To our friends, colleagues, and partners in healthcare:

We, as an industry, have never seen a more uncertain or unsettling time. A time of near-universal stress and anxiety that is global in reach. A time that is tearing at the very fabric of our society.

As a partner to healthcare providers, Wixcorp has been in a unique position to observe the pain and passion our partners face each day. We salute your courage and thank you for your service to our families and communities.

And it's not over yet. While the current wave may be beginning to ebb in some areas, the process of reopening will present significant challenges, and we see the possibility of additional waves coming. As such, we feel a responsibility to share observations of the current problems our partners face and an outlook toward upcoming challenges to share knowledge and create dialogue around the Patient Financial Experience.

WHAT CHALLENGES ARE PROVIDERS FACING?

Over the past two months, we've worked closely with our partners, professional organizations, and healthcare executives to get their unique insights into the crisis. While many challenges were unique to each institution, we found a broader pattern of shared concerns that emerged.

Transitioning non-clinical teams to work remotely. Most institutions have moved at least some personnel to working from home. This has created a difficult task for IT departments to create a secure, compliant, and functional process. Most were built on the fly, creating new breakpoints, and will require extensive review to ensure everything is compliant and sustainable.

Uneven impact across the institution. While emergency care teams and ancillary clinical support teams are keeping busy—and in some cases, overwhelmed—most chronic care and non-clinical teams are working far under capacity or are being furloughed until the pandemic passes. Re-initiating those areas could get complicated.

Deployment of short-term Telehealth solutions. Many institutions either initiated or expanded telehealth capabilities. These provided a desirable channel for remote care, but many ran into scalability and usability challenges right away. While there is a vast array of platform options available, each comes with limitations and often broad IT system impacts. Functional solutions have been deployed for now to get through the current crisis, but many institutions plan to revisit their telehealth tools and processes to create a more unified ecosystem.

Patient communication. With billing and support teams working from home, and patients either quarantined or practicing social distancing, finding ways to connect and collaborate with patients has become a critical issue. Although some existing platforms can provide limited capabilities to interact with patients directly (email, phone, mailing, etc.), patients and end-users are finding them insufficient and too limited in functionality to meet the broad engagement concerns across the health system.

WHAT CHALLENGES ARE COMING?

As we near the end of the current crisis and things slowly begin to normalize, there are a few looming challenges to be addressed over the next two to four months.

A tidal wave of deferred services. Patients are anxious to be seen, and providers are desperate to generate revenue. The two combined will create a perfect storm. Many providers are preparing for extended hours and an influx of encounters. Communication and efficiency will be critical to face challenges with scheduling, patient access, staffing, billing, and patient collections.

Remote team capabilities are sticking around. Many support roles are ideal for a remote workforce; you just never had the time/capacity to get them there. Investment in tools and resources to keep them running at peak efficiency will be important. These investments will also likely help drive down overall expenses.

Patient communication needs. While patient communications were difficult before, the surge in communication needs will put pressure on manual processes and staff efficiency. Automated messaging and the ability to quickly communicate with your entire patient population effectively will be essential.

New competition to attract patients. Coming out of this crisis, every institution will have a heightened focus on attracting and retaining patients. There are a lot of options available to patients today, and this may be the moment they jump. Your ability to compete will depend on how easy and engaging an experience you can provide.

Digital self-service options a patient expectation. The digital solution Pandora's-box has been opened. Patients have been living digitally for two months and expect more from healthcare. They've seen flashes of hope with telehealth, but they will no longer be satisfied with minimalistic patient portals and online applications. They expect an immersive online experience where they can self-service.

As we look ahead, the ability to digitally engage and interact with your patient will be one of the defining issues. Those institutions that can do so will come out of this crisis stronger than before. We here at Wixcorp are committed to helping you do that.

While the struggles and challenges of the last few months have been immense, we've never been more excited about what the future holds. We're embracing these changes and building for the future; we hope you'll join us.

Eric Wixom
CEO and Co-Founder

If you share some of the same concerns and are interested in learning more about how we are helping others manage them, visit us at
http://www.wixcorp.com/covid19/.