



TRANSFORMING HOME CARE FOR THE BETTER

A Case Study





Summit Home Health & Hospice is a Medicare and Medicaid-certified group dedicated to finding better ways to integrate patient care with customer service. Summit's 90-person team of physical therapists, registered nurses, and certified nursing assistants provide home health and hospice care to seniors and other home-bound patients along the Wasatch Front, Utah.

Introduction

Summit Home Health & Hospice is an innovative early adopter of mobile messaging and communications platforms. After struggling to find a workable and HIPAA-secure application, they discovered Buzz, Skyscape's secure medical messaging platform. Summit has used the application to vastly improve communications and workflows, to measurably reduce readmissions, and to improve quality of care.

“Everyone should be using something like this. It really has changed how we operate on a day-to-day basis.”

Joshua Simpson, *Vice President of Clinical Operations*
Summit Home Health & Hospice

This case study provides essential insights into the real-world potential of mobile and cloud-based platforms in care settings as well as lessons for their successful adoption.¹

1. This case study details the implementation of the communication and collaboration platform Buzz in a professional healthcare environment, providing vital guidance on how it can be utilized in any healthcare environment with similar levels of success, resulting in tangible cost-savings, and more compassionate care.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summit adopted mobile communications much earlier than many of its home care peers. Unfortunately, after developing app-dependent workflows and practices, the application they relied on shut down without warning. With a clear understanding of how mobile technology transforms care, Summit knew exactly what they needed in an application. With Buzz, they found a collaborative partner that was constantly adapting to clinical needs, working closely with care staff who use the application every day.

Skyscape founder Sandeep Shah and their head of business development flew to Summit's headquarters in Utah for a 2-day onboarding session. The Skyscape team treated the meeting as not just as an opportunity to train teams, but to learn the specific needs of Summit's diverse clinical environments.

Joshua Simpson, Vice President of Clinical Operations, and Shannon Cozens, Vice President of Care Navigation at Summit, provided Buzz with valuable insights that continued to shape the product.

“Right from the time that Joshua Simpson reached out to us as a part of their extensive platform due diligence, it was very clear that they knew exactly what they needed.”

Sandeep Shah, Founder & CEO
Skyscape

ABOUT SKYSCAPE



The team at Summit was quick to identify pain points with similar applications: frustrating tradeoffs between ease of use and HIPAA security, unmanageable auto-delete features, and complex sign-up and onboarding procedures. Buzz was designed to be flexible and intuitive, so it not only avoided these mistakes, but provided further improvements.

Additionally, the Summit team challenged Skyscape with their wish list to support their usage pattern and the team responded faster than Summit had experienced with any other vendor.

Background

Summit Home Health and Hospice is a busy organization, delivering thousands of care visits each year to patients with medical needs, including those who are managing multiple chronic conditions, undergoing post-operative recovery, or suffering from terminal illness.

Summit has a set of unique workflow needs as their clinicians provide care to patients as they move from care centers and hospitals to long-term care, rehabilitation, home, and hospice facilities. Accounting for continually changing patient populations and shifting care settings, arranging safe and efficient travel for staff and patients, and maintaining continuity in their administrative operations presents scheduling, logistics, emergency preparedness, and response planning challenges.

HISTORY & THE CHALLENGE

Summit's operations involve coordinating a large number of team members including physical therapists, registered nurses, and certified nursing assistants, to work with a wide variety of community partners, including healthcare institutions, transportation services, pharmacists, physicians, and more. On the other end of the care spectrum, they also serve patients and their family members.

To Summit's credit, they recognized the need for a communication platform that could help streamline the complex needs of the operations, while maintaining a patient-centric workflow.



Being an early adopter has its own problems—no wonder it's called the bleeding edge. After establishing a workflow with one product, our provider shutdown.”

Summit Digital Team

For Joshua Simpson and his team, shifting to the new paradigm of digital communication was a journey.

After choosing a mobile communications provider, they diligently developed standard operating procedures, and trained their staff accordingly. Through the initial learning process and hiccups, they were able to fine-tune their process. But, just when they were hitting their groove,

their provider sent them an abrupt notice that it was shutting down. It was a big blow.

Rather than getting discouraged, Joshua went to work, this time armed with a deeper understanding of the necessary features and capabilities for functional mobile communications, along with a formidable due diligence checklist for the companies that they would choose to work with.

“We had a list of around 10 to 12 requirements, and nothing out there came close. Other vendors made a lot of promises but didn’t deliver. Buzz checked off just about every requirement.”

Joshua Simpson

After the Due Diligence

The Solution

Summit adopted mobile communications much earlier than many of its home care peers.

Unfortunately, after losing access to the application they relied on shut down without warning. With a clear understanding of how mobile technology transforms care, Summit knew exactly what they needed in an application. With Buzz, they found a collaborative partner that was constantly adapting to clinical needs, working closely with care staff who use the application every day.

BUZZ + SUMMIT

Despite the difficulties they were having with their earlier provider, Summit was concerned about the transition and onboarding process to the new application.

Skyscape understood those fears and delivered a smooth experience, in some cases even developing and delivering new features to simplify Summit’s workflow.



Today, the entire Summit team is pleased with the level of attention and support delivered by the Skyscape Buzz team.

For Skyscape, providing strong support is a central value.

Summit team members, for example, often shared patient updates on Buzz after their shifts, causing other team members' phones to ping with notifications well into the night. The Buzz team realized it was vital to pair private notes sections with features to easily import notes to the shared patient threads during business hours.

The strong, in-house development team at Skyscape was able to implement those changes quickly.

When COVID-19 changed the landscape of care in early 2020, Skyscape quickly introduced reliable HIPAA-compliant teleconferencing to support remote patient contact, with no need for patients to download the app or third-party software.



PATIENT-CENTRIC COMMUNICATIONS

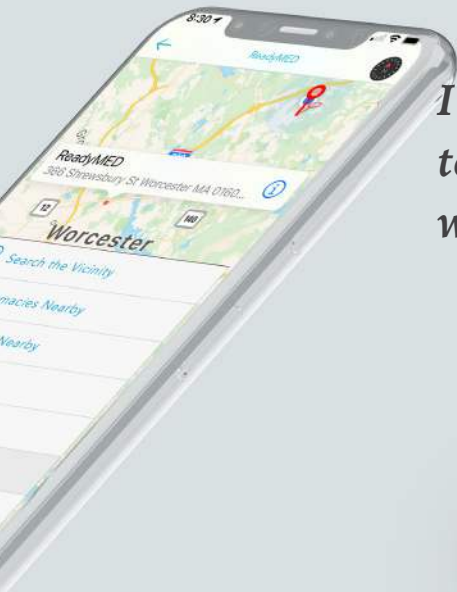
Buzz is not simply a HIPAA-compliant substitute for text, phone, and email, it's a tool to improve workflows and patient outcomes.

One of Summit's most successful strategies has been adapting patient-centric communication threads.

This allows team members to centralize all communication about a patient in one easy-to-access place. Summit uses this feature to provide seamless handoffs between inpatient and outpatient services, and between Summit and third-party care providers. While all 90 Summit staff members use Buzz, the organization communicates with over 100 community partners who are also Buzz users.

“We have avoided countless rehospitalizations due to secure messaging and the ability to quickly share patient information with community partners. Thus, the hand-off of our patients is swift and safe.”

Shannon Cozzens, Vice President, Care Navigation
Summit Home Health & Hospice



I cannot remember how I delivered the information to providers and contacts before Buzz, and I don't want to.”

- Shannon Cozzens




COMPASSIONATE CARE

The partners at Summit recalled the emotional difficulty of showing up to a scheduled home visit only to find that a patient had passed away the day before. Incidents like these were not only embarrassing and emotionally taxing for staff, they sometimes led patients' families to believe that the death of their loved one was not important enough to be clearly communicated between the various groups delivering care. Clinical Communication & Collaboration (CC&C) solutions like Buzz, that allow for multiple groups to converse in one place, completely eliminate these communication gaps.

Because patient communication is centralized on Buzz, care providers can confidently answer questions from patients and their families regarding any aspect of care, even when that care is provided by a third party. Patients, families, and clinicians will all notice the difference. Cloud storage offers care providers the ability to review past communications about a patient, even if they are readmitted years later or interfaced with a different group in the Buzz network.

Buzz has enabled the Summit team to provide care even more compassionately to the patients and their families in the times of their needs.

Conclusions



“We’ve been able to more than cut our rehospitalization rate in half.”

Mobile communication platforms are powerfully transforming home and hospice care, and can drastically improve patient outcomes. Applications like Buzz will become increasingly important in care delivery, and are especially vital for coordination of care between care providers.

Successful implementation of these technologies relies on strong and continued collaboration between care providers and application developers. Companies with in-house programming teams will be able to tailor their software to real clinical environments. Mobile communication software is not simply a HIPAA-compliant replacement for email, text, and phone—it is a powerful tool for managing workflows and augmenting patient care.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Some of the important takeaways from Summit's experience has been to ensure that the platform provider demonstrates the following key attributes:

- History of innovation
- Unparalleled dedication to support
- Leadership with vision

“Our patients ultimately receive more timely and effective care.”

Bailee Hamilton, RN, Case Manager, Clinical Education Specialist
Summit Home Health & Hospice

“Buzz has not only contributed to successful outcomes for our patients, but also our company. We have recently won quality awards and had increases in our Medicare star ratings and HCAHPS scores.”

Bobbi Scadden, RN, MSN Home Health Director
Summit Home Health, Layton

Insights

“Applications must adapt to clinical environments, not the other way around.”

“A strong, in-house programming team allows for fast product changes to meet care providers’ needs.”

“Skyscape's founder & CEO is hands-on with technology, and also pays keen attention to our needs. This says a lot about the company.”

Joshua Simpson, Vice President of Clinical Operations
Summit Home Health & Hospice

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