

USING DATA TO PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY AND ASSIST HIGH-RISK PATIENTS DURING COVID-19

Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care
Riverside County Medical Association
Manifest MedEx



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Because they had access to integrated health data, leaders in Southern California's Riverside County could identify patients in their community at elevated risk from COVID-19 and take action in a matter of days.

Riverside County has experienced high infection rates¹ and deaths in California's COVID-19 pandemic. Due to age, job type, and socio-economic status, a large proportion of county residents are at high risk of infection or complications from COVID-19. One out of every three families in the Inland Empire lives in poverty,² and the county is home to many essential workers and retired seniors. By early April, Riverside County had the fourth-largest³ case count in the state. By late April, more than 650 people were infected with the coronavirus at local long-term care facilities, with cases reported at 40 of the county's 53 nursing homes⁴. Riverside County had its hands full with COVID-19 and health officials knew they needed to act quickly.

In collaboration with county health officials, the Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care (IEFMC) and Riverside County Medical Association (RCMA) acted fast to support patients at the highest risk of hospitalization or death from COVID-19. They launched a two-part outreach program:

- First, they worked with county health officials to reach 73,000 at-risk patients in the region through an automated bilingual phone call.
- Second, they made 800 personal calls to IEFMC's highest-risk patients, offering support and COVID-19 information.

The organizations partnered with Manifest MedEx (MX), California's largest nonprofit health data network, to identify and contact at-risk residents.

In this case study, we'll take a deeper look at how these organizations used MX data to conduct this proactive outreach, helping to reduce the risk of virus transmission and unnecessary hospitalizations for the most vulnerable patients during a fast-moving pandemic.

¹ Hannah Fry and Kailyn Brown, "Riverside County reports 23 new coronavirus deaths, bringing toll to 141," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28 2020.

² Benjamin Purper, "One Out Of Every Three Families In The Inland Empire Is Living In Poverty," *KVCRC*, September 28 2018.

³ Kailyn Brown, "Nursing home patients moved after over a dozen workers skip shifts amid pandemic," *Los Angeles Times*, April 8 2020.

⁴ Erika Martin, "Riverside County lists nursing homes with large COVID-19 outbreaks after more than 650 infected at long-term care facilities," *KTLA*, April 27 2020.

“We got the call. Riverside County, one of the most active regions in our health data network, was asking for help identifying people in their community who were most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

– Erica Galvez, Chief Strategy Officer, Manifest MedEx, in *Fierce Healthcare*⁵

⁵ Erica Galvez, “Industry Voices—An inside look at analyzing coronavirus risk inside a health data network,” *Fierce Healthcare*, May 21 2020.

Rapidly reaching 73,000 people at the highest risk for COVID-19

In March, California Governor Gavin Newsom gave the “Stay at Home” order for residents across the state. In April, as case counts rose, Riverside County public health leaders started exploring how age and health history played a role in who was most at risk from COVID-19. The group brainstormed how to get word out to locals most likely to be hospitalized, have lasting health impacts, or be killed by the virus. The challenge was that no one knew exactly who this group was. Every doctor and hospital in the county had a slice of information, but no one had a comprehensive view.

Luckily MX had been integrating patients’ health records in the county to support care coordination and had insights into which patients were highest risk. Responding to a request from the Riverside County Public Health Department, and drawing on claims and clinical records in their population health analytics system, MX pulled together a list of Riverside County residents with an acute or chronic condition putting them at risk for COVID-19 complications (conditions like diabetes, respiratory conditions, etc.) and who were at increased risk of hospitalization. A total of 73,000 high-risk residents were identified.

With the data on the highest-risk patients coming together, Riverside County health leaders worked with RCMA to write a 10-second public service announcement (PSA) message to go out by automated call, with notes on staying home, wearing masks, washing hands, and available resources to help flatten the curve. They identified two local female physicians to read the message in a compassionate and reassuring manner in English and Spanish. Once finalized, the message went out to all 73,000 patients via an automated system through the Riverside County Public Health Department.

From idea to launch, the life-saving program took only a week and a half to execute.

The rapid, targeted launch was possible because MX already had integrated health records for Riverside County residents. MX was able to rapidly identify a list of high-risk patients along with their most recent contact information.



“Hello, this is Dr. Melanie Crane calling on behalf of the Riverside County Medical Association. Thank you for allowing me a few moments to provide some suggestions that can help you stay healthy during these challenging times. It is very important that you stay at home and away from others if at all possible. If you must be with others, please stay at least six feet apart. Don’t forget to wash your hands with soap and warm water several times each day. If you have a high fever, difficulty breathing, or are having increasing concerns over your health, you should call your doctor. If your symptoms are worsening and you can drive, you should go to your local emergency room. If you are unable to drive, call 911. If you must leave your home for any reason, please be sure and wear a covering over your mouth and nose, such as a homemade mask or bandana. We care about your health. Thank you.”

— Riverside COVID-19 call script

Offering pandemic assistance to high-risk patients

“Everybody was trying to convey to the public, mostly to those who are the most vulnerable, the need to follow the specific safety measures. That’s what we were looking for with this program, to make the seniors and the high-risk patients really understand the importance of staying home.”

– Dolores Green, Executive Director of the Riverside County Medical Association, CEO of the Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care

Following the success of the first program that reached 73,000 local residents, IEFMC launched a second program to identify and make personal phone calls to their most vulnerable patients. Using an internal population health analytics system, IEFMC was able to gather a list of the highest-risk patients on their own. However, the one key data point they did not have was patients’ accurate phone numbers. Pandemic or not, IEFMC knew there was no way busy physicians from their 72 independent practices would be able to provide hundreds of patient numbers for timely outreach, so again they tapped MX. The health data network identified the most up-to-date contact information for each patient on IEFMC’s list.

Using the patient list from IEFMC and the contact information from MX, case managers began reaching out to 800 high-risk patients on behalf of their doctors. The message was simple: Do you need anything? Case managers offered support and made sure patients understood the importance of staying at home and, if they had to leave home, wearing a mask. The calls were well-received by patients who appreciated that their doctor’s office was reaching out to make sure they were okay during such a frightening and uncertain time.


IEFMC had seen first-hand how data from MX benefited their patient populations. In a recent Modern Healthcare case study⁶, IEFMC’s ACO reported using shared health data to see:

- A reduction by 39.35 percent of patients not seen within seven days of discharge
- ER visits reduced 3.1 percent from 2017
- ER visits leading to hospitalization decreased by 5.3 percent from 2017
- Per beneficiary per year spend has also decreased dramatically in a year, helping patients live healthier lives more affordably

“Patients appreciated the personal touch because everybody had questions or concerns about what was happening. [There was] a lot of fear, and they didn’t want to go in and see their doctor, so this was a good way to touch bases. And then if they really needed something from the doctor, the doctor’s staff would follow up.”

– Dolores Green, Executive Director of the Riverside County Medical Association, CEO of the Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care

⁶ Dolores Green, “Commentary: Data-sharing can transform care, so let’s get connected,” *Modern Healthcare*, April 6 2020.



"It's huge to have all this information in one [place], to be able to treat patients with the care they need when they need it. When the hospitals are seeing a new patient, if they have one place they can go to for this information, and when I'm seeing a new patient in my office, it's invaluable to be able to look at everything that happened in the hospital. Oftentimes, it's way too many details for a patient to remember. You can print out daily progress notes, what their discharge medications were, and that's by far one of the biggest values of Manifest MedEx."

— John Fagan, MD, Family medicine physician and IEFMC ACO provider

Health data allows community health leaders to do more for their patients

A global crisis like COVID-19 underscores the need for better data sharing in healthcare. Before COVID-19, IEFMC and RCMA members were relying heavily on integrated health records from the Manifest MedEx network to provide high-quality, coordinated care to patients. When the crisis hit, they knew immediately that MX could help them take action quickly to educate, support, and protect the most vulnerable patients. MX helped Riverside County health leaders broadcast a bilingual PSA to 73,000 high-risk patients in a week and half and make personal phone calls to 800 patients in two days. This would not have been possible without the long-standing community investment in sharing patient health records through Manifest MedEx.

Health information networks like Manifest MedEx have information on COVID-19 testing and notify providers when their patients test positive. They have real-time hospital admit and discharge notifications. They have valuable data for public health case investigation and contact tracing, including clinical background for patients and demographic and contact information.

COVID-19 demands that healthcare leaders be proactive. Time wasted means lives lost. Health information networks are powerful partners for the delivery of proactive information, public health, and care in a pandemic — and every day. Let's talk about how to put integrated data to work for your community's health.

The Inland Empire Foundation for Medical Care (IEFMC) has been a long-time proponent of putting data to good work. A preferred provider organization (PPO) covering Riverside and San Bernardino counties in Southern California, IEFMC comprises more than 2,000 physicians and ancillary providers, along with 27 hospitals in the Inland Empire. The organization's mission is to promote, develop, and encourage the distribution of medical services by its members to people who live in these communities.

The Riverside County Medical Association (RCMA) is composed of more than 1,800 physicians, residents, and medical students throughout Riverside County. Established in 1893, RCMA is a professional association of Doctors of Medicine to promote the science and art of medicine, the care and well-being of patients, the protection of the public health, and the betterment of the medical profession. RCMA unites with other county societies in the State of California to form the **California Medical Association (CMA)**.

Manifest MedEx (MX) — a nonprofit health network serving all of California — is helping health leaders reach their goals of improving outcomes and reducing costs. They are unlocking information from silos so healthcare organizations can put it to work to make healthcare better. MX facilitates the exchange of health records for 23 million people through a network of over 600 organizations in California, proving that collaboration and sharing patient data is good medicine.



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