Remote Healthcare: What do patients want?

How scheduling technology can enhance access to remote healthcare and improve the patient experience

CRONOFY

Contents

Introduction

After over a year of COVID, **telehealth has become the norm for healthcare**. US Laws and regulations needed to adjust to accommodate and remove previous legal barriers. Whether these changes stay remains to be seen and digitizing services presents obstacles to providers long term. Now that more people have experienced telehealth, how do they feel about it? What are their expectations for healthcare and what frustrates them? Do they feel they'll continue to use Telehealth and will it help them to access more healthcare services?

We surveyed 2,000 patients from across the US who had used remote healthcare in the past 12 months to find out.

As scheduling experts, with many clients in healthcare, we were keen to find out how patients felt about the booking process, and their appetite for online booking. We can all relate to that feeling of putting off calling the doctor because the process is so arduous. We have to ask the question - does it need to be? **How can we do it better?** It's in all parties' interest to provide better and more convenient access to healthcare, both online and in person – **streamlining the process and alleviating the stress**. This can only help to break down perceived barriers and increase preventative healthcare, catching issues early and delivering treatment as soon as patients need it.

The other area for improvement is **efficiency and waiting times**. People are very frustrated about too many unnecessary and time-consuming interruptions. This can be a big issue when it comes to booking appointments. Long hold times have become the norm and that's where **automation can really help**. This doesn't mean that phone calls won't be an option but simply that more efficient alternatives should also be offered.

Patient care will always continue to rely on professionals with years of training and experience. Tasks like booking meetings don't need that same level of expertise. It's overdue to stop wasting the time of healthcare professionals and patients.

Adam Bird
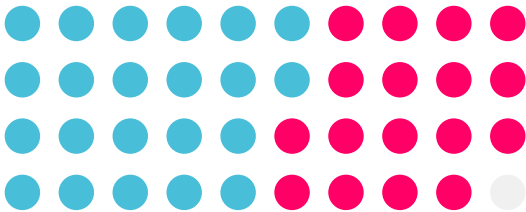CEO & Co-founder | Cronofy

Top findings

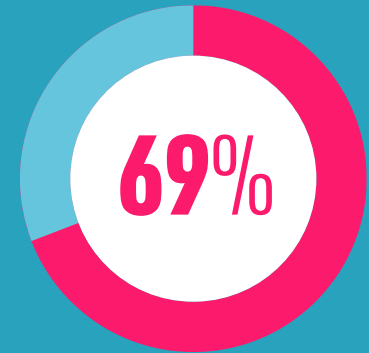**2,000**
US patients surveyed

56%
were women and 42% men

The no.1 thing patients preferred about remote healthcare is that **it saves them time.**

59%
of patients would use **healthcare more** with **online booking**

69%
of patients agree that **online healthcare appointments** provide **better access** to healthcare services

The current healthcare landscape

Every single stage of the healthcare process **impacts the patient experience**, from the first touch with reception, through to booking, communication, hospital treatment and aftercare.

While some of these stages must happen in person, **appointment booking is an area where a low investment can reap a high return**. It frees up time for providers and their staff while saving time and reducing frustration for patients.

Adoption of telehealth appears to have now plateaued, but at an **all new high**. With regulation under review, healthcare teams may need to find **new ways** to address some patients' new appetite for telehealth and digital services.

Dr. Til Jolly the Chief Medical Officer at Aveshka, gives a timely reminder on the state of the healthcare system:

" In the US, the **regulations are about to change**. We had all kinds of regulations that relate to privacy and payment and other things where the **waivers are probably going to go away**. So in the end, what are we going to be allowed to do and supported to do **after the public health emergency** goes away?"

Tjasa Zajc, host of Faces of Digital Health podcast, touches upon areas that currently changing in Healthcare:

" I think one of the greatest things that's happened now is **insurance companies are looking at how to reimburse telehealth solutions**. We already knew what the benefits were, especially for chronic patients, but insurance companies didn't have a scheme to pay for that."
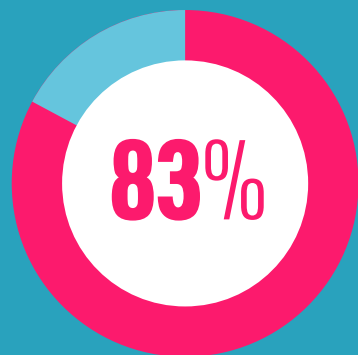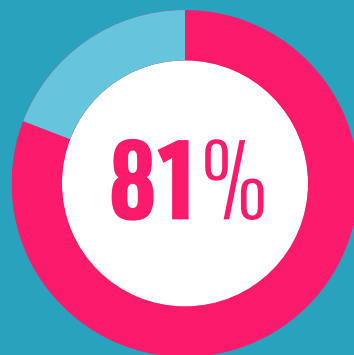
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Remote healthcare appetite

A sign of the times
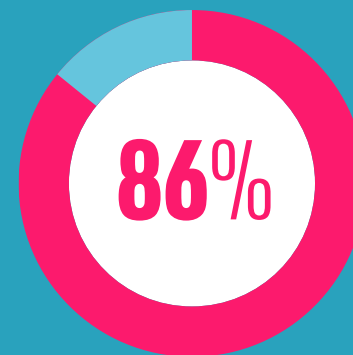
83%

of patients surveyed had a **positive experience of remote healthcare** - over half 'very positive'

81%

of patients would use **remote healthcare** on top of essential in person appointments **instead of as replacement**

86%

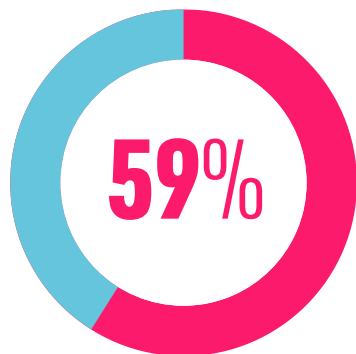of patients would use **remote healthcare the same or more** in the next two years

Remote healthcare complements in person treatments
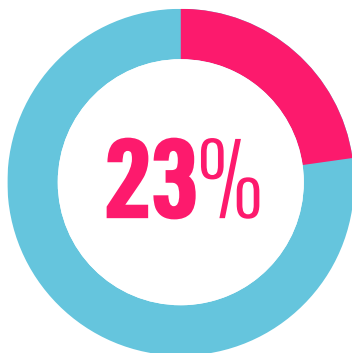
REMOTE HEALTHCARE APPETITE

A future of balance

59%

of patients would **prefer a balance of in person and remote appointments.** Many leaning towards most appointments being **remote when treatment allows**

23%

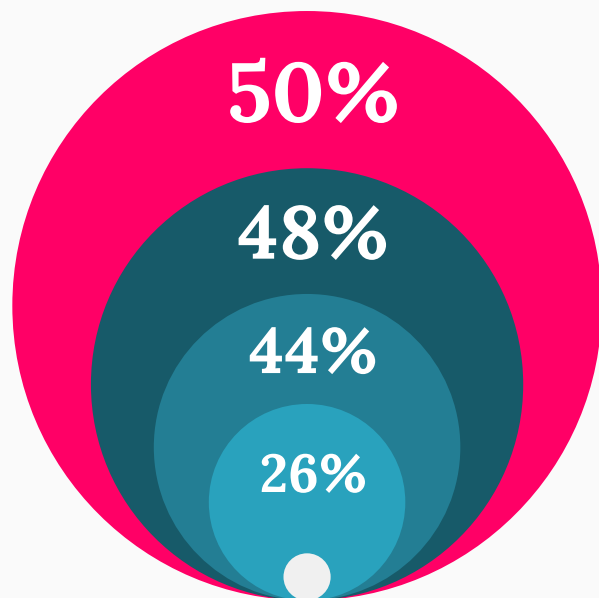would prefer to **attend all their healthcare appointments remotely**!

INSIGHTS

This shows that not only are patients more likely to book the usual appointments, they will book more in total, increasing overall use of healthcare.

Although perhaps not entirely realistic for many scenarios, there's a clear link between this incredible appetite for telehealth and the benefits that it offers, including saving them time and the convenience of not needing to travel. Telehealth isn't for every situation - but used correctly, it can offer considerable improvements to patient experience and improving or adding to the end-to-end care process.

We asked patients:
WHAT HEALTH TREATMENTS WOULD YOU PREFER TO ACCESS REMOTELY?

50%

48%

44%

26%

- General checkups
- Mental health
- Diet & nutrition
- Speech therapy

" We've seen a **huge explosion** in mental health visits by **telemedicine**, because it's **easier to access** and it's **less embarrassing** than being in front of a person or going into an office that's marked "psychiatrist"... this is an **opportunity to actually improve the services for mental health**, which we desperately need."

Dr. Lisa Koonin
Medical Researcher

Why does patient experience matter

Increased revenue

A **positive patient experience can increase loyalty** and patient attendance. The lifetime value of care for a US citizen lies north of $1.5million according to studies[1]. Patients are increasingly discerning and **knowledgeable about the range of options available** to them.

Investing in a positive experience not only **improves the comfort and quality of care for patients**, but also the **length** and frequency **of the relationship**.

Increased patient engagement

Better patient experiences, **investing in building relationships with patients** and improving processes **increases the likelihood** that they will **access more healthcare services**, taking ownership and becoming more engaged in their own health outcomes.

Online booking can massively **improve the patient experience** as well as encourage active engagement with healthcare.

SOURCE: 1. AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY

The waiting game

> I do see that with new business models and new insurance models in the US the **healthcare providers are very much looking at the user experience** and trying to offer patients additional other services that kind of bring income to them. In the end I would say that in the US especially, it's all about trying to **avoid litigation**, trying to **maximize the customer satisfaction**, because there's this **huge competition** on the market for the healthcare providers.
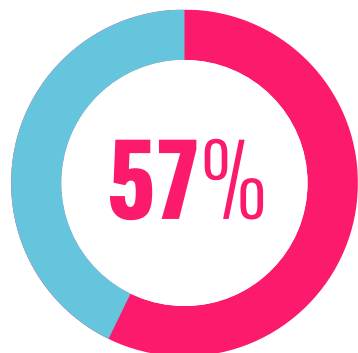
Tjasa Zajc
Host of Faces of Digital Health podcast

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Patient frustrations, expectations and wants

What patients want: Faster access to healthcare

57%

of patients **expect to wait a day** or less for a **remote appointment**

INSIGHTS

Remote Healthcare has opened patients' eyes to what digital transformation could achieve for when accessing healthcare. The pandemic required more appointments to be done remotely and patients now expect more efficiency and lower waiting times for their appointments.

" When you have an appointment and you have to **sit in the waiting room** for 40 minutes, **your experience is diminished**. Your trust in the provider is colored by your f**eelings of disrespect or wasting your time**. And what I've noticed with **telemedicine visits** is that, even if sometimes they're delayed, many times they are **prompt and on time**."

Dr. Lisa Koonin
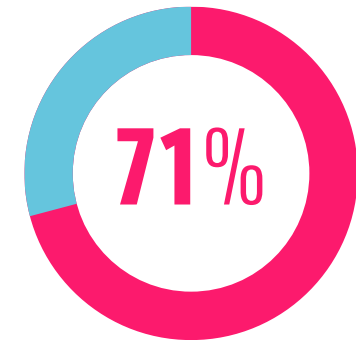Medical Researcher

PATIENT FRUSTRATIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND WANTS

> " I once heard a presentation from an operations leader at a very large family practice group in Northern Virginia and they said **they left 40% of their schedule open every day** because they knew that a certain proportion of **their patients would want same day appointments**.
>
> So it's really **a data management issue**. You've got to have a data and **analytics team** that tells you, for example at an orthopedics: we're going to leave 15% of our schedule open on Monday because we know people are going to break things on Saturday and Sunday and want to come see us.

Dr. Til Jolly
Chief Medical Officer, Aveshka

71%

majority of patients **expect to wait 2-7 days** for an **in person appointment**

INSIGHTS

Improving patient experience can be as simple as managing scheduling to keep appointments available short-term. Automated tools can help with this, as well as reallocating cancellations (which cost the US healthcare industry $150 billion a year).
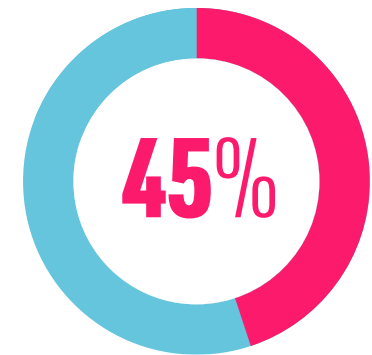
What patients want: Saving time

When you are unwell you don't want the additional headache of travelling

Top five reasons why patients would use healthcare more, particularly remotely:

1. Saving time: no unnecessary travel/waiting times
2. Quicker access/availability to appointments
3. Fast, easy booking systems
4. Saving money
5. Reassurance of security/privacy

45%

of patients **preferred remote healthcare** because it **saved them time** previously wasted on travel and waiting

What patients are currently experiencing

Remote healthcare has given patients a welcome sample of a more efficient experience. Patients were most frustrated about things that took up their time. Delays and disruptions to their day were the biggest concerns alongside understandable fears about risks of attending appointments physically.

Poor availability or long waiting times, coupled with booking frustrations paint a familiar picture. It can take its toll on patients and presents a huge opportunity for improvement.

Top four frustrations patients held with traditional in person healthcare:

1. Poor availability/long waiting times
2. Exposure to other sick patients
3. Disruption to my working day
4. Frustrating booking process

> "Instead of picking up the phone, waiting for somebody to pick up and nobody picks up... then you have to remember to call again, and hopefully this time somebody will pick up and then you have to derive when they are free. And when you are free, **this whole coordination is just a waste of energy**, more than anything else."

Tjasa Zajc
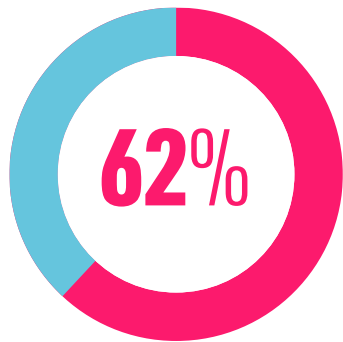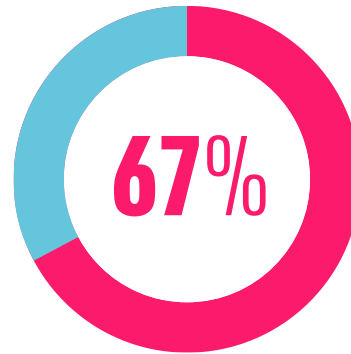Host of Faces of Digital Health podcast

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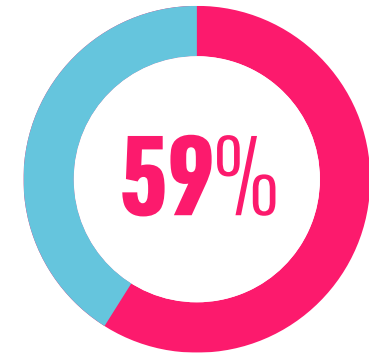**How online booking can improve access to healthcare and patient experience**

Booking appointments online

62% of patients agree that **online healthcare appointments provide better access** to healthcare services

67% of patients said they would **be less stressed** about their health if I had **better access** to health service
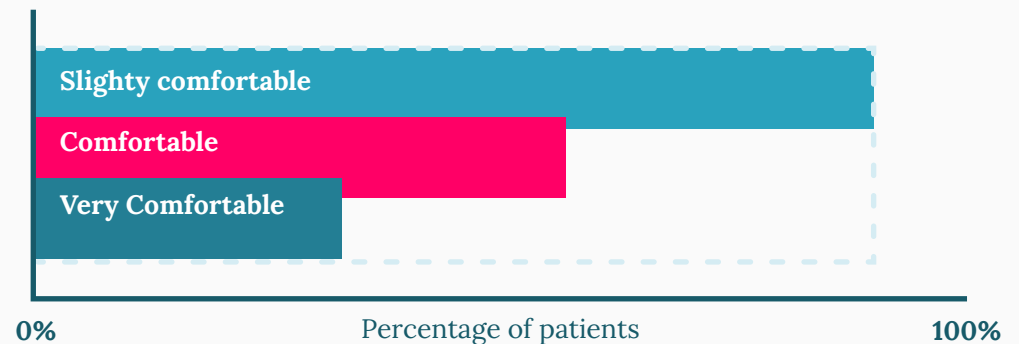
59% of patients would **use healthcare more often** if they could find and **book appointments online** with ease instead of contacting the medical practice

DOCTOR'S DIARY

We asked patients:
HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU BOOKING APPOINTMENTS ONLINE?

Slightly comfortable

Comfortable

Very Comfortable

0%   Percentage of patients   100%

Make it easy

"It's interesting that one of the **top three things patients like** about remote healthcare is **easier booking**. That's interesting because there's no reason why booking should be any easier for telemedicine versus in-person care.

Dr. Til Jolly
Chief Medical Officer, Aveshka

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Key takeaways

Balance and access

Patients want to use more healthcare (remote and in-person) and have better access to healthcare, which online bookings can facilitate.
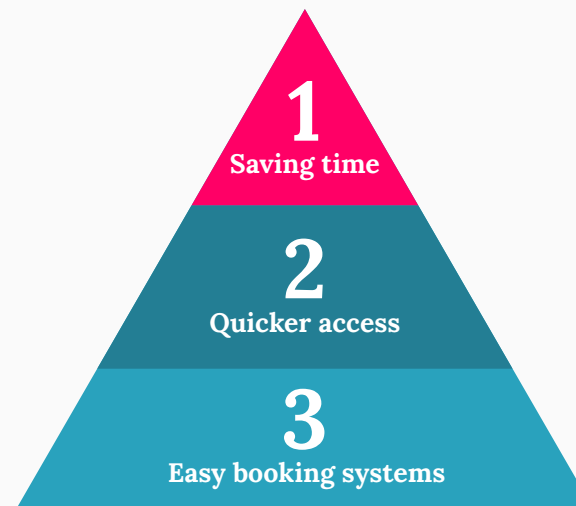
The message is clear: patients first and foremost want to **save time** and get **quicker access** through **easy booking**. **89%** are comfortable booking online and **59%** agree they would use healthcare more if easy online bookings were available.

Health is stressful, people fret and worry, the fact it is then difficult to book and sometimes the booking experience is very stressful is unnecessary - especially as **it's easy to rectify**.

We asked patients:
WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU USE REMOTE VIDEO HEALTHCARE MORE?

1
Saving time

2
Quicker access

3
Easy booking systems

Speed and ease of access can bring relief

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Patients needs and desires

PATIENTS LIKE REMOTE HEALTHCARE AND WILL CONTINUE TO USE IT THE SAME OR MORE	Telehealth options and online booking systems improve the patient experience and access to healthcare overall.
PATIENTS WANT A BALANCE OF BOTH IN PERSON AND REMOTE AS APPROPRIATE	Patients are smart enough to realise that not all treatment can be done remotely – they'd love to see a blend of health services and enhanced treatment and care using technology.
PATIENTS WANT BETTER AND FASTER ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE – WHICH INCLUDES ONLINE BOOKING	This improved access is something that patients feel they have experienced using remote healthcare but doesn't need to be exclusive to it. Digitizing small parts of the process, like appointment scheduling can have a big impact on the overall patient experience and reduce frustration.

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About Cronofy

Why Cronofy?

We are not a healthcare business but as a **provider of scheduling technology** we help dozens of businesses **deliver better healthcare scheduling across the world**. By partnering with Healthcare Tech providers we've been using real-time, automated scheduling to help transform Healthcare and patient experience. **Reducing stress for patients and healthcare professionals** as well as achieve greater efficiency for everyone involved. Cronofy's API and scheduling tool can allow healthcare software companies and healthcare providers to **improve the patient experience**. Offering online booking doesn't have to mean that you offer other telehealth services. It just **streamlines the process** for both professionals and patients.

We take **data security and compliance very seriously** and that's why all our operations meet HIPAA's requirements for handling any personal health data. Cronofy has physical, technical, and administrative safeguards in place to **ensure that patient data is secure**. We're also happy to sign a BAA.

Find out more **here** →

Healthcare Tech providers worldwide already trust Cronofy

BetterMynd   Modern Health   HealthcareSource   Oliva   grow therapy   sondermind®

Scheduling experts for business

Scheduling everything for everyone

At Cronofy we focus on delivering tools and services that allow businesses, groups and people to **effectively organize their time**. We believe that **managing time should take minimal effort** and consider a person's whole life with complete **respect for privacy**.

We're the scheduling experts for business and this is why tens of thousands of companies worldwide rely on **our enterprise-ready technology** to power their scheduling. We work with global brands in many industries including HR, Healthcare and Finance.

Cronofy clients can choose to either integrate their software with **our APIs** or to **partner with us** to deliver secure and **scalable scheduling** to their teams through our **end-users tools**.

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