

# Covid-19: Creating a Virtual Contact Center for Healthcare Organizations

With COVID-19 disrupting healthcare organizations' operations, contact centers are overwhelmed with volume spikes, and patient calls may not be getting through to providers. Additionally, tight workspaces and shared equipment associated with contact centers puts employees at high risk for exposure to the coronavirus.

For healthcare organizations, virtual contact centers may provide a way to manage immediate COVID-19 concerns while providing the foundation for long-term transformation to meet the needs of healthcare tomorrow.

## Virtual Contact Center Guidelines

Organizations can act quickly to shift call center agents to virtual work environments, stemming the spread and risk from COVID-19 while increasing safety, access to care and overall consumer and employee satisfaction. Here are immediate steps organizations can take:

- Prioritize, manage and address increased call volume by introducing new workflow processes that triage COVID-19 calls from other medical inquiries.
- Create scripts specific to COVID-19 for agents to properly route and escalate medical inquiries.
- Implement cloud-based technology that allows for remote, home-based workers to handle call volume and collaborate and communicate with supervisors and peers as needed to provide real-time responses to consumers and patients.
- Optimize and institute best-in-class quality assurance practices and recommendations that specifically address COVID-19 consumer expectations to increase call throughput and open capacity for other medical requests.
- Resource an internal site with FAQ information and templated scripts for triaging.
- Explore expanded operating hours to improve capacity constraints; temporarily routing non-urgent requests through vendors can alleviate volume issues, reduce staff hours and increase consumer satisfaction.
- Develop clear performance metrics and communication plans on COVID-19 management for each key stakeholder, including employees and consumers.
- Retool staffing models to align forecasted call volume to staff hours; creating staffing flexibility can help alleviate capacity constraints and improve call quality and speed.

Virtual call centers will become more prevalent as workers and employers seek additional flexibility and working norms shift due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once immediate steps have been taken to efficiently stand up a virtual contact center that caters to consumer needs and employee safety, organizations should then begin transitioning their contact center for the future.

Leaders will need to consider facility-based and remote workforce models alongside the changing business landscape, which will demand more efficiency in triaging calls, mitigating risks, increasing flexibility and improving service quality.

For more information, [contact us](#) or visit our [COVID-19 resources page](#).



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