HOW TO CREATE A
PATIENT-CENTRIC
PRACTICE

Advanced**MD**®

The changing healthcare landscape continues to challenge private practices. Each year private practices lose 25% of their patient population, according to *American Medical News*. Their research found that most patients change practices due to factors physicians can control, such as wait times, billing errors, lack of follow-up, or poor customer service.[1]

Across all sectors, smart businesses recognize that it costs a lot less to keep existing customers than attract new ones. Implementing patient-centric solutions can improve patient satisfaction, engagement, and retention while also enhancing your practice's profitability. Read on to find out how you can create a patient-centric practice.

Streamline the patient check-in process.

A Software Advice survey of 5,000 patients found that 97% were frustrated with wait times.[2] A patient portal can help speed up the check-in process, and it's a convenience patients want. In fact, nearly 60% of patients would choose a provider who offered the ability to fill out paperwork online prior to an in-person visit.[2]

When patients handle forms on their own time, they may fill out information more thoroughly. For example, patients can check their medicine cabinets to include any prescription medications and dosages, over-the-counter products, and supplements they take. According to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA), 25% of patients don't tell their doctors about their use of supplements. The good news: the same study indicated that patients would tell their primary care doctors if asked.[3] Give them that nudge by requesting it on the forms.

AdvancedMD now offers AdvancedPatient, a patient engagement software suite, that allows your staff to auto-assign forms for patients to complete at home through a patient portal.

Our patient portal can eliminate other kinds of waiting for your patients, too. Instead of waiting until your office is open to call, then wading through phone menu prompts, and possibly listening to hold music, patients can go on the portal immediately. Once there, your patient can request an appointment or prescription refill, view medical records, or ask you and your staff questions. Viewing and paying statement balances are also a snap.

"A survey found that 97% of patients were frustrated with wait times."

1   "What Makes Patients Loyal?" American Medical News. December 2006. http://www.amednews.com/article/20061204/business/312049995/4
2   Software Advice. "The Cure for Wait-Time Woes Industry View Report." 2013. http://www.saimgs.com/imglib/other_pages/Melissa/How-to-Treat-Patient-Wait-Time-Woes-Industry-View-2013.pdf
3   Jou J, Johnson P. "Nondisclosure of Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use to Primary Care Physicians: Findings From the 2012 National Health Interview Survey." *JAMA Internal Medicine*. 2016;176(4):545-546. http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2500061
4   Arroll, Bruce et al. "An Exploration of the Basis for Patient Complaints About the Oldness of Magazines in Practice Waiting Rooms: Cohort Study." *BMJ*. December 2014. http://www.bmj.com/content/349/bmj.g7262

Minimize patient frustration while they wait.

One cost-free way to improve patient experience is to have the front desk give expected wait times and updates. In fact, 80% of patients said this would minimize their frustration.[2] Providing updates to patients indicates that you value their time as much as your own. As a result, patients feel respected instead of like just another number. They're also more understanding if they know you're handling an emergency. If there is an extended wait time, 70% of patients surveyed said an apology from the doctor would help them be more understanding.[2]

While your patients are waiting, keep them busy. Yes, it's a tired old joke that doctor's offices only stock ancient magazines. Of course, your staff will tell you the current issues get stolen! Funny enough, there is a *BMJ* study to confirm the theory: celebrity magazines are the most likely to be filched.[4] Go beyond keeping the latest issue of *In Touch Weekly* and provide free Wi-Fi. Software Advice reports that 60% of patients say free internet access would reduce frustration.[2] Let them catch up on email, check Facebook, or play Candy Crush while they wait. It's an easy courtesy that goes a long way.

> "Giving patients expected wait times would alleviate frustration, according to 80% of patients surveyed."

Support your patients' desire for health information.

Turning to the web to find out more about anything is second nature. Most doctors have at least one story about a patient and Dr. Google. The resulting information can become a "prescription for fear," an apt description from a *New York Times'* article about medical websites.[5]

An annual "Pulse of Online Health" survey found that the most popular sites are WebMD and Wikipedia; however, the sites rank high because of ease-of-use, not perceived trustworthiness.[6]

Overwhelmingly, patients (95%) consider doctors the most trusted source of medical information, according to the "Pulse of Online Health" findings.[6] Support your patients' desire to know more. Providing educational materials is a key principle in shared decision making , and can help you meet the proposed MACRA quality measures.

Less than half of patients facing a medical decision reported that their provider asked them about their goals and concerns about treatment, according to a discussion paper from the Institute of Medicine. Furthermore, more than 80% wanted their providers to listen, 80% wanted to know the full truth of their diagnosis, and 70% wanted to understand the risks of treatment.[7]

"Less than half of patients facing a medical decision reported that their provider asked them about their treatment goals and concerns."

Created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Mayo Clinic's Shared Decision Making National Resource features video demos, electronic interactive tools, and English and Spanish PDFs specifically for use during appointments.[8]

Finally, The National Patient Safety Foundation's *Ask Me 3* campaign promotes stronger patient-provider communication with a free video, and downloadable English and Spanish materials for your office. The cornerstone of the health literacy program encourages patients to ask doctors these three basic but critical questions:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?[9]

5   Heffernan, Virginia. "A Prescription for Fear." *New York Times Magazine*. February 6, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/magazine/06FOB-Medium-t.html
6   Makovsky/Kelton. "Pulse Online Search" Survey. March 2016. http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/sixth-annual-pulse-of-online-search-survey-finds-consumers-weighing-trust-ease-of-use-when-seek-ing-health-guidance-300234002.html
7   Alston, C., et al. "Communicating with Patients on Health Care Evidence." Discussion Paper. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Health and Medicine Division. September 2012. https://nam.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/VSRT-Evidence.pdf
8   Mayo Clinic Shared Decision Making National Resource Center. http://shareddecisions.mayoclinic.org
9   "Ask Me 3." National Patient Safety Foundation. http://www.npsf.org/?page=askme3

Improve patient access with telemedicine.

Video-conferencing technology helps boost patient engagement and demand for services. Private practices with telemedicine can improve both their clinical efficiency and the patient/provider relationship.

Being able to offer telemedicine services to rural, elderly, or housebound patients can help you expand your practice reach *and* profitability. Your other patients, including those who have a hard time getting off work, will appreciate virtual house calls too.

In a few short years, telemedicine is expected to be commonplace, especially with the shift to value-based care. The use of telehealth will jump from an estimated 250,000 patients in 2013 to 3.2 million in 2018 as patients become more proactive in their healthcare delivery choices, according to predictions by the *American Health Association*.[10] That's an eleven-fold increase!

"The use of telehealth will jump from an estimated 250,000 patients in 2013 to 3.2 million in 2018, according to industry predictions."

Here's another important number for you: the Association of American Medical Colleges predicts that there will be a shortage of somewhere between 12,500-31,100 primary care physicians by 2025.[11] This shortage is going to have a profound effect on the entire healthcare system, but especially on those who already live in underserved rural areas. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), state Medicaid programs, and private payers are looking to telemedicine to bridge that gap.

For patients with chronic conditions, telemedicine helps with continuity of care and quality of life. Several studies have confirmed that telehealth is a powerful tool in reducing deaths, improving health outcomes and access to healthcare services, and reducing the healthcare costs for managing chronic conditions.[12] With telehealth technology, patients with diabetes can be remotely monitored, and an alert can be sent to both the provider and the patient to promptly take action when dangerously low blood sugar levels are detected.

Telemedicine simplifies consults with specialists too; both patients and primary care providers give this convenience high marks, according to an article published in the *Journal of a Telemedicine and Telecare*. The reasons were "convenience, educational value, rapid turnaround, improved access to specialty input, better provider-provider communication, avoidance of unnecessary patient travel, and the perception of shorter waiting times for patients ultimately referred to face-to-face visits."[13] Two big pluses of using telemedicine to offer specialist consults: the patient *and* the revenue stay with your practice.

In case you think telemedicine is too Jetsons for your patients, think again. Video-conferencing is already part of your patients' lives whether they meet virtually with clients or FaceTime with loved ones. A recent Cisco survey shows that 74% of U.S. consumers would use telehealth services.[14]

"A recent survey shows that 74% of U.S. consumers would use telehealth services."

With two-way HD video, our AdvancedTelemedicine product promotes a feeling of personalized care for patients. Compared to a phone consultation, this video conferencing technology creates a highly personal and collaborative patient experience. It's the return of the house call.

10   American Hospital Association. "The Promise of Telehealth for Hospitals, Health Systems and Their Communities." *Trend Watch*. January 2015. P. 6. http://www.aha.org/research/reports/tw/15jan-tw-telehealth.pdf
11   IHS, Inc. "The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections from 2013 to 2025." Prepared for the Association of American Medical Colleges. 2015. P. 33. https://www.aamc.org/newsroom/news-releases/426166/20150303.html
12   "The Empirical Foundations of Telemedicine Interventions for Chronic Disease Management." *Telemedicine & e-Health*. September 2014.
13   Vimalananda, VG et al. "Electronic Consultations (E-Consults) to Improve Access to Specialty Care: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis." *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*. September 2015; 21(6): 323-330.
14   Insight Express. "Cisco Customer Experience Report for Healthcare." February 2013.

Conclusion

The best patient-centric solutions increase patient satisfaction and engagement while enhancing revenue. AdvancedMD offers AdvancedPatient and AdvancedTelemedicine in addition to our cloud-based EHR and medical billing systems. Contact us to learn more about patient-centric solutions for your private practice.

Learn more about why you'll love AdvancedMD

AdvancedMD technologies are used by independent physicians and their staff to optimize all areas of their practices. The suite includes integrated electronic health records and practice management, revenue cycle management, patient engagement, business analytics reporting, and physician-performance benchmarking. As you'd expect, our U.S.-based stellar service team supports each service and technology we offer. AdvancedMD serves an expansive national footprint of more than 21,500 practitioners and 500 medical billing companies.

Learn more about how AdvancedMD can shorten your task list and improve your workflows.

SCHEDULE LIVE DEMO

advancedmd.com/schedule-demo

Visit **advancedmd.com**
Call (800) 825-0224