

# Points of Care

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Strategies to maintain a consistent connection with patients across the entire healthcare journey.



## Historically, the healthcare industry

has changed due to regulations, consolidations, economic realities, societal factors and other varying influences. Despite the uneasiness these changes may bring, healthcare providers have generally retained their reputation as reliable, trustworthy sources of expertise. They've even maintained their patient base. As a whole, the industry has been relatively immune to disruption.

## Until now.

Another force is causing a monumental shift in the way providers work. When it comes to the evolution of the healthcare industry today, all signs point directly to the patient. As their needs adapt to the digital era, providers must follow suit, offering not only the dependable service patients have come to expect, but the always-on, omnichannel experience they also now demand.

Considering that most physicians only spend 13 to 16 minutes with each patient,<sup>1</sup> fostering that sense of continual connection may seem impossible. We'll tell you why it isn't.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The majority of providers now considers patient experience as a critical factor to success. Understanding how patient expectations and behaviors are changing will reveal new opportunities for providers to connect with patients across their entire healthcare journey.
- Being present in multiple channels at each touchpoint of the patient journey can help ensure providers connect patients with the right information and support at the right time.
- From the moment a patient starts researching health information through the exam-room visit and beyond, implementing key engagement tactics, such as search engine optimization, online listing management, waiting room digital screens and interactive exam-room technology, can help boost patient satisfaction and improve outcomes.
- A comprehensive patient engagement plan is necessary to meet consumers' new expectations of the healthcare experience and empower them with the information they need to play an active role in their care via any channel they choose.

# A Foundational Shift

In 2011, a 5.8-magnitude earthquake shook the mideastern United States so strongly that the Washington Monument, standing tall in the nation's capital for more than 150 years, almost collapsed. It didn't, but numerous cracks tell the story of its shaky past.

Today, the ground under the healthcare industry is also trembling. Empowered consumers are making heavy demands, challenging traditional hospital and physician office processes and exposing cracks.

No longer passive dependents, patients are becoming active participants in their care and requesting immediate access to information, convenient hours and multiple ways to communicate with their physicians (to name a few).

As a result, a fissure is appearing between patients' expectations of their healthcare experience and providers' actual delivery of it.

## Experience Is in the Eye of the Beholder

*Providers overestimate the quality of their patient experience.<sup>2</sup>*



Being a reputable medical professional is no longer a primary differentiator in patients' eyes. What now sets a provider apart from the rest are the emotional connections and engaging experiences he or she can create.

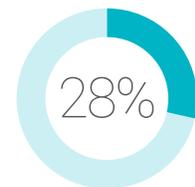
Providers are taking note—some more than others. According to an American College of Healthcare Executives survey, 75% of providers say patient experience is critical to the future success of their organizations.<sup>3</sup> Yet, on the list of hospital CEOs' top concerns, patient satisfaction doesn't even make the top five.<sup>4</sup>

Improving the overall patient experience will only become harder as digital and mobile revolutions continue to up the ante in terms of patient engagement and satisfaction. Understanding how patient expectations and behaviors are changing is the first step toward successfully navigating the new landscape and connecting with patients at every point in their healthcare journey.

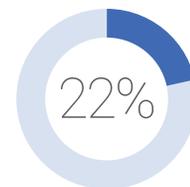
## What Millennials Want

Different generation, different expectations. Millennials' view of healthcare is anything but traditional, challenging providers to come up with new strategies to attract this segment.

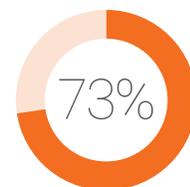
### Millennials & Healthcare<sup>5</sup>



28% visit a doctor for existing conditions



22% visit a doctor for a new condition



73% are willing to use on-demand medical centers, 64% retail clinics, 52% telemedicine

# All Points Lead to the Patient

The changing habits of all generations offer providers unprecedented opportunities to engage with patients in new ways. New communication channels are open and consumers are diving in—and they expect their healthcare providers to do the same.

Taking a cue from other industries already affected by this level of consumerism, providers need to leverage today's technologies to transform how they market themselves and interact with patients (Think Netflix, Uber, AirBnB and PayPal.). No longer periodic providers, they must evolve into continual consultants, always available with an answer in whichever channel their patients prefer.

## Engagement Tools at Every Point of the Healthcare Journey

<b>Search</b> <i>for Health Information or Providers</i>	<b>Find</b> <i>a Physician/ Hospital</i>	<b>Visit</b> <i>Doctor</i>	<b>Assess</b> <i>After the Visit</i>	<b>Maintain</b> <i>a Healthy Lifestyle</i>
Provider Website	Provider Website	Personalized Education	Personalized Education	Personalized Education
SEO	Online Listing Management	Interactive Digital Screens	Provider Website/App	Provider Website/App
Pay Per Click	Social Media	Custom Physician App	Reputation Monitoring	
Social Media			Provider Outreach	
			Social Media	

“ Healthcare providers play a key role in connecting consumers to relevant, actionable information and support that can advance their care.

The role of ‘communicator’ has never been more important to healthcare providers’ success.

—CHRIS MARTINI  
President, Hospital and Chief Provider Officer, PatientPoint

### Choose Your Channel



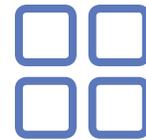
#### ONLINE

80% of Internet users look online for health information.<sup>6</sup>



#### MOBILE

By 2017, 65% of patients will be actively seeking health solutions via a mobile device.<sup>7</sup>



#### APPS

Consumers’ mobile health app adoption has doubled since 2013, increasing from 16% to 32%.<sup>8</sup>



#### SOCIAL

More than 40% of consumers say that information found via social media affects the way they deal with their health.<sup>9</sup>

# Patient Engagement Tools and Tactics

Delivering the right information in the right channel at the right time is easier said than done. Implementing a few key tactics, however, can help increase your interactions and boost your engagement well beyond the 13- to 16-minute exam room visit.

## Online Is Where It's At

More than 80% of internet users in the U.S. look up health information online.<sup>10</sup> That's roughly 60% of the population. Without a strong online presence, which includes, at a minimum, a branded website, you could potentially be missing an opportunity to reach three out of every five adults. That's huge.

As more Americans research health information online in an average day than visit health professionals, your online presence has never been more important. A website is the first step, but other strategies should follow. Let's dive into those now.

## Search Engine Optimization



30% of those going online to make health decisions say they find it difficult to sort through all the information.<sup>12</sup>

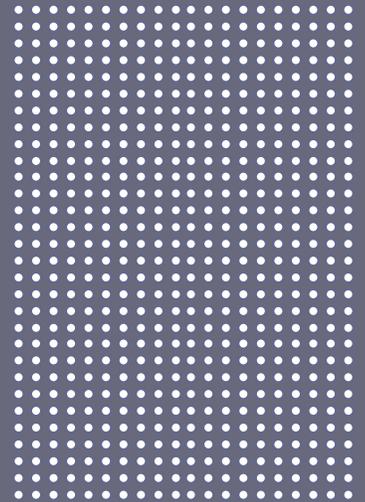
Google "flu symptoms" and more than 33 million search results appear. It's no surprise, then, that one in three people say they struggle to find the health information they need on the internet.<sup>13</sup> Based on the vast number of results generated, it's an even bigger surprise if they come across your website—unless, that is, you're employing search engine optimization (SEO) tactics.

In the simplest terms, SEO helps increase your chances of being found by placing your website at or near the top of the results pages. This placement relies on a variety of influential factors including the quality and relevancy of content on your website and your site's architecture, speed and cross-device compatibility (Is your site mobile-ready?).

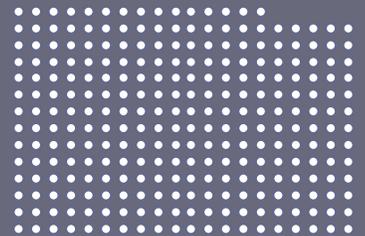
It may sound daunting to check off all of these boxes (and more), but it doesn't have to be done all at once. Regular updates of quality information to your website is a solid first step. There are also third-party companies who can handle a variety of SEO tactics for you.

## Online vs. In-Office

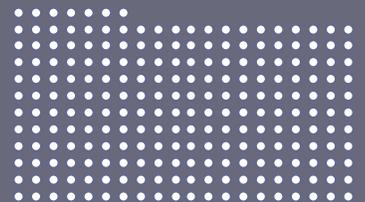
Per day...<sup>11</sup>



**6 million**  
people go online for medical advice.



**2.75 million**  
people visit hospital outpatient and emergency departments.



**2.27 million**  
people visit physician offices.

To put the importance of SEO into finer perspective, consider these stats:

- 86% of patients conduct a health-related search before booking a doctor's appointment.<sup>14</sup>
- 43% of visits to a hospital or clinic originate from a search engine—that's nearly half of all visits.<sup>15</sup>
- 45% of searchers start at the top of the search results and work their way down.<sup>16</sup>
- 39% read the results list and then click on the items that seem the most relevant.<sup>17</sup>  
The typical range of sites visited is two to five.<sup>18</sup>
- Just 12% clicked on a site because they recognized the sponsor or name.<sup>19</sup>

## Pay Per Click



More than 80% of people click on pay-per-click ads when looking for health information.<sup>21</sup>

Want another way to drive more people to your website? Pay for it! Pay-per-click efforts are one of the easiest and quickest ways to get your hospital or office in front of internet users. Studies have shown that 81% of people click on a sponsored, or pay-per-click (PPC), link when looking for health information.<sup>22</sup> Google reports that 57% of the Boomer generation have searched online for health information, with 73% clicking on sponsored links from paid search marketing campaigns.<sup>23</sup> Consumers are hungry for the quick and easy delivery of the information they need, when they need it. PPC ads deliver it to them with a simple click.



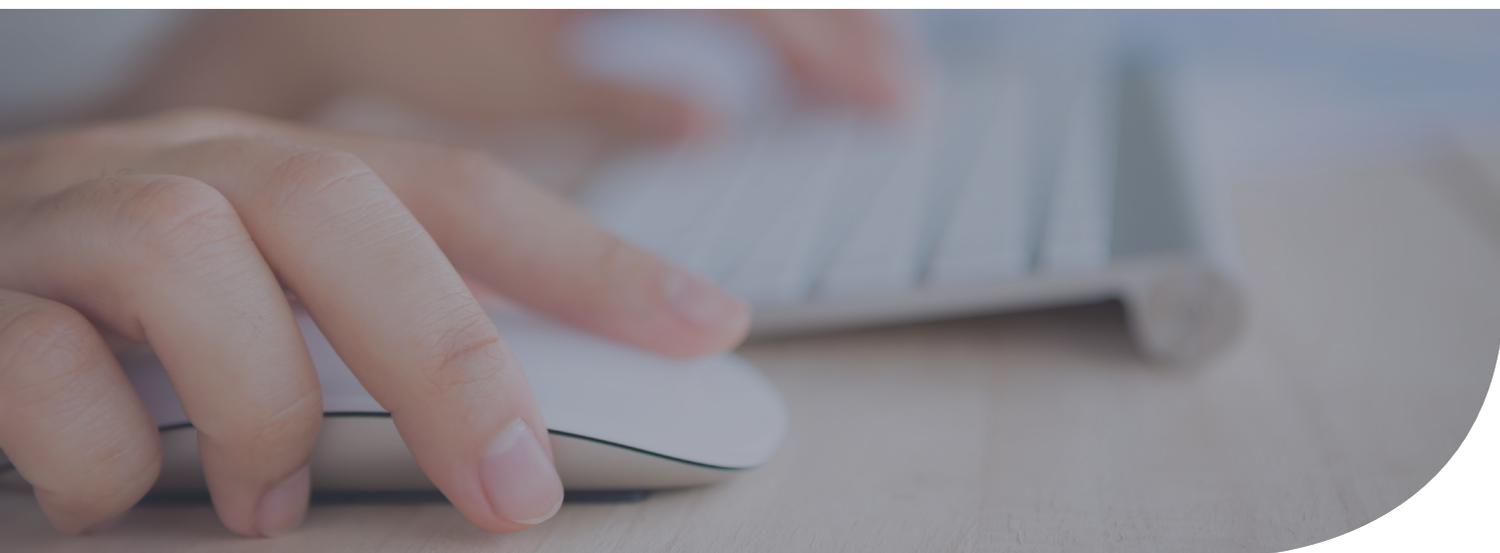
### **Did You Know?**

77% of online health seekers say they begin their session with a search engine such as Google, Bing or Yahoo.<sup>20</sup>

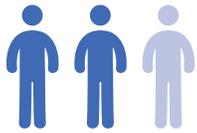
### **Their most commonly researched topics?**

- Specific diseases or conditions
- Treatments or procedures
- Doctors or other health professionals

Make sure your website has informative content on all of these well-researched topics.



## Online Listing Management



Two out of three people seeking immediate treatment check their devices to find the locations closest to them.<sup>25</sup>

We've all been there—you haven't eaten all day, so you do a quick search on your smartphone for the nearest pizza place. You give them a call, only to hear the ear-busting beep and cackle of an automated voice telling you this number no longer exists. Begrudgingly, you move on to the next listing.

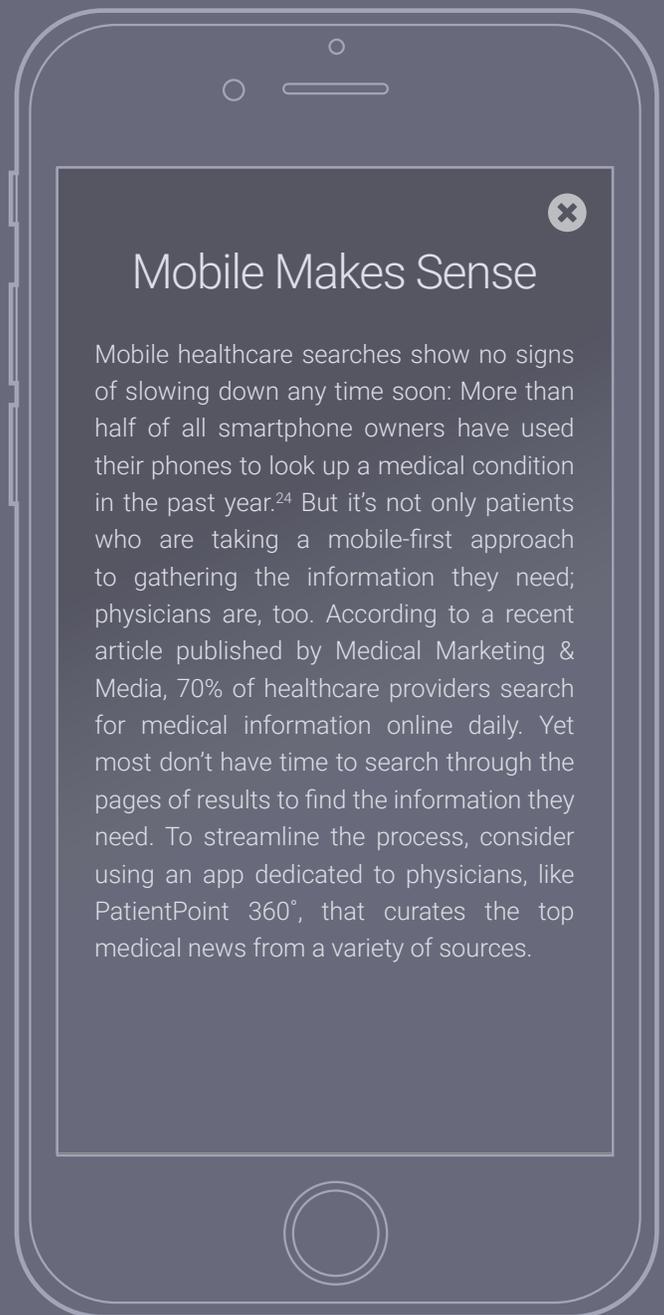
When it comes to real health needs, people don't have the time or patience for incorrect information. One bad experience can turn a potential patient away forever. Online listing management ensures this never happens by keeping your location listing up-to-date in as many online directories as possible.

Like SEO, this can seem like a daunting task to take on yourself. Providers may consider enlisting the help of an online listing management service, which can update and maintain your location across online directories for you. Not only will your information always be kept up-to-date, but you will also have more opportunity to showcase your service offerings and drive new patients to your office or facility.



### **How Does Your Listing Stack Up?**

Want to check the current status of your online listings? Go to [www.patientpointscan.com](http://www.patientpointscan.com).



## Social Media



60% of doctors say social media improves the quality of care delivered to patients.<sup>26</sup>

Social media and healthcare do not mix. This has been the long-held belief of many healthcare professionals, due to regulatory pressure and, perhaps, fear of the unknown. The tides are turning, however. Today, 65% of physicians use social media sites for professional reasons.<sup>27</sup> The opportunities social media presents to build awareness and connect with patients and the public are too big to resist.

According to a study conducted by Master of Health Administration, 60% of social media users are most likely to trust social media posts and activity by doctors over any other group.<sup>28</sup> Your opinions are highly revered—share them, especially considering that 41% of social media users said social media would affect their choice of a specific doctor, hospital or medical facility.<sup>29</sup>



### **Did You Know?**

One-fourth of all hospitals in the U.S. participate in social media.<sup>30</sup>



SOCIAL SHARING

5m ago

#### **Information to consider sharing via social media:**

- Services offered, hours of operation, regular practice updates
- New doctors and staff
- General pre- and post-operative care information
- Educational videos on general topics
- In-depth resources into specialty conditions
- And more

## Reputation Monitoring

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62% of patients use online reviews as a first step to finding a new doctor.<sup>31</sup>

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Overshare is an understatement in today's society. People turn to social media to post their experiences with providers (good and bad), and those accounts are only a search phrase away for millions of other people to find. Bottom line: What others are saying about you matters.

Online reviews can make or break your hospital or practice's image. Not only are patients relying on reviews to help guide their decision-making, but online accounts also affect your rankings in local search engines.

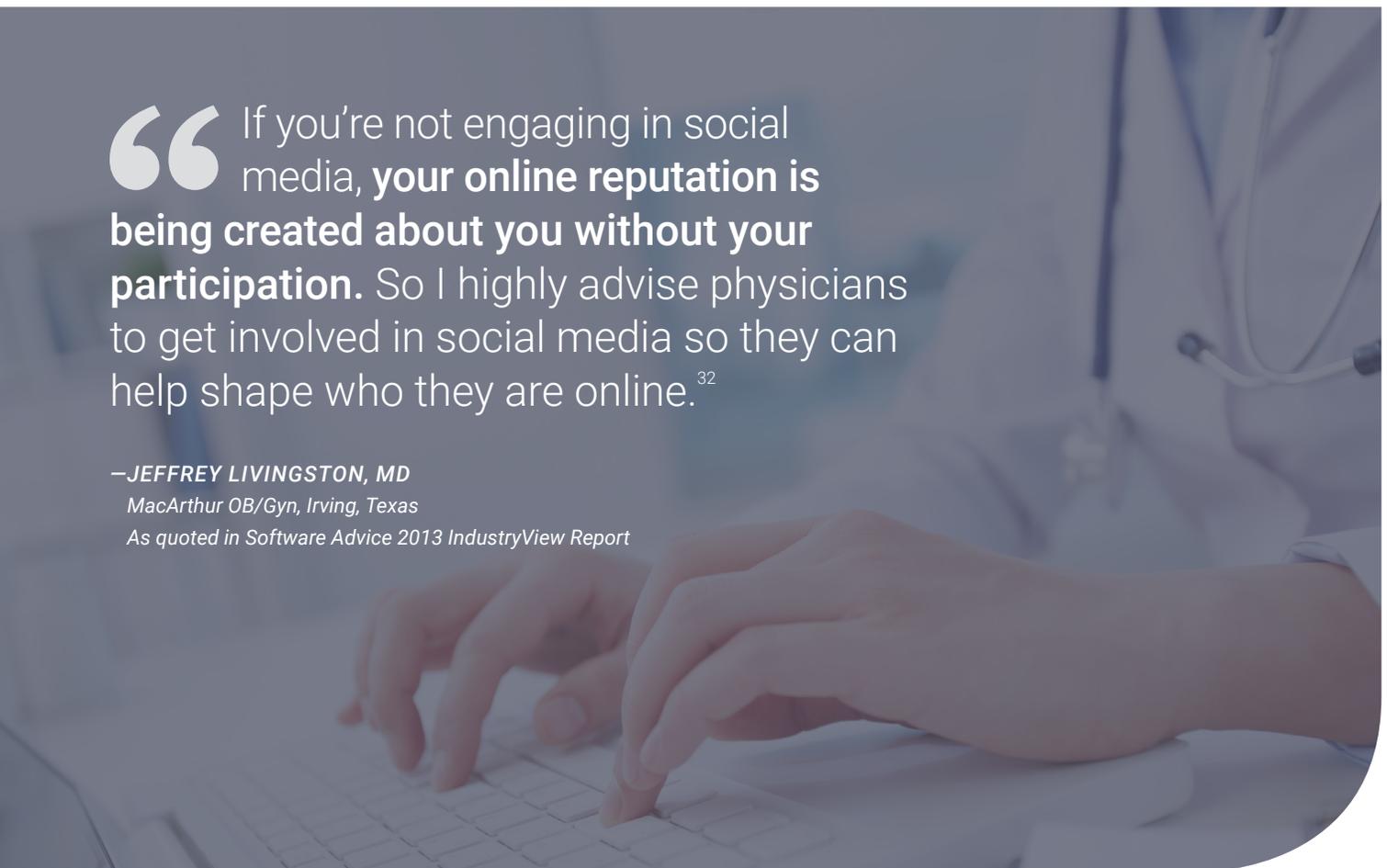
Tools are available that can help keep the pulse of patient satisfaction and alert you to reviews that need your attention. Remember: Bad reviews aren't necessarily bad for business. Addressing complaints or quickly rectifying a situation may build credibility in consumers' eyes.

“ If you're not engaging in social media, **your online reputation is being created about you without your participation.** So I highly advise physicians to get involved in social media so they can help shape who they are online.<sup>32</sup>

—JEFFREY LIVINGSTON, MD

MacArthur OB/Gyn, Irving, Texas

As quoted in Software Advice 2013 IndustryView Report



## In-Office Tools to Continue the Connection

Online efforts help build awareness and attract consumers to your physician office or hospital. They shouldn't stop, however, once a patient arrives for his or her visit. A holistic patient experience relies on consistent, customized communication before, during and after the visit. Displaying familiar, relevant messaging in the waiting room and exam room will ensure the connection you've worked so hard to create with a patient continues to grow stronger.

### Digital Screens



More than two-thirds of patients said relevant communication enhances their waiting room experience.<sup>33</sup>

Patients say the waiting period is often the worst part of the doctor's visit.<sup>34</sup> In fact, 63% said it is the most stressful thing about going to the doctor.<sup>35</sup> Waiting inherently induces anxiety. Without compelling engagement, waiting can also create frustration. Don't let these feelings fostered in the waiting room follow patients into the exam room.

Digital screens in the waiting room give you an opportunity to reinforce key messages you've shared online. Posting complimentary reviews, sharing your recent social media posts and promoting updates that have been made to your website provide a personal point of reference for patients. Additional health-related information that is easy to understand, from best practice reminders to treatment information to healthy lifestyle tips, can go a long way in calming your patients' concerns and setting the stage for fruitful discussions in the exam room.

For a busy hospital, getting messages and important information to all employees, patients and families can be a challenge. Digital screens allow patients to see vital information about their care plans, messages about discharge and medication information, along with constant reminders that help is available by hospital staff at any time. Digital screens are also a good way to showcase services and events your hospital has to offer, new physicians and technologies to the hospital and recognitions your hospital has received, all of which help to put a personal touch on an often cold, anxiety-ridden experience.



#### LOOKING UP

Patients are paying attention:  
**Half of patients watch the screen at least part of the time they spend in the waiting room.**<sup>36</sup>

## Interactive Technology

Exam rooms are essential tools for effective patient engagement. However, most are intimidating environments that offer little patient education or interaction.

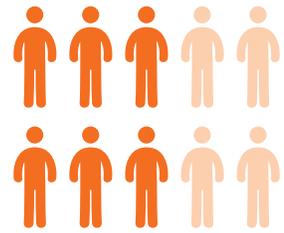
As patients become more active participants in their care, they're looking for new outlets—including digital technology they can interact with—to find information about their condition, treatment options and general health advice.

Including interactive touchscreens in the exam room enables patients to learn more about their condition and how to improve their health as they wait for the physician. Physicians can use the screen to help facilitate better understanding of key topics (What patient wouldn't want to see a 3D model of his heart as the doctor explains the causes of a clogged artery?), as well as compel patients to sign up for access to a patient portal. In addition, articles, videos and other content can be emailed to patients to empower them to continue making the right decisions about their health after their appointment.

And it works. A recent study by The Beryl Institute found that hospitals using interactive technology to communicate with patients increased satisfaction scores by approximately 10% and increased satisfaction with hospital educational materials by as much as 42%.<sup>37</sup>

## After Care

"Out of sight, out of mind" does not apply to patients once they leave the exam room. People tend to immediately forget 40% to 80% of information their providers present to them.<sup>39</sup> Open channels of communication across your website, social media accounts and other channels will maintain the sense of connection your patients need as well as help drive better outcomes and higher patient satisfaction.



Almost six out of 10 patients said **technology in the exam room enhances the experience**, especially when it's used "collaboratively to educate or explain."<sup>38</sup>



***"Great Experience!!!"***

*According to a recent study by Dr. Hanan Aboumatar, an assistant professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, hospitals that made patient experience their top priority saw a positive effect on their patient satisfaction scores.<sup>41</sup>*

# End-to-End Patient Engagement

A full 70% of doctors say their bond with patients has eroded since they began practicing medicine.<sup>40</sup> Considering the number of outlets providers have available to them to create connections with their patients, that is a staggering statistic.

A comprehensive patient engagement plan is necessary to meet patients' new expectations of the healthcare experience, helping empower them with the information they need to play an active role in their care and participate via any channel they choose. Not only will this help providers drive more traffic to their doors and retain their current patients, but overall health outcomes may be improved by minimizing a key constraint that prevents people from receiving and adhering to proper care—lack of engagement or knowledge.

To build and maintain a strong connection with patients in an era where patients are being inundated with messages from every angle, patient experience and emotional engagement are becoming increasingly influential factors in determining healthcare providers' success.

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## The Connecting Point

For 30 years, PatientPoint solutions have helped connect healthcare providers and patients at all points of care. More than 31,000 physician offices and 1,000 hospitals trust PatientPoint solutions to provide an integrated patient-engagement experience across care settings.

### Physician Office Solutions

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PatientPoint | **Communicate**

Waiting Room Digital Screens Program

PatientPoint | **Educate**

Exam Room Education Display Program

PatientPoint | **360°**

Mobile Engagement Platform

PatientPoint | **Interact**

Interactive Exam Room Program

PatientPoint | **Access**

Physician Medical News Program

### Hospital Solutions

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PatientPoint | **Communicate**

Waiting Room Digital Screens Program

PatientPoint | **Navigate**

Patient Information Program

### Online Solutions

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PatientPoint | **Launch**

Healthcare Provider Website Program

PatientPoint | **Locate**

Reputation & Listing Management

PatientPoint | **Leads**

New Patient Leads Program

PatientPoint | **Optimize**

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