

A SIMPLE GUIDE

Patient Engagement Can Make or Break Your Practice

Why you need the right platform



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Consumer-minded patients expect online convenience as their smartphone, laptop, or tablet serve as essential tools to navigate all areas of their lives—with healthcare now included.

As ambulatory practices respond to the need to adapt to new technologies in light of COVID-19, patient engagement tools, such as a patient portal, online communication capabilities, and virtual visits are essential to maintain practice safety, connect with patients, and attract new ones. Patients expect healthcare to offer one-stop shopping functionality similar to Amazon. On the practice side, when resources are stretched to the limit, providers and staff need all the available technology to gain efficiencies and work smarter.

A patient engagement platform integrated into the electronic health record (EHR) and practice management (PM) systems keeps your providers and office staff on the same page throughout the patient’s journey. This e-book will help you get the most out of a patient engagement platform.

WHAT PATIENTS WANT

What started as safety measures related to COVID-19 have transformed into consumer demand. Patients will continue to rely on online communication tools to interact with their providers. User-friendly patient portals, virtual visits, and other online capabilities to access their provider's services will be expected, and you may need them to stay competitive.

Less time on-hold on the phone

Scheduling appointments or paying bills by conventional means can take too much time from a patient's day. Allow them to conveniently perform these tasks from their smartphone or computer.

Maintain social distancing

Managing their healthcare from home on a web-enabled device offers another precautionary step to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Ensure patient and provider safety by providing options for online engagement.

Communicate when convenient

Calling patients to remind them about their appointments can be time consuming and not always effective. Give patients options (text, email, or phone) on how they want to receive these messages.

Take charge of their own schedule

Plans change. Allow patients to change or cancel appointments easily online.

Gain better access

Patients want 24/7 access to vital healthcare information. Enable them to log in anytime to check test results, renew medication refills, and review other medical information.

“Our patients can communicate in a secure manner, pay their bills online, view their latest appointment notes, and request appointments. It takes a huge burden off our staff.”

Aaron Higgins

EHR & Quality Programs Manager
Savannah Vascular Institute



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PATIENT ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

Be aware that not all patient engagement solutions are created equal. Take time to find the one that will meet your specific needs.

Consider how you plan to use it. What issues do you seek to address? Does your staff spend too many hours on the phone? Do you have missed appointments, unpaid bills, and unfilled prescriptions? You need to determine whether your new platform can help address your specific challenges.

Use the following guidelines to help determine what's best for you.

- Make a checklist of pain points
- Ask patients informally how they want to engage with your practice online
- List the “must-haves” for your practice to interact with patients
- Understand the advantages of a patient engagement solution that integrates with your EHR and practice management systems
- Look for a solution that provides secure messaging between providers and patients either that can be accessed from smartphones and computers
- Make sure the patient engagement platform can be configured to meet your specific needs
- Test the patient engagement tools for ease of use
- Check the references of vendors and ask them for case studies
- Before signing, understand the ongoing support arrangement—some vendors may require your own IT staff and charge extra for customer service

Questions to ask vendors

- Is the portal part of a broader patient experience platform that offers additional capabilities?
- How do my staff and patients log in? Is it easy?
- What payment options are available to my patients?
- Can patients schedule appointments online easily?
- What happens if I change my EHR or practice management system—is the patient engagement platform agnostic?
- Does the patient engagement platform require investment in additional hardware?
- Can I share health records, lab results, and other HIPAA-secured information?
- What kind of customer service is available after implementation?
- Can I set different business requirements for my different office locations and staff roles?

The bottom line for patient engagement:

- Integration with EHR and PM systems
- 24/7 access
- Configurability
- Convenient and easy to use
- Reliable communication between patient and provider

INTEGRATE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUR HEALTH IT

An uncertain healthcare climate, changing regulations, and patient expectations create the need for more practice efficiency. To achieve efficiency, you need an integrated patient engagement platform. Integration of solutions reduces the need to maintain multiple vendor relationships, and deliver a tailored experience for each patient in a cost-effective manner.

By contrast, a patient engagement solution not integrated with EHR and practice management systems increases the risk of duplicating appointments, charts, and other issues.

Fully integrated patient portals, patient self-scheduling, virtual visits, secure messaging, and online payment functions help avoid duplication and improve practice efficiency. A provider can easily access data located in the internal workflow. Previous appointment details, pharmacy records, insurance information, and other data which were gathered in the PM and EHR can be reviewed to ensure a productive visit with the patient.

The key is to select a patient engagement platform that seamlessly integrates with most EHR and PM systems.

The bottom line—enable staff and providers to spend more time on patient care and less time on scheduling appointments, writing down refill requests, and scanning forms.



8 BENEFITS OF AN INTEGRATED PATIENT ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

Reduce call volume

The more options you give patients to engage with your practice, the less time your staff spends answering calls.

Improve patient satisfaction

When you give patients easy access to manage their care, you provide them more reasons to be satisfied with your practice.

Focus on patients

With less time spent on the phone to make appointments, collect payments, and answer questions, your staff can focus on what matters most—your patients.

Reduce no-shows

On average, 25 percent of appointments result in no-shows.¹ Practices have found when patients can schedule their appointments via a portal, they are more likely to show up.²

Reduce errors in communication

When appointments, refills, and lab results are managed via a patient portal, there are fewer miscommunications.

Attract new patients

As you better manage your schedule, you can attract new patients, especially people for looking for last-minute or same-day appointments.

Reduce A/R days

Online payment options allow you to collect patient payments faster without the cost of printing and mailing bills.

Reduce waiting room time and increase safety

Enable patients to go online to confirm their personal information, complete patient registration, provide insurance information, and pay copays and balances before their appointments. You can even provide curbside check-in to notify patients when providers are ready to see them.

INCREASE PATIENT SATISFACTION

Patient satisfaction grows when your practice embarks on a journey to evolve patient engagement. Every opportunity to make the experience for patients more convenient brings your practice closer to achieving sustainability in the new era of healthcare.

Enable patient self-scheduling

Offer patients convenient and flexible access to care with a system that enables your practice to maintain control over what types of appointments are offered. The system needs to be highly configurable and rules-based.

An integrated patient self-scheduling solution can connect directly to your practice management system, be accessed from your practice website for new and existing patients, as well as be accessed from the patient portal. Your practice can easily manage:

- Email or text reminders for all appointments (including ones not scheduled online)
- Appointment confirmations, rescheduling, and cancellations at the time of the email/text reminder (as determined and allowed by your practice)

Benefits of patient self-scheduling

- Reduce no-shows: Online appointment scheduling can reduce no-shows by 25 percent³
- Reduce phone volume: A practice can lower incoming phone calls by 30 percent⁴
- Improve patient satisfaction: Give patients more options and improve your satisfaction rates
- Attract new patients: Nine out of ten patients will switch doctors if not offered a patient portal and self-scheduling⁵
- Increase revenue: Fewer no shows, new patients, and reduced administrative costs will lead to improved revenue⁶
- Maximize staff time: Save eight minutes for each appointment scheduled online versus a phone call⁷

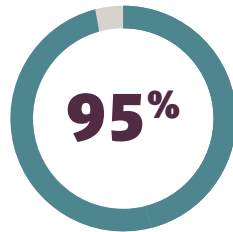
Offer convenient payment options

If your patient portal's payment options and billing processing service are not working together to help patients seamlessly pay their bills, you are short-changing your practice. A fully integrated payment platform allows practices to receive payments faster.

For patients, seamless payment options, along with friendly reminders, allow them to pay bills 24/7 with the flexibility to pay online at home or from their smartphone while they wait for their appointment.

Benefits of convenient payment options

Overdue patient payments are one of the leading causes of aging A/R. Online payments not only speeds payments, but also motivate patients to pay in full. Detailed financial reporting provides an effective overview of the business-side of the practice.



95 percent of consumers would pay their healthcare bill online if their provider offered the option.⁸



Make communication easy

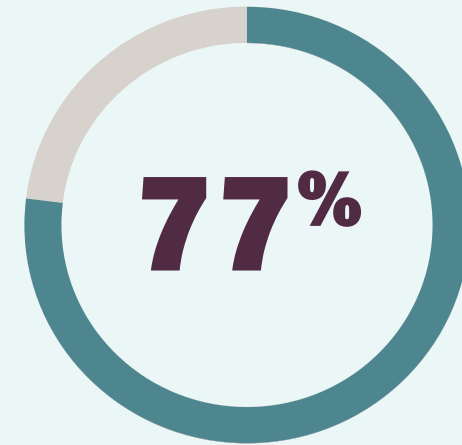
Whether it's by text, email, phone, or via your patient portal accessed from the web or mobile device, practices can enhance the provider/patient relationship by offering multiple ways for your patient to engage with providers and staff.

Benefits of convenient communication options

The ability for patients to communicate 24/7 with your practice can influence their satisfaction level. A patient portal can help facilitate that 24/7 communication both online and through mobile devices. Simple instructions and prefilled message selections on the patient portal can help guide patients to the information they need for:

- Test and lab results
- Medication issues and refills
- Billing issues
- Insurance questions
- Need for a referral
- Appointments
- Symptoms and what to do

Prefilled message selections also help your staff to reply faster. Your patient portal should give you options to set up queues, so the right questions go to the appropriate staff members.



DID YOU KNOW?

77 percent of patients want the ability to book, cancel, or change their appointment online⁹

Capitalize on telehealth integration

Virtual visit integration with EHR/PM systems, patient experience platforms, and other core technologies ensure data is available throughout the patient/provider experience.

Telehealth integration helps uphold a level of efficiency that ensures healthy clinical and financial outcomes—beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual visit integration yields many benefits that support quality care coordination. More than a buzz word, it's the embodiment of efficiency in the new era of healthcare.



Benefits of integrated telehealth

- Automatically generated appointment reminder emails and SMS notifications
- Virtual visit scheduling in your practice management system
- Notifications in your EHR/PM when the patient is ready to see you
- Information, such as visit duration, intake responses, and consent to flow back to the patient's chart where the documentation would be handled as you normally would



ENGAGE PATIENTS WITH PEACE OF MIND

An integrated patient experience platform plays a critical role in maintaining care continuity. You can keep patients connected to your practice and empower them to participate in their health.

NextGen® Patient Experience Platform is a HITRUST Certified, PCI-DSS, ONC Certified HIT, and HIPAA-compliant solution with capabilities that will benefit your patients and practice.



Benefits for Patients

Provides patients the convenience of scheduling appointments online and receiving reminders

Gives patients access to their chosen provider with virtual visits

Enables patients to request prescription refills online and see medication list

Empowers patients to communicate digitally with providers on selected topics

Provides user-driven username and password recovery

Enables parent and caregiver access for dependents' accounts

Shows past and upcoming appointment display and appointment requests

Provides access to patient's health record, including lab, test results, and patient education

Benefits for Practices

Helps increase revenue and speed payments when patients pay bills online

Improves efficiency and decreases no-shows with patient self-scheduling

Saves staff time by empowering patients to complete paperwork pre-appointment

Eases efficiency by automating prescription refill requests

Provides secure communications for practice-defined topics

Offers automatic invite for patients to enroll

Supports secure two-way messaging with attachments

Makes patient forms available in the patient portal to easily fill out and update

“ Giving parents the accessibility they need to manage their child’s care enables us to use less staff for calls and mailings. At the end of the day, reduced administrative tasks equals increased revenue. And, more importantly, happier staff and parents. ”

Eileen Morrow
Technical and Operations Manager
Anderson Hills Pediatrics

BUILT TO BOOST EFFICIENCY AND EMPOWER PATIENTS

With the new **NextGen® Patient Portal** as the gateway to your practice, other critical capabilities round out the **NextGen Patient Experience Platform**. Combined, they extend more value than any individual component. The innovative NextGen Patient Experience Platform was built to boost practice efficiency and empower patients in their own healthcare.



BETTER STARTS HERE.

Contact us at 855-510-6398 or results@nextgen.com.

Roll out a welcome mat to your community with a patient portal solution that integrates with your EHR and PM and is part of a broader patient experience platform.

1 NCBI Research Study, "Prevalence, predictors and economic consequences of no show," <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4714445/> **2** Case study, KSF Orthopaedic Center Achieves 75 Percent Reduction in No-Shows, <https://ng.nextgen.com/ksf-ortho-center-achieves-reduction-in-no-shows> **3** Prevalence, predictors, and economic consequences of no-show, Jan 14, 2016, NCBI, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4714445/> **4** Case Study, KSF Orthopaedic Center Achieves 75 Percent Reduction in No-Shows, August 2020, <https://ng.nextgen.com/ksf-ortho-center-achieves-reduction-in-no-shows> **5** Black Book Research, 2018 Patient Survey **6** Case Study, Anderson Hills Pediatrics Delivers 24/7 Convenience, August 2020, <https://ng.nextgen.com/anderson-hills-pediatrics-delivers-convenience> **7** Patient Engagement: Digital self-scheduling set to explode in healthcare over the next five years, 2016, Accenture, https://www.accenture.com/t20170412T073547Z__w_/us-en/_acnmedia/PDF-6/Accenture-Patient-Engagement-Digital-Self-Scheduling-Explode.pdf **8** As patient responsibility jumps 29%, providers to focus on patient-centric payment solutions, October 25, 2017, Jeff Lagasse, Healthcare Finance, <https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/patient-responsibility-jumps-29-providers-focus-patient-centric-payment-solutions> **9** As patient responsibility jumps 29%, providers to focus on patient-centric payment solutions, October 25, 2017, Jeff Lagasse, Healthcare Finance, <https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/patient-responsibility-jumps-29-providers-focus-patient-centric-payment-solutions>

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