



# Preferral

## **Better Care Through Better Referrals**

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While Saving Time and Money

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Thousands of patient referrals are made each day across the U.S. healthcare system. Patients' health, and in some cases their lives, depends on this care being coordinated correctly and quickly. Yet, the vast majority of physician practices rely on inefficient, unreliable and un-trackable methods to communicate this important information.

Streamlining the referral process benefits all parties involved – the referring physicians, the specialists and the patients.

### Fast Facts about Referrals

**46%** referrals that go unscheduled.<sup>1</sup>

**<5%** referrals made via Preferral that go unscheduled.

**>50%** portion of specialists' new patients generated by physician referrals annually.<sup>2</sup>

**63%** portion of referring physicians dissatisfied with specialist referral communication.<sup>3</sup>

**24/7** real-time updates and complete transparency throughout the Preferral referral process.

**55%** portion of high-severity missed-diagnoses malpractice claims involving referral tracking issues.<sup>4</sup>

**0** referrals lost when managed through Preferral.

### Primary Care Practice Saves \$30-40K and Stacks of Post-it® Notes Annually

Cool Springs Internal Medicine and Pediatrics serves 5,000 patients per month from two locations. Typically, each month the practice's 13 providers make a combined 600 patient referrals to a variety of specialists.

Historically, these referrals were managed by the practice's nurses, requiring them to fax multiple forms and spend an average of 1.5 hours on the phone each day. This cumbersome process was keeping the nurses from providing face-to-face patient care and was simply ineffective. Each specialist required different forms, faxes got lost, and oftentimes, it took at least 5-7 days to secure a patient's appointment with the specialist.

The practice administrator wanted a solution that would streamline the referral process to improve efficiency and help their patients get the care they needed as quickly as possible.

In 2017, the practice began using Preferral. At the same time, they consolidated the referral process to be managed by a dedicated referral specialist, alleviating the nurses of this burden. According to Patrick Stearns, the Practice Administrator, "If we didn't use Preferral we would have to hire an additional full-time referral specialist. That would cost the practice \$30,000-\$40,000 per year."

*"Go in any referral specialist's office and you'll see 50 Post-it Notes with patient referral information on them. Being able to communicate with specialists in a secure way is a valuable, continuity of care issue. Without Preferral, it's hard to manage referrals without paper and the more paper you have, the bigger the risk."*

*- Patrick Stearns, MBA, CMPE  
Practice Administrator  
Cool Springs Internal Medicine and Pediatrics*

The benefits go beyond the time and cost savings. Preferral helps practices make more accurate referrals, which enhances patient satisfaction. The platform's built-in logic takes into account information such as the patient's insurance and care requirements, matching those against the specialists' capabilities and accepted list of payers.

“Preferral allows us to hand the baton to the specialist. We send the referral through the portal, within minutes the specialist receives it and can contact the patient directly to schedule an appointment,” says Stearns. “We always do what is best for the patient. But, if I have the choice between two specialists and all things are equal, I’ll go with the one who is on Preferral.”

## Improved Communication Reduces Pain at Physical Therapy Group

Star Physical Therapy is an outpatient physical therapy practice with 65 locations and 300 providers throughout Tennessee. The practice, which provides care for post-acute surgical patients and injured athletes, among other patients, receives thousands of referrals each month.

Before last year, 50% of Star Physical Therapy’s referrals were sent via fax. According to Damon Adalgren, Director of Operations, faxes, which can get lost, are an unreliable method of communication. Because of this, the practice wanted to reduce its reliance on faxes. Further, several of its referral sources were requesting a way to send referrals electronically to Star Physical Therapy.

Star Physical Therapy chose Preferral because the platform is agnostic, allowing it to work with all EHR systems, and it is user friendly. “The people at Preferral are great to work with and receptive to our requests. We got ramped up quickly and it is affordable,” says Adalgren.

Provider-to-provider communication is key to ensuring optimal patient outcomes. The Preferral platform is unique in the fact that it allows the users to see the date/time stamp and the person who received the communication.

“We want to make sure doctors can confirm that the specialist is seeing their patient,” says Adalgren. “Preferral allows us to communicate to referral sources and get a confirmation that it was received. This also assures that we get all the information we need in a timely manner.”

When it comes to physical therapy, time is often of the essence, as it is with many other specialties. Injured and post-operative patients are usually in pain, so getting the care they need quickly is of the utmost importance. Preferral’s online system alerts specialists when they get a referral and then sends additional daily notifications until that referral is addressed.

“This is a big deal. Thanks to the alerts, a referral doesn’t get forgotten. Plus, we get more actionable information,” says Adalgren. “Advocacy is built into the software. Preferral is a great tool – no other platform does this.”

## Texts and Transparency Help Patients Get the Care They Need

The amount of time and effort involved in getting a patient scheduled with a specialist is a hassle for referral sources. But, it’s even worse for the patient. Patients may be worried, in pain, or their lives may even be on the line. They need to get an appointment as quickly as possible – and they need to be informed of what is happening along the way.

Once a referral has been submitted, the Preferral system contacts the patient, letting them know the referral is being processed, giving them directions for what they need to do next and whom they should call with questions. Once the referral is scheduled, the patient gets a confirmation along with a map to the specialist’s office. Preferral also sends an appointment reminder to the patient one day prior, either via text or email.

Preferral gives patients the information they want and helps them get the care they need.

“Our business is to take care of people who are hurt. Preferral allows us to do business better.

- Damon Adalgren  
Director of Operations  
Star Physical Therapy

“It is a terrible feeling having to wait to get an appointment with a specialist. Preferral lets us deliver quicker and better care for our patients.

- Damon Adalgren  
Director of Operations  
Star Physical Therapy

## About Preferral

Preferral is an online platform that allows medical practices to send and receive referrals quickly, easily and securely. No faxes, no phone calls, no lost referrals.

Specialists can share their custom referral form with any referring practice. Referring practices can then easily refer online anytime, with no account required. Preferral improves the efficiency of the referral process so patients have better access to specialty care.

Schedule a demo to see how Preferral can help your practice manage referrals more effectively.

***Better. Easier. Referrals.***

**Preferral.com**

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1 Barnett M, Sirui S, Landon B. Trends in Physician Referrals in the United States. Arch Intern Med. 2012;172(2):163-170.doi:10.1001/archinternmed.2011.722

2 <https://www.kyruus.com/new-report-reveals-19-7-million-misdirected-physician-referrals-u-s-year>

3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1495590/>

4 <http://blog.treatspace.com/faulty-referral-management-raises-risk-of-malpractice>