand.

You may want to inquire if the system is task or template based. A task-based system is more scalable for large organizations, as it is designed to enable distributed workforces without compromising high-quality care.

Portals offered by device providers are typically limited in the scale they can reach and less flexible than software that is device-agnostic. The best software goes beyond automation of device management. It also offers AI-assisted pathways that dynamically adapt to changing patient needs while simplifying the clinical decision-making process. This automation reduces the administrative workload on teams, allowing clinicians to concentrate on direct patient care, which in turn improves patient outcomes. Some higher scale programs will have one care team member who can manage up to 400 remote care patients.

You'll also need to vet your software partner's track record of onboarding large patient populations. Will you need to onboard thousands of patients monthly, weekly, or even daily? Ensure your software provider can attest to the challenges and solutions for innumerable levels of growth, and consider the scale you'll need now and, in the future.

Ask your potential remote care software provider:

- Is the platform task or template-based?
- Is a workforce management system built-in? Are individual work cues built into the system, and workflow assignment? An example in practice: how will the system allow responsiveness if one of your team members is out sick?
- What ratio of care team members to patients can the platform enable?
- How many patients is the platform equipped to manage? What is the scale of your clients' current programs?
- What conditions and care paths can be managed through the platform?
- How many patients can be onboarded monthly? Weekly? Daily?

Tailored Solutions and Expert Program Design

Traditional software can feel like a one-size-fits-all solution. Most healthcare organizations need a robust platform to implement remote care programs for specific patient, clinician, and payer needs. A customized plan leads to better engagement and outcomes.

Software should be designed with exceptional configurability, enabling it to adapt seamlessly to various settings. Whether you're part of a health system, a private practice, or any other care delivery organization, the platform should be tailored to meet your specific requirements.

Alongside versatile software, expert guidance should be provided to ensure the implementation of best practices for unique contexts. Teams should consist of remote care partners with extensive experience in designing programs across diverse healthcare environments, allowing them to address the complexities of business needs comprehensively.

Ask your remote care software partner:

- Does your organization offer program design services? Are these services included in the software cost?
- What types of organizations have you designed remote care programs for?
- What unique use cases have you designed programs for?
- Can the program be designed specifically to fit the goals of my payers, patients, and clinicians?
- What care management programs can be managed through your platform? Can you design additional programs?
- Some common examples to ask about include:
 - Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)
 - Chronic Care Management (CCM)
 - Diabetes Care Management (DCM)
 - Transitional Care Management (TCM)
 - Remote Therapeutic Monitoring (RTM)
 - Principal Care Management (PCM)
 - Behavioral Health Integration (BHI)
 - Annual Wellness Visits (AWV)
 - Value-Based Care (VBC) initiatives

EHR Integrations

Seamless integration with your existing EHR(s) or your clients' EHR(s) streamlines workflow and eliminates redundant data entry, extra logins, and errors. Providers living in the EHR environment should have access to the same real-time data as the care managers living in their care management software. This saves time and improves the overall efficiency of your remote care program.

Deep integration with multiple EHRs is imperative to service multiple clients. In this common instance, the initial EHR integration process should be systematic and timely.

Ask your remote care software partner:

- Are you integrated with many leading EHRs, and which integrations are bi-directional?
- Will patient enrollment, care documentation and claims integrate with the practice workflow?
- Will vital signs sync back to the EHR?
- Do you have expertise in supporting migration from one EHR to another?

Integrations - Devices Connectivity & Inventory Management

Reliable data transfer from connected devices is needed to monitor patient health remotely and compliantly. But with more data comes the potential for added workload unless data can be managed in an AI-assisted platform. Additionally, device inventory, shipping, and support provide for a smooth implementation and ongoing operations. You want to make sure your remote care software is integrated with the devices you intend to utilize now and in the future.

Ask your remote care software partner:

- Ensuring device connectivity and seamless data transfer is often challenging, especially in rural areas. Does the platform integrate with devices that solve for this?
- Are triggered alerts built into the software for out-of-range vital transmissions? Are these alerts adjustable at the practice, provider and patient level?
- Does the platform enable device inventory management? What if I have my own devices?
- Is device ordering and fulfillment built into the platform, but also visible within the integrated EHR?
- What if my organization wants to upgrade or change devices? How is that handled?

Implementation

A smooth implementation process is essential for success, particularly for care management companies that are adding new clients at a rapid pace. You'll want a partner that takes the time to look at your workflows and adjust for you. Even with this hands-on approach, your user experiences will require some training and guidance and therefore requires a software partner with a track record of implementation success.

The ability to implement in a timely manner is the key to showing rapid ROI. You will want a partner who can onboard your organization in 4-6 weeks or less, and even more efficiently for your clients.

The investment you're planning to make is more than purchasing a solution that you believe works for you – it's beyond the implementation that is the key for sustainability. You'll want to find a partner that offers the "keys to the castle" yet remains close by for ongoing support. Staff turnover for example, is an important business reality that must be planned for, so you need a partner that will support you during that process.

Ask your remote care software partner:

- How many client accounts have you implemented, and what types of healthcare organizations do they represent?
- What does the implementation timeline look like?
- What are the key milestones?
- What support does the platform provider offer during implementation and post-go live?

Functionality and Features

Unless you've utilized care management software before and have perhaps outgrown it, it may be challenging to preemptively know what functionality is a must. Some features make compliance and practice adoption simple; others lead to quantifiably better outcomes for your patients.

From our experience, features for digital patient engagement are a no-compromise zone. Enabling remote care is more than a single touchpoint each month, it's multiple touchpoints that reduce the cost of delivering care.

As with any new software purchase, you will want to check the specific functionality you currently require. You'll also want to understand the process for requesting new features and enhancements as your programs evolve.

Ask your remote care management partner:

- Is there a feature for patient search and cohort management?
- Are there built-in patient assessments? Are they customizable?
- Are there tools for medication reconciliation?
- What patient outreach tools are built in? Do you have an integrated dialing system?
- How does the platform enable digital patient messaging?
- Is time-tracking enabled for all care activities?
- Is there a clinical goal library?

Information Security and Technical Specifications

You'll want your potential software partner to describe the security features incorporated into the platform, such as how data is encrypted at rest and in transit. Look for a platform that is HIPAA compliant and has a track record of adherence to other frequently changing regulations.

You'll want to ensure that vitals from RPM devices are received via API with the device provider. All clinical applications should require two-factor authentication and have role based and account-based permissions controlling access to any patient data.

Technical support should be readily available 24/7/365 as well as real-time platform performance metrics.

Ask your remote care software partner:

- Where are the software applications hosted? Is the software web-based for real time updates?
- Does the platform integrate with EHRs that are HL7, FHIR and/or API based?
- Does the platform offer HIPAA secure, role-based access controls?
- How are software licenses assigned? How does the platform ensure the security of patient data and meet regulatory requirements?
- What is the platform's uptime? Are the application's performance metrics available to clients real-time?
- Are technical support teams US-based? Are they available 24/7/365?

Data and Reporting

Some of the most important questions you should ask of your potential software partner surround reporting and analytics functionalities, and rightly so. Best-in-class software will enable advanced analytics and reporting to track outcomes and ROI.

Having access to automated billing and extensive catalog of reports can maximize revenue opportunities and ensure the financial viability of your operations. Additionally, look for software that delivers precise analytics to measure outcomes data across multiple points of care.

Ask your remote care software partner:

- What commonly used reports are available to clients? Can we utilize the platform to report on enrollments, patient engagement, device logistics, compliance and adherence, team member performance, and vitals trending?
- Are you separately integrated with other advanced analytics tools, that our teams may leverage?
- Is there an integrated billing engine that compares activities – completed or incomplete – and generates claims that comply with the requirements of the payor?

White-Labeling

The most frequent remote care software users are either care management companies or health systems, who often desire their own application branding. In these instances, the ability to white-label various aspects of the application is desirable, and sometimes even a requirement. If this is applicable to you, you will want to understand which components of the application can be white-labeled, and at what cost.

Ask your remote care software partner:

- What platform-wide branding can be white-labeled? What secondary, or account level branding can be custom branded?
- What service level, or patient-facing branding can be white-labeled?
- What domains, application landing pages, or mobile applications can be white-labeled?
- Of your white-labeling capabilities, which have associated costs?

In summary, by asking the right questions throughout the selection process, you can ensure you choose the right remote care platform and connectivity partner for your healthcare organization's unique goals. We hope this guide provides you with valuable information you need to help you make the best remote care software decision for your organization today and tomorrow.

Reach out to sales@mdrevolution.com find out what other care delivery organizations are doing to bring state-of-the-art remote care management to their clients and the patients they serve.