

Patients Leaving Practices Contributed to “A Lousy Experience”

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Research shows that patients are leaving both providers and payers because of bad customer experiences. Nearly 80% of people who switched doctors said “ease of navigation” factors were the cause. These include difficulties in doing business, bad experience with administrative staff, and inadequate digital solutions. To illustrate the importance of navigation factors, consider that the rate of switching was double that of even a poor clinical experience.

Health care payers face some of the same challenges, with 49% of those who switched indicating that experience factors were the reason. This includes inaccurate or inconsistent information, unanswered questions, poor experiences using digital tools, poor customer service, and discomfort over how payers use patients’ personal data. After experience, benefits and coverage rank next as the reason to switch payers.

There are four factors that drive patient loyalty: **access, ease of doing business, digital engagement, and trust.**

When it comes to access, 71% of people cite it as a top factor in selecting a new health care provider. They value things like appointment availability, convenience, customer service and the ability to connect to their provider through their preferred channels, according to the report. A trusted referral source is also important, which just over half of respondents (53%) consider it to be a top factor in their selection of a new provider.

For ease of doing business, people who find their health care providers very easy to work with are nine times more likely to stay than those who find them difficult to work with—and three times more likely to stay than if their provider is even somewhat easy to work with. Similarly, people are four times more likely to stay with health care payers they find are very easy to work with compared to those that find their payer difficult.

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Digital engagement is a strong predictor of loyalty. People who are highly digitally engaged are significantly more loyal. Nearly 80% of highly digital people are likely to stay with their health care providers. When it comes to how highly digitally engaged people interact with health care payers, they are more likely to stay (69% versus 55%) and more likely to consider their payer very easy to do business with (74% vs 50%).

According to the report, people who trust their providers are five times more likely to stay with their health care providers than all other categories, and they are almost seven times more likely to stay than those who don't trust their providers at all.

Reference: Medical Economics