

7 Steps for Increasing Patient Engagement



Improving patient engagement is not only one of the primary goals of Meaningful Use Stage 2 but is just good for the patient. If managed well, engagement can lead to better coordination of care, lower costs of care, and ideally, improved patient outcomes.

So when my friends at [eVisit](#), a telemedicine software company, released an infographic about boosting patient engagement, it caught my attention.

Below are the seven steps they recommend to achieve deeper patient engagement, along with survey results showing how today's patients think and feel.

Can your patients benefit from any of these?

1. Give access to patient medical records online.



GIVE ACCESS TO PATIENT MEDICAL RECORDS ONLINE

It makes sense. If patients have better access to their medical records, they're better equipped to manage their health. It can be a huge project for providers, but it's worth it in the long-run.



Providing online access to patients benefits everyone. Patients who have access to their personal health information tend to take more responsibility in forming health decisions with their physician.

“Fifty-seven percent of patients say they’d be more engaged in their personal healthcare if they had online access to their medical records.”

2. Cultivate an email list.

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CULTIVATE AN EMAIL LIST

Many doctors skip email in favor of old-fashioned phone communication. But patients are starting to prefer email for the flexibility. A solid email list is an invaluable tool for practice marketing, appointment reminders, sharing updates on your patient portal, and sending out important health information.



Email lists have been prominent in other industries, but are starting to become more popular in medical practices. Patients, and physicians alike, are seeing the benefits communication via email. Make sure to use a HIPAA compliant email solution.

“Ninety-three percent of adults would prefer a doctor who offers email communication.”

3. Recommend mHealth apps.

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RECOMMEND MHEALTH APPS

There are tons of helpful mHealth apps out there that your patients will love. Visit iMedicalapps.com to get clinically-vetted app recommendations.



The number of mHealth (mobile health) apps for phones and tablets is growing quickly. In fact, the market is estimated to grow to \$26 billion by the end of 2017, partly due to increasing patient demand and the convenience of having a smartphone in your pocket.

“Nine out of ten patients say they would use an app prescribed by their physician.”

4. Offer virtual doctor visits.

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OFFER VIRTUAL DOCTOR VISITS

A majority of patients are now open to telemedicine. Offering virtual care is a great way to both strengthen your practice's profitability and stay connected to your patients.



Telemedicine has exploded onto the healthcare scene, and by all accounts, it's not going anywhere. In 2015 alone, there will be approximately 800,000 online consultations. And by 2018, an estimated seven million patients are expected to participate in online telemedicine appointments.

The benefits of telemedicine make this trend one that will only grow more popular. Medical practices need to offer this service to their patients to stay up to date.

“Seventy-five percent of patients who haven't used telemedicine were interested in doing a virtual visit in place of an in-person one.”

5. Get mobile-compatible.

5

GET MOBILE-COMPATIBLE

Most Americans live out our daily lives with our phones in hand. Take advantage of that. Make your practice website mobile-compatible. Create an app for your practice. Send out appointment reminders and other notifications via text.



64%
of American
adults own
a smartphone



**Smartphone
adoption**
even among
low-income adults
is high

Everything – and everyone – is mobile these days. It’s become the standard in every industry, and is now flowing over into healthcare. Patients have come to expect easy, quick access, and mobile-compatibility can achieve that.

“Sixty-four percent of American adults own a smartphone.”

6. Build your online presence.



BUILD YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Patients are more likely to be engaged when they trust you and can interact with your brand even when you're not around! Cultivating your reputation online through review sites, blogs, and social media can help build your presence.



Until now, most physicians have underestimated the power of building an online presence. And when it comes to online reputation, it most definitely matters. A quick Google search can sometimes make all the difference in which physician a patient chooses.

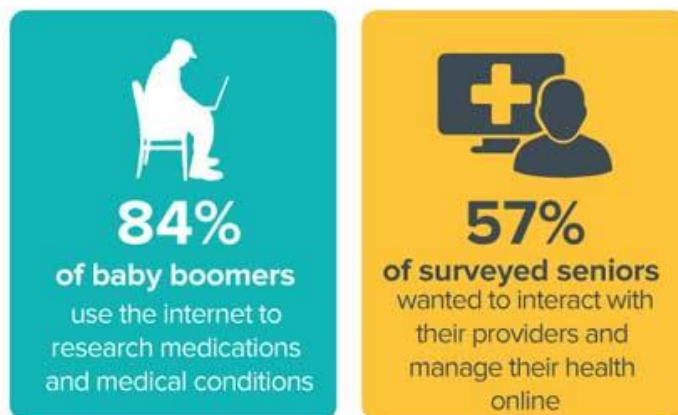
“Sixty-two percent of patients use online review sites to find a new doctor.”

7. Use tech to get seniors engaged too.



USE TECH TO GET SENIORS ENGAGED TOO!

Plenty of seniors adopting technology to manage their health, usually to help manage one or multiple chronic conditions. Don't just assume your older patients aren't tech-savvy enough to get engaged online.



When you think of technology, it's common to think of the younger generations only. But seniors are increasingly seeking out technology that will simplify their lives. Seniors that find it hard to get to their doctor's office would benefit greatly with online office visits.

“Fifty-seven percent of surveyed seniors wanted to interact with their providers and manage their health online.”

Check out the complete infographic at eVisit.com.

What are your best tips for boosting patient engagement? Please tell me in the comments on our [website!](#)

About the Author



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Manny Oliverrez, CPC, is a 20-year healthcare veteran and the CEO and co-founder of Capture Billing, a medical billing services company located outside of Washington, D.C. He teaches the nation's physicians, administrators, and medical practices how to maximize billing and revenue cycle management processes. Manny also frequently posts articles and videos on his [award-winning healthcare blog](#). For more information on Manny and his company, please visit [his website](#), or call (703)327-1800. And if you're on [LinkedIn](#), please look for him there too. **READ MORE**

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