



## Keeping It in the Family:

Helping Family Practices Streamline Operations while Still Strengthening Connections with Patients

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# Introduction

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## Family medical practices are, without exaggeration, the backbone of medical services in the United States.

They are very often the first doctors we visit after being born; they are the doctors that we see at least every year as we grow up; they are the doctors that we go to for all the “little things” like colds, flu, bumps, bruises and questions; and they are most often the doctors we have the longest relationships with.

In fact, if you grew up in America and your family followed the American Academy of Pediatrics’ (AAP) recommendations for check-ups and doctor appointments, you would have had at least 26 visits with your family medical practitioner by the time you turned 18. And that’s not even counting colds, flu, additional vaccinations or any other minor medical needs you might have had along the way. Also, depending on where and how long you stayed in one area, you might have even continued to see the same doctor for years afterward.

Family medicine relationships usually last years and even sometimes a lifetime. To succeed, these relationships must encompass more than just advice and prescriptions - they must be built on trust. Even in the early days of formalizing the core tenets of family medical practice and finding ways

to differentiate it from general practice, leaders at the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine cited an “emphasis on an enduring relationship with patients and a belief that trust would help patients and doctors go deeply into the psychological and physical complaints and problems.”

Estimates from the CDC’s National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey show that anywhere from 20 to 25% of all doctor’s office visits in the United States are to family medical practices; it’s clear how incredibly important these relationships are for long-term patient wellness. And how important it is for providers to get these interactions right.



However, despite our nostalgic view of the friendly American family doctor from Norman Rockwell paintings, the truth is that it can be a challenge for many practices to maintain these kinds of relationships and accessibility amidst the modern backdrop of increased specialization, insurance requirements, patient numbers and HMOs. Family medical practices today must navigate many challenges to ensure they can manage their operations effectively and still be trusted advisors for their patients.

In terms of operations, many family medical practices somewhat ironically need the same thing they are trying to provide their patients - a partner they can trust to work with them over time to ensure their needs are met, now and down the road. That's why it's crucial that family practices connect with the technology support that will help them minimize time spent on logistics and admin so they can focus on maintaining and strengthening their patient relationships.



# Family Medical Care vs. Primary Care

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While these two types of practices overlap in terms of patient function in many cases, there are also some key differences between them that strongly affect their approaches to patient relationships and communication.

Probably the biggest difference is that family medical care practices are often the primary destination for patient care. As such, their doctors have to have a very wide understanding of medical specializations and age groups. Family medical practices often keep care “in-house” where possible and less frequently refer patients to outside providers. This means that family medical practices, as the main provider of services, really need to prioritize ongoing connections with their patients over months, years and sometimes generations. Patient communication is, therefore, their top priority.

By contrast, while primary care practices are often the first port of call for their patients, the primary care office has a wider range of professional specialists who serve as the first point of contact. This initial consultation can serve as a gateway for health and wellness concerns, with practices often referring patients to specialists and providing

a more collaborative care approach. While patient communication is a priority, it is more important for this model to coordinate care among providers and ensure HIPAA and regulatory compliance.

With that context in mind, let’s look at key communications and technology needs for family medical practices.



# Efficient Call Management



The soundtrack to a movie about family practices would definitely include a phone ringing frequently.

On average, a small practice can receive between 20 and 50 calls every day, and that can go up to 100 or even 150 calls per day for a large practice. These often represent patients seeking appointments, looking for medical advice or asking for prescription refills. These critical inbound calls require proper routing and management to help the practice maintain its operations and patient base.

Efficient call management systems with features like call routing, on-call scheduling and multi-location user support are crucial for ensuring patients are quickly connected to the right person or provider the first time. This is essential for practices that want to prevent long wait times, reduce patient frustration and streamline operations.



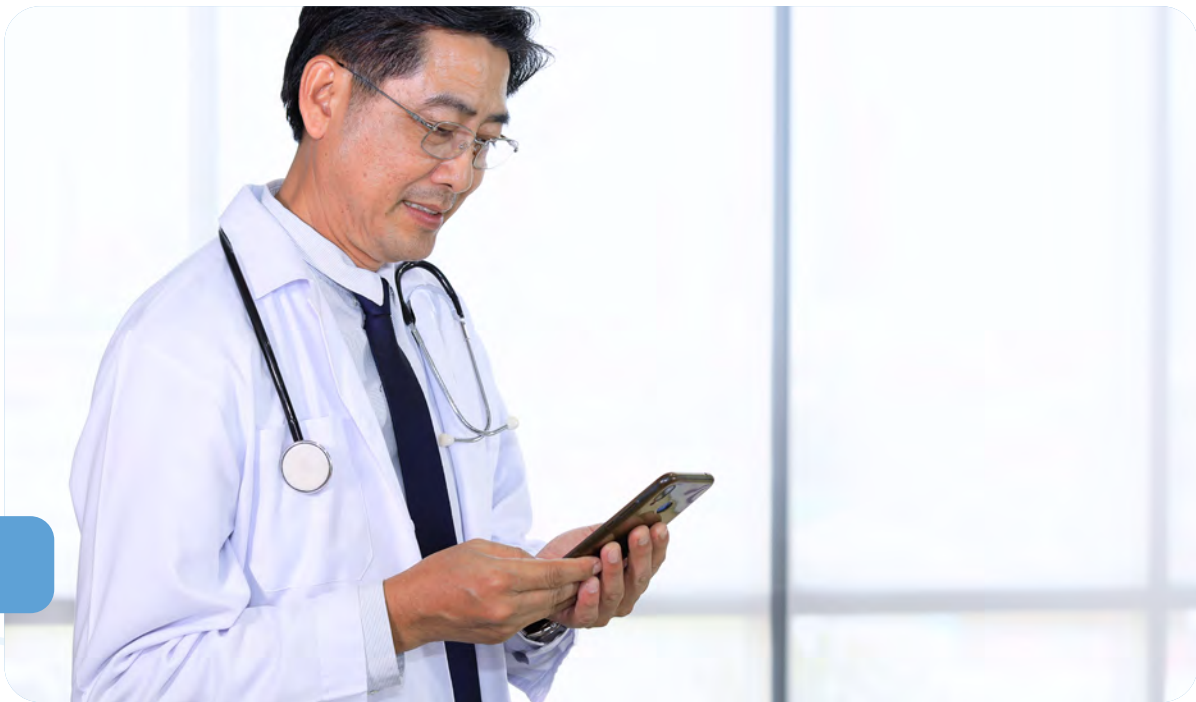
On average, a small practice can receive **between 20 and 50 calls every day**, and that can go up to **100 or even 150 calls per day** for a large practice.

Whatever the size of the practice, all providers often need a main line answering solution, switching and routing and ways to track and transfer calls to both landlines and mobile phones. This is particularly important for smaller offices where staff will likely be covering more tasks and potentially away from their desks or stations for more than a few minutes.

For many providers, a reliable VoIP solution can solve the challenges of call routing during the day and forwarding to answering service after the office is closed. For example, RingRx's virtual receptionist feature helps patients connect with your team easily. It can also reduce wait times through personalized greetings, on-demand messages and information and customized call routing. The system can also work with after-hours live and virtual answering services to ensure that patients can reach your practice at any time, helping ensure you can provide the kind of constant access that DPC patients require.

RingRx also gives you options to streamline your office's operations and communication. Fax services can be fully integrated, reducing paperwork and manual tracking while providing better access and accountability—no more searching for paper faxes or wondering if transmissions really went through.

Finally, the mobile app and online capabilities mean you can manage your office's phone system from anywhere, so you'll always be on top of whatever's happening.



# Secure Communication



**As mentioned, trust is the most important thing a family practice can provide.**

Because of that, compliance with HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) is crucial for protecting patient privacy and securing sensitive health information. Family practices need communication solutions that ensure communications are secure to prevent unauthorized access to personal health information. And they need their patients to feel secure in handling their information.

That's why it's important to choose partners who understand the demands of HIPAA and data security regulations and have built them into every part of their systems.



RingRx's secure cloud-based platform was created from the start with HIPAA and healthcare security and privacy in mind. All our staff are HIPAA certified, and we maintain our commitment to security through ongoing education and training. Further, all data is securely encrypted to ensure privacy and regulatory compliance.

RingRx can manage network and data custody audits for compliance needs and system access audit logs, ensuring you have the full audit trail of everyone who listened to or came into contact with a voicemail. Messaging is also secure and sent through encrypted channels that comply with current regulations. So, you will always be sure that patient confidentiality is respected at every touchpoint in the chain and whenever a patient is referred to another practice.

However, none of this matters if employees can't access the features. That's why we've built our platform to work for employees at all levels—so even your least technical staff will find it easy to use and easy to ensure that your practice remains HIPAA compliant.

Whether you need patient messaging features, call forwarding or ensuring all patient interactions are automatically integrated into patient records, RingRx can design a structure that complements and supports your primary needs, all in an easy-to-use package.



# Enhanced Patient Engagement



Family medical practices know continuous and effective patient communication is vital to improving health outcomes and patient satisfaction.

Some tools for doing this include automated reminders, follow-up calls, and educational information that helps manage chronic conditions, preventive care, and post-treatment care. Efficient communication tools help nurture patient relationships and strengthen the bonds between patient and practice that are vital to ongoing success.

RingRx can manage patient messaging, ensuring compliance and security while still providing more convenience for patients. Messaging can also be used for wellness programs, including appointment and medication reminders and wellness tips and ideas. Finally, messaging can make it easier for patients to provide information to your practice and can increase the number of touchpoints and frequency of interaction.

Integrating SMS functions into your practice's main phone and fax system also allows your practice to save time and be more efficient in your patient communications while better centralizing and tracking your outreach.

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# Integration, Scalability and Efficiency



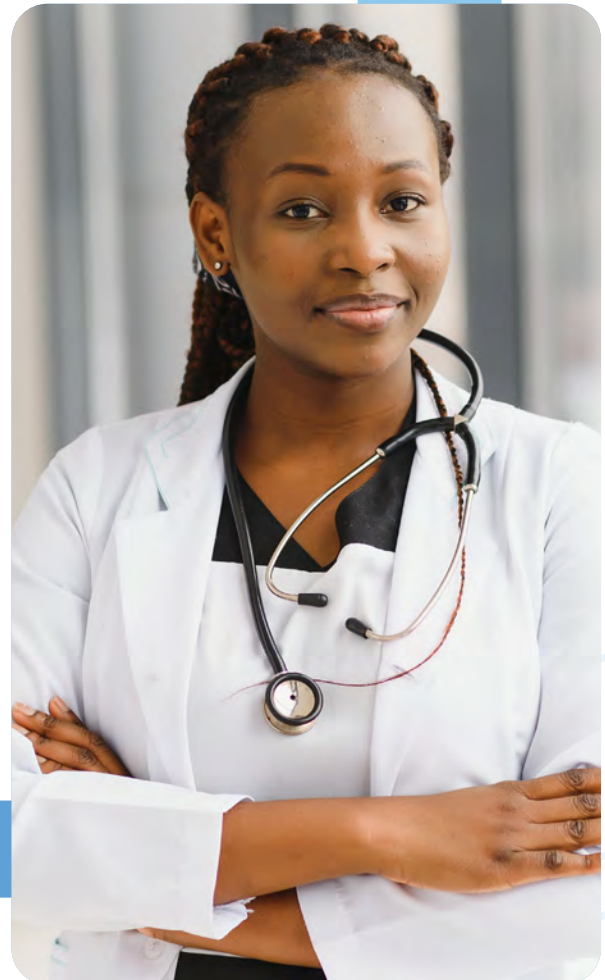
One of RingRx's key advantages is our cost-efficient software-based approach to centralizing and managing all medical office communications.

This is made possible because we completely own our platform, so there are no additional software, licenses or third-party costs to account for and no monthly equipment maintenance costs.

RingRx was built on an open standards base for ease of integration and extensibility, with a robust API at the forefront. All our components were designed to be interoperable and integrate EMRs, revenue cycle management applications, reputation management solutions, and more. That means we can implement our solution for you with as little disruption as possible to your existing technological ecosystem.

Because RingRx is cloud-based and optimized for mobility, it allows for easy cross-site integration and collaboration, whether you and your staff are on-site or working from multiple locations. We also have built the platform to ensure there are always opportunities for integration with other software applications that may be part of your office's operations, now or in the future.

With RingRx, you can expect to save 50 percent or more than a traditional landline and 30 percent or more than competing services from cable and other VoIP providers. Not having to invest in an on-premise PBX server eliminates the upfront costs you must pay when purchasing such equipment, especially when buying new hardware every five to seven years.



# Conclusion

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Family medical practices will always be about the patient first and creating a connection that can last a lifetime.

At RingRx, we know how important it is to get communications right, especially when it can profoundly impact your practice. Our goal is to provide you with a more efficient, patient-centered experience that everyone in your organization can easily use and work with, and which will ultimately allow your team not even to have to think about the technology. That way, you can focus on patient communications and continue to build trust and partnership with your patient base.





Let us help bring your **family practice office's operations** to the **next level** so you and your team can spend less time and money running the office and more time working directly with patients and building long-term trust. With RingRx, you can **quickly streamline** and **improve efficiency**, ensuring that family care remains your primary focus. Get in touch today for a **free demo** and see how our flexible solutions can help your practice become more efficient while serving your patients even better.



## Book a Demo today!

To learn more about RingRx and if it fits your organization, [book a demo](#) or contact us at (888) 980-6860 and request a free trial.





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