

# An enterprise approach to unify healthcare

UpToDate Point of Care Report

Insights for healthcare leaders on transforming care, unifying teams,  
and driving better outcomes for patients and healthcare organizations.

**Issue One**  
Cardiovascular Health



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## Healthcare administrators have an opportunity to lead the charge toward improved cardiovascular health for patients

Looking across today's healthcare landscape, cardiovascular disease (CVD) stands out as a crisis that, unfortunately, is predicted to become only more widespread and dire in the coming years. This issue of the UpToDate® Point of Care Report offers insights into the challenges that lie ahead and explains why improved CVD prevention and management are increasingly essential.

You'll learn how you can better help populations who have been marginalized in healthcare and be a proactive leader in enhancing patient care and outcomes, all while supporting clinicians.

The solution is to adopt proactive strategies that enable a unified, enterprise approach—one that can not only improve cardiovascular health, but also reduce costs and increase satisfaction for both patients and clinicians alike.

### **What's inside:**

- Insights to support system-level decisions.
- Ways to implement a unified, enterprise approach to cardiovascular health.
- How improved access to data helps clinicians.
- A perspective on the looming CVD crisis.
- The most common risk factors for CVD.
- Why clinicians need more prevention information.
- The benefits of a proactive approach to prevention and management.

**Let's work together to create a healthier future for all.**



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## Harnessing evidence-based content can lead to better outcomes

Despite the progress made in modern medicine, CVD continues to be the leading cause of death worldwide, claiming approximately 17.9 million lives annually according to the World Health Organization (WHO). This translates to approximately 29 million people with ischemic heart disease, 13 million with heart failure, 16 million with heart attacks, and 14.5 million with strokes.<sup>1</sup> This trend is expected to continue in the coming decades, with a recent study projecting a 30-35% increase in serious heart diseases in the United States by 2060.<sup>2</sup>

Heart attacks and strokes account for more than four out of five CVD deaths globally, and one third of these deaths occur in individuals under the age of 70.<sup>1</sup> Unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and harmful alcohol consumption are the most significant behavioral risk factors for heart disease and stroke that could be impacted by interventions.

Clinicians recognize both the threat and the pervasiveness of CVD. They are eager for more information on how to make their patient care and education more effective and efficient, as evidenced by a 7% year-over-year jump in usage of UpToDate® from 2022 to 2023 for cardiovascular clinical decision support (CDS).

Clinicians also know that a patient's lifestyle choices can be the cornerstone of cardiovascular health. Still, many healthcare providers feel limited in their ability to advise their patients about implementing the diet, exercise, and other behavioral recommendations associated with CVD prevention and management.



UpToDate®

12,000+ **core medical topics available in UpToDate**

Top 30 **core topics were viewed over 23 million times in 2023**

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5 of the top 30 **most viewed topics were on heart-related conditions**

7% **year-over-year increase for heart-related content usage in 2023**

468 **updates added to cardiology topics in 2023**

412 **active cardiovascular contributors**

# Recognizing social drivers of health that contribute to CVD

Researchers estimate that 10-20% of a patient's health is impacted by medical care.<sup>3</sup> The other 80-90% is impacted by the social drivers of health, which are also known as social determinants of health (SDOH). The WHO defines these factors as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, money, and age, and people's access to power, money and resources."<sup>4</sup>

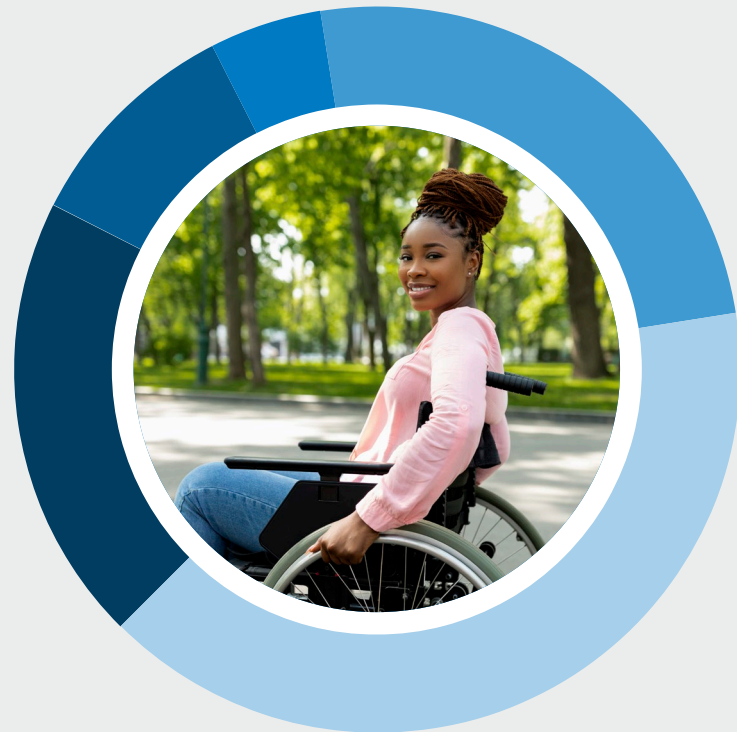
## Social drivers are important data points in addressing cardiovascular health

Understanding and incorporating SDOH is essential for clinicians, health systems, and payers to achieve care equality. This includes acknowledging unique symptoms in women at higher risk of misdiagnosis and treatment delay. Difficulty in maintaining a healthy diet or exercise routines due to social circumstances also contributes to cardiovascular health risk.

Increasingly, healthcare professionals must grasp the relevance of SDOH and integrate them into care plans. For instance, females often display dissimilar heart attack symptoms and at a significantly younger age than males, resulting in possible delayed treatment.

Social and cultural drivers of health such as lack of access to healthy food and exposure to environmental toxins contribute to higher risk of chronic illness such as obesity, diabetes, kidney and pulmonary disease, premature cardiovascular disease, cancer, mental health disorders, and other conditions.<sup>5</sup> Incorporating SDOH data points into clinical care helps provide a more holistic view of a patient, identify the potential CVD risks, and improve treatment plans.

# Understanding and empathizing with a 360° view of the patient experience



Medical care ■



Physical environment ■



Biogenetics ■



Health behaviors and actions ■



Social and economic factors ■



## Identifying and connecting patient health risks that lead to CVD comorbidities

Preventing CVD is typically a complex and multi-faceted task. Research has shown that the primary behavioral risk factors are physical inactivity, an unhealthy diet, and tobacco use. These risk factors can lead to physical conditions such as obesity, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes—all of which increase a patient’s risk of CVD even more.

Often, patients have multiple risk factors and comorbidities, creating even greater diagnostic and therapeutic challenges.

After all, the data indicates that:<sup>7</sup>

- 5-10 % of patients will die within the first 12 months after their heart attack.
- About 50% of patients will be readmitted to the hospital within the first 12 months after their heart attack.

What if clinicians had the data and information to be more proactive, consistently identifying which patients have health risks such as hypertension or pre-diabetes and then taking action to prevent progression?



It is not uncommon for the first diagnosis of type 2 diabetes to be made at the time of a heart attack.<sup>6</sup>

This type of “surprise” adds to the complexity and cost of clinical care and further complicates an already difficult prognosis.

By helping patients better manage their CVD risk factors and comorbidities, could clinicians help prevent some heart attacks or other major events from happening?



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## Taking a proactive, educational approach with patients

Clinicians are pivotal to CVD education, risk assessment, diagnosis, and intervention — and the more proactive their approach, the better.

Routine screenings can help detect cardiovascular issues early, leading to the prompt implementation of a personalized care path and ultimately, the prevention of disease progression. Interventions can include:

- **Lifestyle modifications**, including healthy diet choices, regular exercise, and smoking cessation.
- **Prescription medications**, such as statins for cholesterol management, antihypertensives for blood pressure control, or medications to control blood sugar.
- **Monitoring selected patients** for additional support of a specialist referral for testing, interventional therapies, and treatments to mitigate future acute care needs.

Regular follow-ups create a continuous feedback loop, enabling your clinicians to adjust strategies based on each patient's evolving health status.

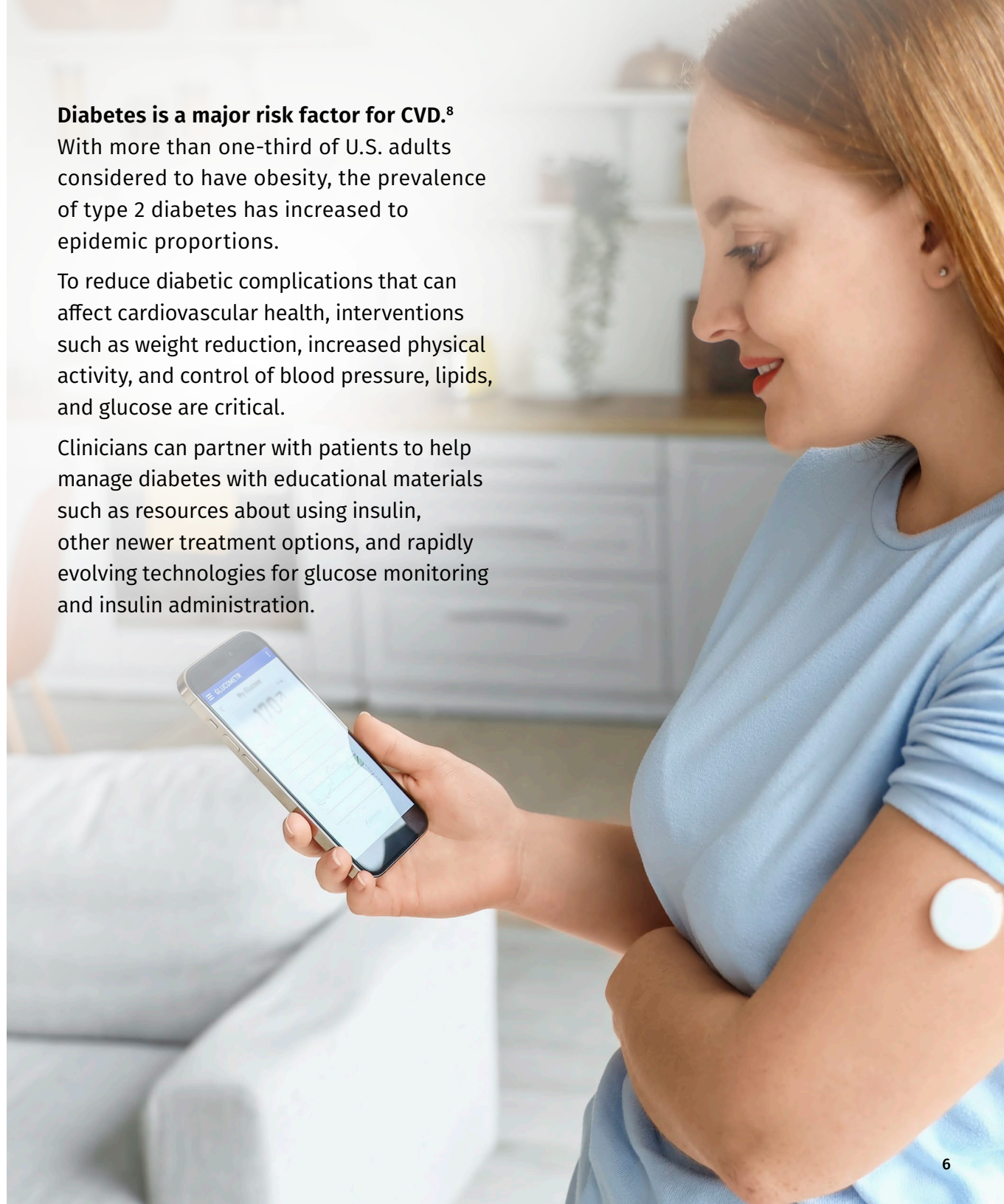
Adopting a proactive approach to CVD prevention workflow and care management saves clinician time, reduces costs, and improves patient quality outcomes.

### **Diabetes is a major risk factor for CVD.<sup>8</sup>**

With more than one-third of U.S. adults considered to have obesity, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes has increased to epidemic proportions.

To reduce diabetic complications that can affect cardiovascular health, interventions such as weight reduction, increased physical activity, and control of blood pressure, lipids, and glucose are critical.

Clinicians can partner with patients to help manage diabetes with educational materials such as resources about using insulin, other newer treatment options, and rapidly evolving technologies for glucose monitoring and insulin administration.



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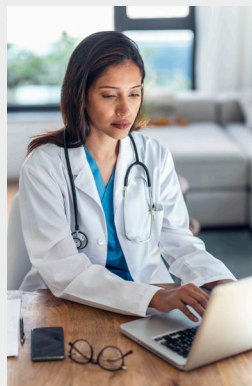
# Improving access to data helps health systems be more proactive and effective

In medicine, there are many gray areas where guidance is unclear and rarely answered directly in literature. Research shows that the average doctor has 15-20 unanswered questions daily. These life-changing moments can at minimum add to wasted time and unnecessary procedures, and at worst create the risk of negative consequences for patients.<sup>9</sup>

To be proactive, your clinicians need updated information on the best clinical practices at their fingertips. They need a solution that can provide the most accurate, updated information wherever they are working—in the office, at home, or on the go.

And that level of CDS isn't just useful, it's liberating. For clinicians, time saved is time better focused on patient needs.

Physicians are aware of the need to spend more time with patients, and 27% agree that poor communication is the number one contributing factor to patient mistrust.<sup>10</sup> When clinicians are relieved from long searches for clinical answers, they can better focus on addressing patient questions, building trust, and providing actionable care plans, especially if the patients themselves come empowered with questions after reviewing health information.



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## Answering clinical questions

Based on data analysis, users are able to search, locate, and review the information they need in approximately 1 minute.



- Median mobile session: **62 seconds**
- Median web session: **74 seconds**



**98%** of clinicians trust UpToDate as an evidence-based clinical information resource.



**95%** of clinicians say UpToDate improves the quality of care they provide to patients.

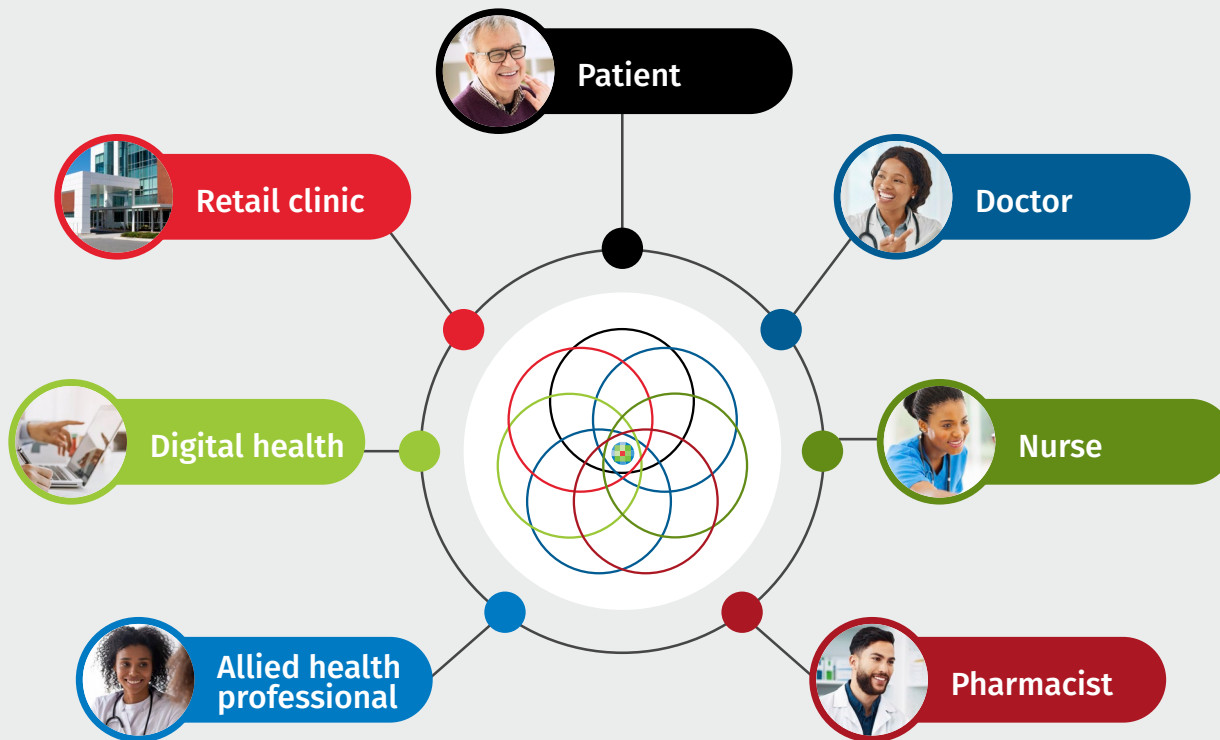
UpToDate Individual Subscriber Survey, October 2022, N=9,878

For patients who are managing CVD or CVD risk factors, more time addressing questions can be beneficial since cardiovascular issues and challenges typically require additional education, screening, and intervention. Equipping patients with relevant CVD health information can support plan adherence beyond the clinic.

### Enhancing care with patient education for shared decision-making

As of 2023, UpToDate had more than 200 patient education topics in our cardiology section and more than 100 patient education topics relevant to heart health to support shared-decision making.

## Trusted, evidence-based content at the point of care



The patient needs to be a part of the care team for optimal outcomes.

## A unified approach to prevention and management

CVD is complex and pervasive. To improve CVD prevention, lower costs, and improve outcomes, healthcare professionals—from administrators to frontline staff—must adopt a unified, enterprise approach.

System-wide, structured disease management programs provide a multidisciplinary, integrated approach to care, including aligned clinical and drug recommendations, individualized care plans, patient education and support, and coordinated care with outpatient facilities.

### Effective systems-based strategies include:<sup>11</sup>

- Nurse-led case management, including titration of drugs.
- Multidisciplinary care teams, including a cardiologist, nurse specialist, and other members such as a dietician, pharmacist and social worker.
- Programs promoting self-care.
- Outpatient cardiologist care.

Patients are more likely to have a positive experience when they receive consistent care from all clinicians and facilities within an organization.

By ensuring that teams across healthcare organizations use the same CDS tools, clinicians can avoid providing conflicting information to patients, which can cause confusion and lead to poor patient satisfaction and potentially worse outcomes.





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## Keeping the focus on the patient

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No matter how proactive or unified the approach, the focus of CVD prevention and management must always be the patient.

The “point” (or place) of care is continuing to shift toward non-traditional settings. That, in turn, is:

- **Enabling patients and members** to be more capable advocates for and consumers of their cardiovascular care.
- **Closing the knowledge gap** between health consumers and clinicians to encourage shared decision-making and treatment vigilance that is based on the most current evidence.
- **Facilitating engagement** beyond face-to-face appointments.

Changes like these bolster patients’ feelings of empowerment, and studies have shown that when patients are engaged with their care, outcomes improve, costs are reduced, and both patients and clinicians report more satisfaction.<sup>12</sup>

### **Encouraging patient empowerment and promoting proactive, high-quality care**

Healthcare administrators play an important role in fostering strong patient-provider relationships to help drive proactive, high-quality care. With clinical decision-making becoming increasingly complex, leaders need to challenge the status quo and introduce new ways of inspiring clinician and patient engagement along the care journey. This includes embracing aspects of value-based care and engaging in shared decision-making with patients.

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# Is your healthcare organization ready to improve your patients' cardiovascular health?

Healthcare continues to evolve, and a proactive, unified approach to CVD prevention has massive potential. Recent research found substantial benefits of a program that offered comprehensive support, including use of protocol-driven care provided by specially trained nurses, a multidisciplinary registration system, and a LDL-cholesterol toolkit, combined with quality improvement methods such as regular clinician education and feedback, practice visitations, and quarterly benchmark reports. Other studies have shown the cost-effectiveness of CVD prevention and control strategies.<sup>1</sup>

## CDS for a shifting care delivery landscape

For over 30 years, clinicians around the world have relied on the evidence-based clinical content in UpToDate to make the best possible decisions for their patients – even when the evidence isn't clear.

Learn more at

[wolterskluwer.com/en/solutions/uptodate](https://wolterskluwer.com/en/solutions/uptodate)



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# Unified solutions to achieve what matters

Improving health outcomes requires a holistic, strategic approach to wellness that includes the entire care journey beyond individual patient visits.

The UpToDate Point of Care Report series provides healthcare leaders with valuable insights to manage critical, systemic issues such as clinical burnout, staffing shortages, health equity, and clinical workflows across the enterprise. To address these issues and create a culture of patient trust and safety, it's necessary to have a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders, including administrators and frontline staff.

Join UpToDate in our mission to transform care, unify teams, and drive better outcomes for patients and healthcare organizations.

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