

Technology Beyond the Exam Room

How Digital Media is
Helping Doctors Deliver the
Highest Level of Care





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Recent studies show that eating a cup of blueberries each day can reduce your risk of certain types of cancer, and increasing your intake of vitamin D can lower your risk of diabetes. New treatments or ways of preventing an illness are released to the public on a regular basis, yet 115 million Americans still don't feel healthy. Perhaps this is because healthcare consumers aren't fully taking advantage of what's available to help them achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Physicians are now utilizing Engagement Communications to help patients better manage their healthcare through web-based educational campaigns, text message and e-mail reminders to refill prescriptions, monitor glucose, check blood pressure and schedule annual exams. As digital technology becomes increasingly ubiquitous in American culture, a higher prevalence of its usage should be expected within our healthcare system. High-tech communication is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reach large audiences, but in a very personalized manner.



Digital Disclosure



When a patient is asked how much alcohol they drink or if they smoke, do physicians always receive truthful answers?

During clinical or hospital visits, some patients experience social anxiety when discussing their lifestyle choices. A patient may be hesitant to reveal private information out of fear of what their physician may think. Unfortunately, this lack of disclosure can lead to incorrect diagnoses and prescriptions, making the patient's initial face-to-face visit dangerously counterproductive.

The digital age is providing the tools for the necessary solutions to this challenge. When patients were asked how they felt about office visits in a virtual setting, an astounding 85 percent responded that communications such as emails, text messages and voicemails are as helpful, if not even more helpful, than in-person or phone

conversations with their healthcare provider.

Over one-third (34 percent) of U.S. consumers said they would be more honest when talking about their medical needs through an automated call, email or text message than in person with a healthcare provider. Others revealed they would talk more frankly about nutritional habits (28 percent), their fitness regimen (27 percent) or personal vices (18 percent) through digital communication rather than in-person visits.

Earning Trust through Patient Engagement



Most patients, at some point, have met with a doctor who took that extra five minutes to ask about their job, or discuss their child's recent school play. It's in these moments that a patient begins to build trust and a sense that their physician cares about them as an individual. Interpersonal communication is crucial when developing a solid and trustworthy patient-physician relationship.

It can be tricky in our demanding society, however, for physicians to find time to take these extra steps. So how can healthcare providers reach out to each patient and make that needed connection?

By transcending the in-office visit through digital technology, healthcare providers may finally begin to achieve the quantity of communication their patients so desire.

Three in ten U.S. consumers asserted that receiving text messages, voicemails or emails that provide patient care between visits would increase feelings of trust in their provider. Of the 66 percent of patients who have received a voicemail, text or email from a healthcare provider, many reported a variety of positive outcomes. Fifty-one percent reported feeling more valued as a patient, 35 percent said digital communication improved their opinion of their provider, and 34 percent reported feeling more certain about visiting that healthcare provider again.

By utilizing beyond-the-clinic communication such as email, voicemail, text messaging, and social media, physicians can create and nurture that personal, human touch.

"When patients are engaged with their doctors and nurses, they can feel empowered and are better able to participate in their own health and well-being."

— "Rules of Patient Engagement: How to Deeply Connect with Empathy" by Barbara Ficarra, RN, BSN, MPA

Confidentiality Concerns

As doctors introduce technological advances into a patient's ongoing treatment, they must evaluate the ethical implications of such changes. Providers must consider the impact it may have on their previously-existing patient relationships.

Who will see these emails and texts? Will the doctor-patient confidentiality agreement hold up when communicating outside of an exam room? To the latter, the answer is yes. But providers should always remember that when utilizing digital communication such as email, they hold the same ethical responsibilities to their patients as they do during other visits. Their virtual guidance must be presented in a manner that meets professional standards.

From the American Journal of Bioethics, Amy M. Bovi wrote in her article titled "Ethical Guidelines for Use of Electronic Mail Between Patients and Physicians" that educating patients about the inherent limitations of email usage can take place during a prior face-to-face visit or within the very first email. This would be synonymous with asking a patient about the privacy or security of a particular fax machine before faxing sensitive medical information. If a patient initiates email communication, the physician's primary response should include information explaining the risks involved when communicating through email and ask for the patient's permission to continue. Medical advice or information about the patient's condition should not be transmitted prior to obtaining his or her authorization.

"There are several potential benefits for patients and physicians who use email. Patients may feel more comfortable in addressing complex, sensitive, or personal issues if the interactions are conducted in writing rather than face-to-face. The use of email allows time to construct a thoughtful, structured message. Also, email is largely self-documenting, which is crucial for the integrity of the medical record. Finally, email can solve issues related to large distances or patients' inability to travel to receive follow-up care."

— "Ethical Guidelines for Use of Electronic Mail Between Patients and Physicians" by Amy M. Bovi

Once healthcare providers and patients are educated on the safety of digital communication, they can finally begin to move past the fear of confidentiality and ethics limitations. The advantages of digital technology are already being observed in several areas, such as follow-up prescriptions and treatment discussions, and alerting patients with "It's time" reminders.

More than 35 percent of those who don't follow exact treatment plans said they would be more likely to follow directions if they received reminders from their doctors via email, voicemail or text. They welcome their provider telling them to do something specific, like take medication, schedule a routine medical screening, or get a flu shot.

Follow-up care and reminders aren't the only benefits a patient will experience with digital communication. Doctors are now able to connect with patients they may otherwise not have seen due to location, weather, or any number of inconvenient circumstances.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE FINDINGS ►



Preference Awareness

It's important for patients to arrive at their appointments knowing how they would like to receive communication (text, email or phone) and in what topics they're most interested (updates, education or alerts). Before patients talk with their doctors about participating in between-visit care, patients should ask themselves the following questions:

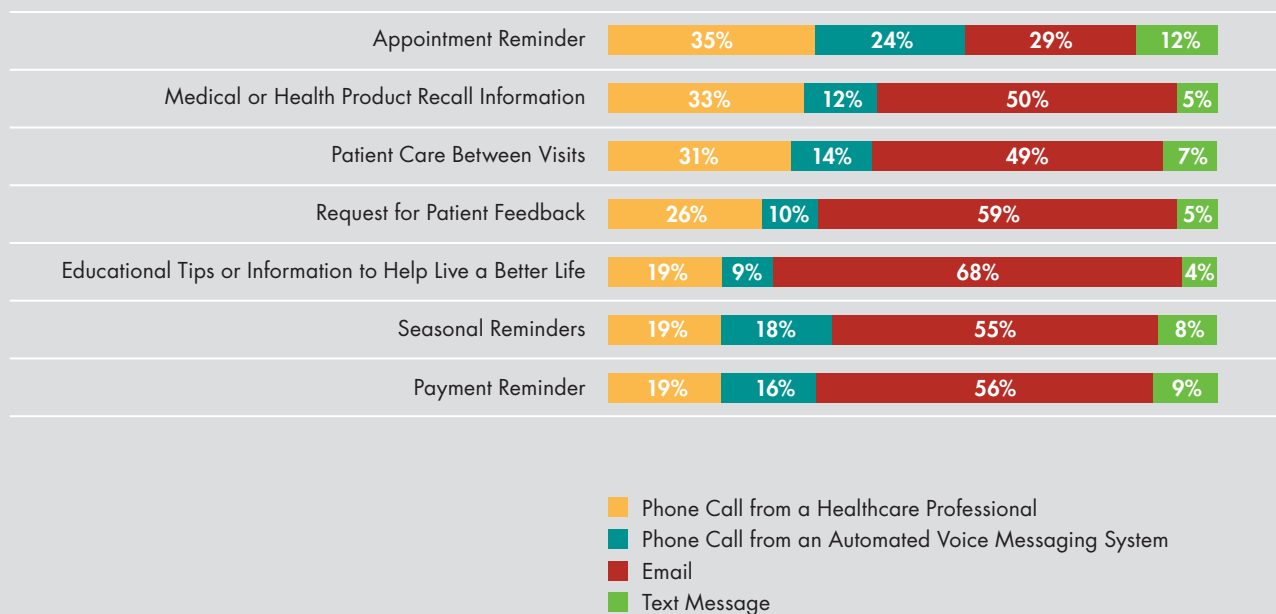
- Do I want to receive information via phone call, text, email or snail mail?
- How often would I like to receive information?
- What time of day works best?
- What kind of information would I like to receive? Appointment reminders? Disease education? Feedback? Payment reminders?

Once a doctor collects answers to these questions, he or she can make better choices about how to engage and treat their patients.

The TeleVox Healthy World study, “Technology Beyond the Exam Room,” found that given the choice between a phone call, voicemail, email and text message, patients would most like to be contacted via email. Email is the favored method of communication when receiving feedback following initial face-to-face visits with their doctors (59 percent), notices for seasonal health offers such as scheduling flu shots (55 percent), and payment reminders (56 percent).

However, the way patients prefer to receive communications from their healthcare provider changes based on the information being delivered. For example, although patients want their doctors to email them educational tips or information which will help them live a better life (68 percent), they prefer to receive a phone call to remind them about an upcoming appointment. When it comes to patient care between visits, it’s a toss-up—45 percent of patients prefer phone communication while 49 percent prefer email communications. Likewise, when being notified of medical or health product recalls, 45 percent of patients prefer phone communication and 50 percent prefer to be alerted by email.

For each of the following purposes, please select which type of communication you would prefer to receive from a healthcare professional.





Men and Health: Get to the Point

It may not come as a surprise to learn that most men tackle problems with a “just fix it” approach. They believe that if a problem exists, a solution must also exist. This same concept holds true when communicating about health and wellness decisions. Men don’t just want to learn about unhealthy lifestyle habits, they want to be educated, firstly, on how to fix them.

Dr. Jesse Hsieh wrote in his article titled “Just Fix the Darn Thing! The Key to Communicating with Men” that when it comes to communicating about health problems, it’s in a man’s DNA to think, “If you can’t fix the problem, why are we talking about it?”

Dr. Hsieh wrote that most men don’t want to sit down and have a heart-to-heart about what’s going on in their bodies, no matter how great of a listener the doctor may be. But, Dr. Hsieh wrote, the good news is that men might be more open to a health-related discussion if you offer some solutions into the mix.

Twenty-two percent of men surveyed said that the communication they expect from their healthcare professional should go beyond telling them to get healthy. They want the exact steps on how to become a healthy individual. So how can physicians give men the ongoing education and updates they require to fulfill their fix-it needs, and on what topics?

Thirty-five percent of men reported that a phone call from a healthcare professional reminding them of their

appointments would be most helpful. Topics that piqued most men's interests were educational tips about how to eat healthier, how to help their partner maintain a healthy pregnancy, and advice on how to maintain a proper exercise routine. Nineteen percent of men said they would also like to be alerted via text or email during seasonal changes about issues such as allergy maintenance or when to get a flu shot.

Make it Personal



52% of men said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



48% of men reported that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



37% of men said they would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name



14% of men said that they would ignore or refuse digital healthcare communication if it is not personalized with their information



Nearly **3 in 10** men asserted that by receiving text messages, voicemails or emails that provide patient care or reminders between visits they would experience a greater sense of trust between themselves and their doctor



Women and Health: Timeliness Matters

With a groan and a slap of her palm atop a screeching alarm clock at 6:00 a.m. — it begins. Every Monday through Friday she's waking and dressing the kids for school, getting herself ready for work, and finding that extra ten minutes to make sure everyone eats breakfast before embarking on her one-hour commute to work.

It's 2012 and women are doing it all — owning businesses while having kids, while running marathons, while earning Ph.Ds. It's a wonder that 83 percent of women still find time to see a doctor at least once a year.

According to a study conducted on behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians, 90 percent of adult women in the U.S. are responsible for making the healthcare decisions for themselves and their family members. This includes spouses, children, and other relatives such as

parents and grandparents. By utilizing digital technology advances, doctors and hospitals are offering ongoing medical treatments and updates that can save money, and most importantly, time.

“Working women are likely to be the primary decision maker for the family as well as the caregiver when a family member falls ill. Therefore, women need adequate knowledge and tools to satisfy their multiple roles as decision makers and consumers of health care.”

— United States Department of Labor

Eighty-four percent of the women surveyed said that receiving digital communication updates from their healthcare professional, such as text messages, emails or voicemails, is as helpful, if not more helpful, than in-person conversations. Forty-two percent of women said they would most like to communicate through text or email. Thirty-five percent of women said they would like to receive communication via telephone, and 10 percent prefer direct mailings.

The TeleVox Healthy World study, “Technology Beyond the Exam Room,” shows that information regarding appointment or payment reminders and special event announcements, such as flu shot offerings and other seasonal updates, are among the topics most requested by women when communicating digitally. Other topics include information about medication recalls and tips on how to enhance their nutritional and exercise programs.

Make it Personal



55% of women said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



51% of women reported that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



34% of women would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name



11% of women said that they would ignore or refuse digital healthcare communication if it is not personalized with their information



23% expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals



High-tech Engagement Across Generations

Consumers are currently living in an age revolutionized by digital communication. They are in a constant state of upgrading, as technology seems to update faster than most people can grasp how it's used. Cell phones are old news within six months and computers are considered out-of-date within a year. Most everyone wants the latest and greatest version of whatever will allow them to stay plugged in, connected and ahead of the game.

Those ages 18–34, known as Generation Y, are typically the most savvy when it comes to being in-the-digital-know. They own and purchase more tablets and tech-advanced cell phones, have the most up-to-date social media pages, and are usually setting the standard for new digital and gaming verbiage in pop culture.

Generation X, those ages 35–44, are racing right alongside their younger counterparts. However, instead of mastering

the digital social realm, the Gen Xers are focused more on the practical and business functionality of these leading technologies.

"In almost every online or mobile behavior, Gen Yers lead the adoption curve. The youngest members of this group don't remember life without a mobile phone or a time when texting or email was

unavailable. Gen X, despite having a longer 'tech memory' than its younger counterpart, still rivals Gen Y in many areas. This slightly older group tends to use the Internet and computers more functionally."

— Forrester Research's Annual Survey of American Technology Adoption reported in "Generations X and Y Lead the Way in Today's Digital World" by Sarah Perez

Of equal importance is that in this lightning-speed race to the digital top those born in the Baby Boomer era, current senior citizens, can be left in the dust.

When taking into consideration that 85 percent of the U.S. population report wanting to communicate with their healthcare provider through emails, text messages and voicemails, rather than in-person visits, it's important to remember what age group may need to communicate with their doctors most frequently.

Eighty-one percent of the Baby Boomer population surveyed said they visit a healthcare professional at least once a year, compared with the 78 percent of Gen Yers and 79 percent of Gen Xers reporting a yearly visit. As these Boomers start requiring a doctor's care more frequently, younger generations must note the importance of educating them on the benefits of being plugged in.

Closing the Age Gap in Communication

Though the Boomer group would prefer a pen and paper over an instant message, and are not likely to follow MTV's latest on Twitter no one should be quick to think

that this generation doesn't know how to text or log in into Facebook. Most Boomers' usage of social media and other forms of digital communication is greatly increasing as it allows them the accessibility to connect with family, loved ones, and now their physicians.

"Although at the beginning of the social media craze it seemed like my Baby Boomer parents were hopeless and would never 'get it,' they are slowly starting to adapt and embrace the Digital Age... it looks like the Baby Boomers are figuring out what they have to gain by keeping up with the changing times."

— "Baby Boomers in the Digital Age" by Team Metzger

The average adult over the age of 55 manages six to eight medications daily. As their pill boxes grow, it becomes difficult to remember when to take each pill, whether to take it with food, if the side effects they are experiencing are normal, and so on. Unfortunately, without the proper between-visit guidance, approximately 50 percent of the 2 billion prescriptions filled each year are not taken correctly. It's estimated that 125,000 people with treatable diagnoses die each year simply because they do not take their medications as prescribed.

Ongoing follow-ups from physicians, via text message, email or voicemail can ease stress, both for the patient and the patient's family. As more tech-savvy seniors emerge, they're learning how to engage their doctors digitally.



82% of Baby Boomers said communication from a healthcare professional via text message, email or voicemail is as helpful, if not more helpful than in-person or phone conversations



42% of Baby Boomers said they prefer to communicate with their healthcare provider over the phone

Make it Personal for all Ages

Gen Y (Ages 18–34)



50% of Gen Y Americans stated that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



46% of Gen Y Americans said that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



34% of Gen Y Americans would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name



11% of Gen Y Americans will ignore or refuse the communication if it is not personalized with their information



26% of Gen Y Americans expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals

Gen X (Ages 35–44)



50% of Gen X Americans said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



51% of Gen X Americans said that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



37% of Gen X Americans would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name



14% of Gen X Americans will ignore or refuse the communication if it is not personalized with their information



25% of Gen X Americans expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals

Make it Personal for all Ages

Boomers (Ages 45+)



57% of Baby Boomers said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



52% of Baby Boomers said that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



37% of Baby Boomers would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name



13% of Baby Boomers will ignore or refuse the communication if it is not personalized with their information



18% of Baby Boomers expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals



Are Older Physicians Embracing New Forms of Communication?

When selecting a doctor, a number of thoughts run through a patient's mind. What location would be best? Do I prefer male or female? Should I choose a doctor who is older or younger?

When patients consider the age of their doctor, arguments such as *younger doctors will have the latest information* versus *older doctors will be more experienced and wiser* may roll around in their minds. These thoughts may seem like generalizations, but when it comes to high-tech engagement, patients must consider what effect their doctor's age will have on the communication they receive throughout their treatment.

Using such forms of digital technology as cell phones and computers may be second nature to a young doctor or emerging medical student. Similarly, older doctors may have been practicing their own methods of communication and treatment for years or decades. But as new technology continues to transform healthcare, and patients begin to rely on updates via text, email and voicemail, it's becoming essential for more mature doctors to take note of their younger colleagues' high-tech skills.

In an article published by the American Medical Association, Pamela Lewis Dolan wrote that, “Younger doctors who grew up using technology are stepping up to help the older generation adapt to information technology, social media and smartphones.” This is becoming known as “reverse mentoring.”

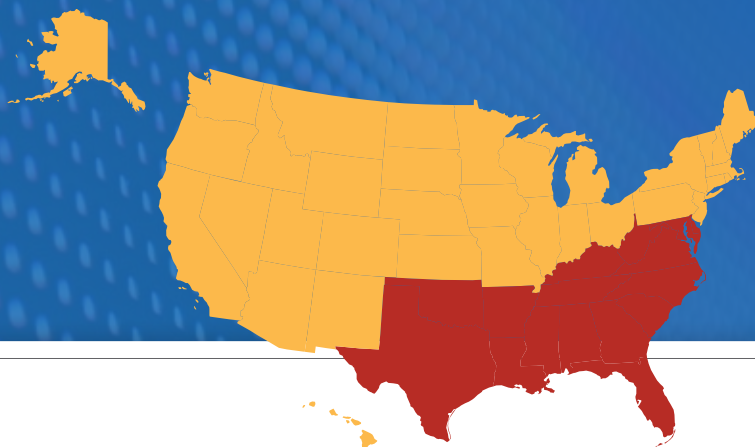
“Even though older physicians have been found to be the least likely to adopt an electronic medical record system, it’s not because they’re averse to technology, analysts say. It’s likely that their experience may have taught them not to be so quick to cling to a new fad, or spend money on something

that will make them less efficient. But if you offer them something they think will make them better doctors, they will use it enthusiastically.”

— “Older Doctors a lot more Tech-Savvy than Many Think” by Pamela Lewis Dolan

Choosing a healthcare provider is one of the most important decisions a patient and their family will make during the course of their lives. Consumers are quickly learning that age is a non-issue when searching for a physician who will provide the high-tech engagement they require.

Regional Snapshot: Southern United States



87% of Southerners think digital communication from a healthcare professional regarding appointment or payment reminders, special events, and health and fitness tips is as helpful, if not more helpful, than in-person conversations



44% of those living in the South think communicating through text or email would be most helpful



34% of Southerners would most like to receive communication from a healthcare professional they frequent via telephone



10% would select direct mail

Make it Personal



54% of Southerners said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



50% of those living in the South said that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



35% of Southerners would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name

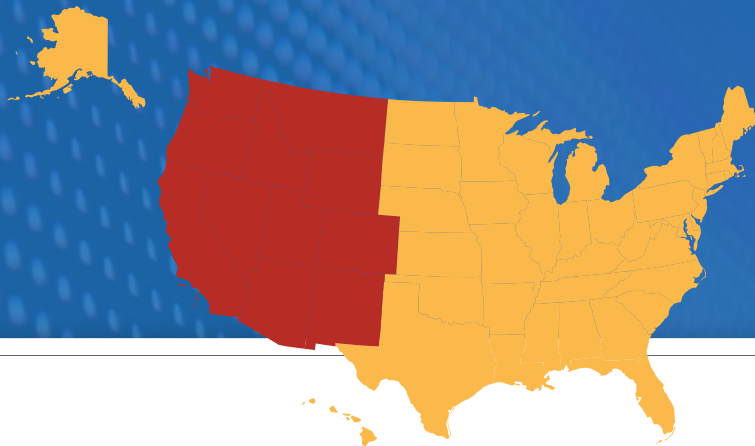


12% of Southerners will ignore or refuse the communication if it is not personalized with their information



20% of those in the South expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals

Regional Snapshot: Western United States



84% of Westerners think digital communication from a healthcare professional regarding appointment or payment reminders, special events, and health and fitness tips is as helpful, if not more helpful, than in-person conversations



40% of those in the West think communicating through text or email would be most helpful



31% of Westerners would most like to receive communication from a healthcare professional they frequent via telephone



10% would select direct mail

Make it Personal



53% of Westerners said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



51% of those out West said that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



33% of Westerners would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name

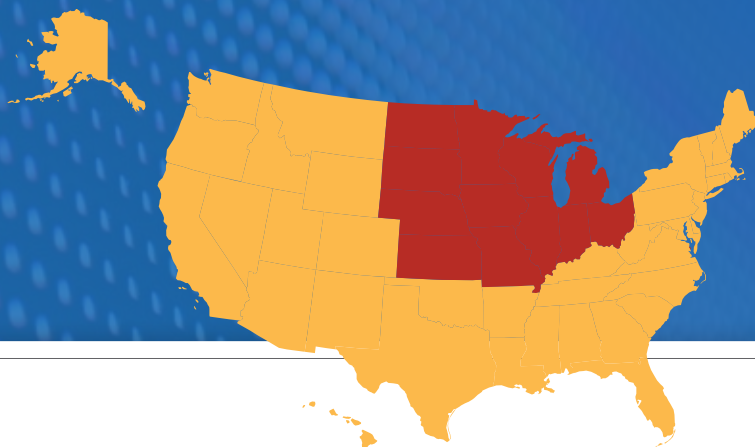


15% of those living in Western states will ignore or refuse the communication if it is not personalized with their information



23% of Westerners expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals

Regional Snapshot: The Midwest



81% of those living in the Midwest said digital communication from a healthcare professional regarding appointment or payment reminders, special events, and health and fitness tips is as helpful, if not more helpful, than in-person conversations



32% of Midwesterners stated communicating through text or email would be most helpful



34% of Midwesterners would most like to receive communication from a healthcare professional they frequent via telephone



9% would select direct mail

Make it Personal



54% of those in the Midwest said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



53% of Midwesterners said that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



40% of Midwesterners would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name

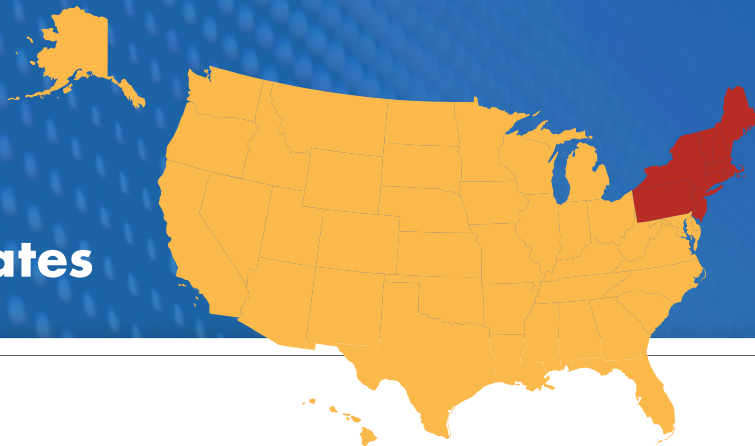


13% of those living in the Midwest will ignore or refuse the communication if it is not personalized with their information



24% of Midwesterners expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals

Regional Snapshot: Northeastern United States



84% of those living in the Northeast stated digital communication from a healthcare professional regarding appointment or payment reminders, special events, and health and fitness tips is as helpful, if not more helpful, than in-person conversations



49% of Northeasterners said communicating through text or email would be most helpful



36% of those living in the Northeast United States would most like to receive communication from a healthcare professional they frequent via telephone



8% would select direct mail

Make it Personal



54% of Northeasterners said that communication they receive from healthcare professionals should be relevant to them as an individual



46% of those in the Northeast said that the communication received from healthcare professionals should be personalized with information that is tailored to their specific needs



35% of Northeasterners would like all communication from their doctor to be personalized with their name



10% of those in the Northeast will ignore or refuse the communication if it is not personalized with their information



23% expect digital communication to help them become healthy individuals



About the Study

“Technology Beyond the Exam Room: How Digital Media is Helping Doctors deliver the Highest Level of Care” is based on a survey of a nationally representative sample of more than 2,200 healthcare providers representing a variety of specialties and disciplines. The research was conducted using an email invitation and an online survey format.

In addition to surveying healthcare providers, TeleVox also worked with Kelton Research to survey a nationally representative sample of 1,015 Americans ages 18 and older. The survey was conducted using an email invitation and an online survey format. Quotas were set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population ages 18 and over. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.



About Healthy World

A healthy world, while global by definition, actually happens one person at a time. It is driven by forward-thinking healthcare practitioners who understand their involvement is critical to ensuring a healthy population.

The Healthy World initiative, launched by TeleVox, is about helping people — young and old — be healthy!

Three imperatives for creating a healthy world — one person at a time

1. Touch the hearts and minds of patients to drive positive behavior change
2. Engage patients with information and encouragement between visits
3. Activate patients to make positive behavior changes for a healthy life

The driving force behind the goal of creating a healthy world are the healthcare professionals who take the time to engage patients with personalized, thoughtful, ongoing interactions that encourage and inspire them to embrace and follow ongoing treatment plans for healthy lives.

They know every communication with a patient — including those that take place between office visits — is an opportunity to help that person understand the importance of good nutrition, physical activity, treatment plans and taking their medications as prescribed. Engaging patients and their families between visits through proactive, relevant communications that will help them stay focused on positive behavior changes is the way to create a healthy world, one person at a time.

A photograph of a young Black man and woman smiling and looking at a laptop screen. The man is in the foreground, leaning forward, and the woman is behind him, also smiling. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light.

About TeleVox

TeleVox is a high-tech Engagement Communications company, providing automated voice, email, text and web solutions that activate positive patient behaviors through the delivery of a human touch.

Since 1992, TeleVox has been creating a comprehensive approach that breaks through and activates people to live healthy lives. At TeleVox, we understand that touching the hearts and minds of patients by engaging with them between healthcare appointments will encourage and inspire them to follow and embrace treatment plans. We know personalized, ongoing patient engagement will activate positive lifestyle changes that will help people of all ages lead healthy lives. TeleVox helps healthcare professionals touch, engage and activate every single patient to live a healthy life.

TeleVox. High tech, human touch to activate a healthy world — one person at a time.