

# Catch The Wave Of The Future



Clearwave's patient engagement platform may help create zero-contact offices.

BY MARK D. KAUFMANN, MD, FAAD

>> The COVID-19 pandemic changed everything about how we practice dermatology, and many of these changes are here to stay. Lots of companies are coming up with innovative solutions to help foster the delivery of dermatologic care in the post-COVID era.

One of the missions of my Digital Practice column is to introduce readers to new technologies that have the potential to improve practice efficiency and patient care. I recently spoke with Lisa Shoults Belflower, Vice-President of Operations at United Skin Specialists, who brought Clearwave technology into the 10 dermatology practices that she oversees. For the record, I have no financial interest in this technology or company.



## What is Clearwave technology?

**Lisa Shoults Belflower:** Clearwave offers several technologies and services, including patient check-in on mobile phone, tablet, kiosk, or a combination of these. It also automates the check-in process. Patients can now complete all the necessary demographic and medical history information in advance of their appointment on their own device. It also sends patient reminder texts about upcoming appointments.

## What is Clearwave eligibility?

**Ms. Shoults Belflower:** It's particularly efficient when it comes to confirming insurance eligibility. The system can check if a patient's insurance is in effect and up to date, and if not, it can flag errors. This provides accurate billing information. Clearwave eligibility has a flag system. A green flag means that insurance is good to go, a yellow flag requires some edits and corrections, and a red flag means you may have to call the insurer to confirm coverage. Before this, the insurance verification process was painful. Each payer has a phone number you can call or a website to visit and staff had to feed this information into the system. Confirming eligibility this way could lead to hours of time spent on hold or being transferred.

## Is this technology pandemic-friendly?

**Ms. Shoults Belflower:** We have 10 clinics, and the kiosks are in some of them right now. These have been helpful during the pandemic, as there is less face-to-face interaction due to social distancing efforts. A big plus is no more clipboards and no more pens. Patients sign in right there on the kiosk using disposable finger covers. The data is fed electronically into our patient management system. It's quicker and totally contactless unless you need help.

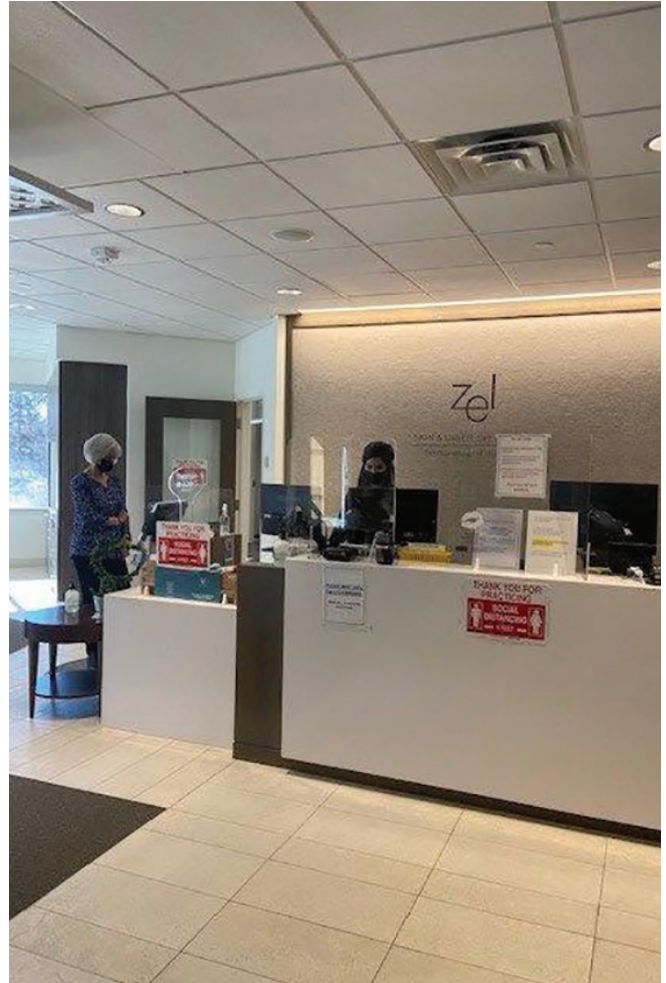


## How do patients like this approach?

**Ms. Shoults Belflower:** Overall, patients have been happy. With anything, there are always outliers. In this situation those tend to be the elderly and patients who are not technologically savvy. The system is very easy to use. The first

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time a patient comes in, our front desk staff will run them through the program on the kiosk.

### How's it going?

**Ms. Shouls Belflower:** We have been using it for about two years. The technology breeds efficiency in the clinics and allows our front desk staff to focus on other things. We are still confirming ROI and considering a mobile solution without kiosks so patients can check in on their smart phones with even less touch. It does help us on the eligibility front, for sure, by ensuring the patient has appropriate insurance for the service we provide.

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