

# 5 Healthcare **Trends for 2022**

# Introduction

It's getting harder for healthcare to keep pace with the ever-evolving digital transformation of the consumer journey. That journey to find care is the driving force of five trends that are shaping healthcare in 2022.

The healthcare industry is being rocked by powerful forces. A resurgent pandemic continues to strain healthcare systems, and healthcare worker burnout is worse than ever. Consumers are getting more selective about their care and less brand loyal, and healthcare is under regulatory pressure to be more transparent about the cost of services they provide. On top of all that, consumers are increasingly savvy about using digital channels to find care and leave online feedback that influences the reputations of hospitals and physicians.

## Our Methodology

This whitepaper discusses those trends based on hard data. We recently **partnered with YouGov to survey 1,227 U.S. adults aged 27-64 to learn how they search for care online and what sources influence their choice of a facility and/or physician.** The survey results revealed some compelling findings about the consumer journey, including how healthcare is embracing a feedback economy in which ratings and reviews drive business performance and growth.



# 1 Healthcare Embraces the Feedback Economy

The feedback economy drives purchasing behaviors, from reading reviews about a new pair of sneakers to finding the best local pizza. Now, this same behavior is driving healthcare selection, which are some of the most important life decisions a person can make. Ratings and reviews are the currency of today's feedback economy. Healthcare providers are learning how to use them as real-time signals to improve every aspect of the patient experience.

72%

of U.S. adults read online patient ratings and reviews when considering the decision of a healthcare facility or physician.

55%

of Millennials have selected one physician or location over another based on online reviews.

50%

of U.S. adults **read 10+ reviews, and 23% read 20 or more** when selecting care.

72%

of healthcare consumers want the provider they choose to be **rated 4 out of 5 stars or higher**.

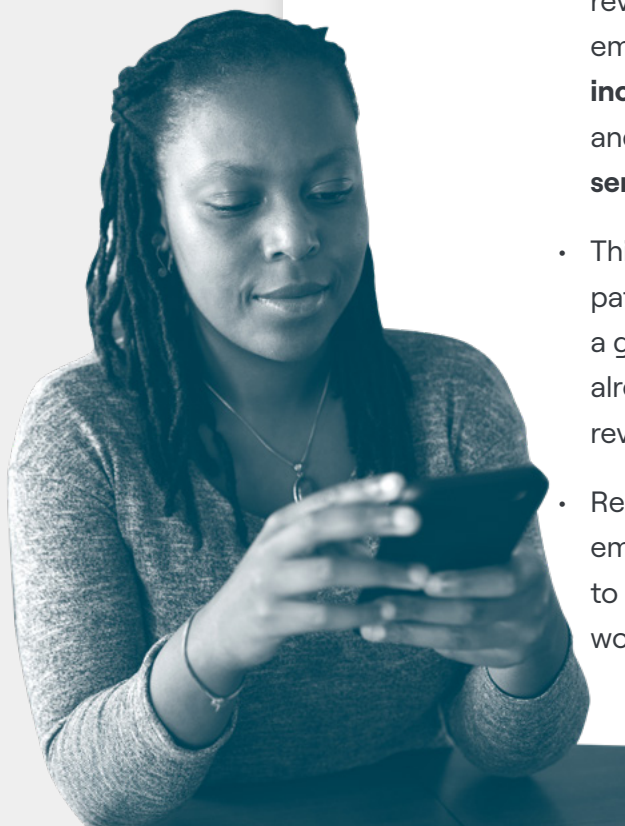
Ratings and reviews continue to be the third most important decision factor for patients, after insurance and location. **65% of respondents say it's important for providers to respond to reviews.** That feedback drives decision-making and makes patients more selective.

WHAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND PAYERS SHOULD DO

## ➞ Request Reviews at Scale

Now is the time to start requesting reviews from patients and members at scale. If you are hesitant about implementing a review requesting program because you are afraid of negative reviews, consider the following.

- Among our clients that implement review requesting via SMS text or email, we see **an average of 507% increase in volume** of online reviews and a **30% improvement in positive sentiment**.
- This is because most of your patients and members are having a good experience with your brand already. They just aren't writing a review.
- Requesting a review via SMS text or email activates the "silent majority" to post a positive review they wouldn't have shared if not asked.

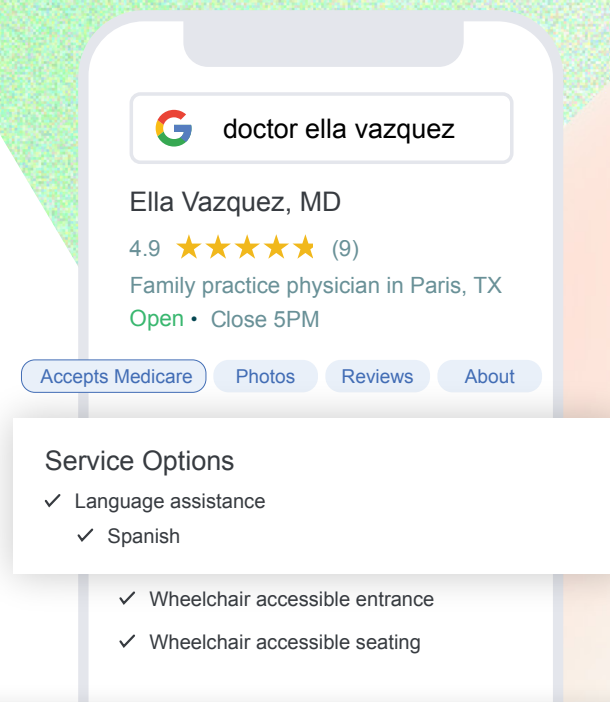


# 2 Google Is Co-opting the Patient Journey

It is no secret that Google wants to be the single point of consumer access to healthcare across the web. The company has been expanding its [healthcare presence](#) by positioning itself as the default resource for people to research symptoms and access care. Our research underscores just how much Google influences every phase from awareness to consideration. For instance, according to our survey:

**Google is the most popular source for searching for a physician or hospital** – more popular than provider/physician websites, healthcare-specific sites such as WebMD and Healthgrades, or social media. **Google is also the #1 review site used by healthcare consumers.**

Meanwhile, Google continues to make improvements that make Google Search more valuable for care seekers. For example, Google recently announced that it can now show searchers which [health insurance networks the provider might accept](#). This is huge. Our own research shows that insurance acceptance is the most important attribute when people evaluate a physician or provider.



## WHAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND PAYERS SHOULD DO

### → Optimize Google Business Profiles

[Google Business Profiles](#) are as critical as your own website. In fact, **65% of organic searches result in a conversion right in the Google experience** – without ever visiting your website. Consumers want to schedule an appointment, start a virtual visit, or send a message to staff right within the Google Business Profile. For more insight, check out our webinar on [Google and the patient journey](#).

# 3 Repercussions for Unmanaged Data

According to our survey, “insurance accepted” is an important criterion when people choose care. It’s no wonder, because healthcare insurance directories are crucial at a time when medical expenses are the [leading cause of bankruptcy in America](#). Choosing a provider who is not properly covered by insurance can have catastrophic results.

But there’s a big problem — provider directories are too often out of date. Rampant inaccuracies have become such an issue that the Federal Government has acted. According to the [No Surprises Act](#), health insurance plans must update their directories within 48 hours of data changes.

As a result of the No Surprises Act, healthcare insurance plans will lean on providers to update their information more frequently. [Antiquated data management such as spreadsheets](#) will no longer be adequate when hefty fines are on the line.

## WHAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND PAYERS SHOULD DO

### → Automate Data

Providers will need to automate more than ever before. **A single, centralized automation platform that tracks and reports data on providers is a must.**

- Automation is important, but multiple systems need to be connected properly in order to capture and report data quickly and accurately.
- Providers should take this opportunity to improve how they collect and share data to support the entire [marketing technology stack](#).

As the lines between marketing and consumer experience blur, healthcare providers and payers will find many feedback sources living in silos. Auditing the technology stack is the first step to unifying data to support a great experience.

# 4 Goodbye, Brand Loyalty. Hello, Transparency.

Brand loyalty is a thing of the past. **Only 30% of all consumers** told us that connection to a specific hospital or brand is one of the most important factors for choosing a physician.

Why? These reasons stand out:

- **Brand loyalty is declining everywhere.** Brand loyalty in healthcare reflects an erosion of brand loyalty across other industries, especially during the pandemic when increasing numbers of consumers are demonstrating a willingness to switch brands.
- **The surging Millennial population also plays a role.** Among Millennials, the largest population segment in the United States, **only 19% say they would choose a physician based on their connection to a brand.**

The erosion of brand loyalty together with the proliferation of information available to consumers contributes to a need for physicians and hospitals to be more transparent. Hospitals have been under pressure to be more transparent about their prices for some time. Our study suggests that transparency goes beyond price. Consumers want even more complete information about hospitals and physicians. Insurance accepted is important but also information ranging from telehealth options to ratings/reviews should also be provided.

## WHAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND PAYERS SHOULD DO

### ➔ Ensure Published Information Is Accurate and Transparent

Healthcare providers and payers must publish comprehensive information about themselves across the digital world. This need for transparency is one more reason why providers need centralized automation platforms to publish and update data.

Note also how important it is for physicians to populate their Google Business Profiles with personal information such as a bio, specialties, photos, and feedback in the form of patient reviews. Not only is it essential that physicians keep their profiles up to date, but they also need to humanize their brands. We identified a major problem: **65% of physicians we analyzed had accumulated zero reviews in 2020.** Physicians need to monitor reviews, respond to them, and request them from patients to improve care.

# 5 AI Helps Reveal the “Voice of the Customer” in Healthcare

Digital tools like virtual care, chatbots, and online symptom checkers are no longer a novelty, as they have demonstrated value to patients and providers [throughout the pandemic](#). Now we must determine whether these technologies are actually making the experience better for patients and providers. The best way to find out is to analyze feedback, but there are too many sources of feedback to manage and analyze without automation.

The answer for healthcare is a continued investment in artificial intelligence (AI). Specifically, a type of AI called natural language processing (NLP) technology analyzes large swaths of human language comments for key patterns. This technology combs both structured surveys and an increasingly important source of learning — “in the wild” feedback. This refers to data collected from thousands of external sources such as a Google review or a comment on a Facebook page.

## WHAT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND PAYERS SHOULD DO

### → Establish a Feedback Hub

If you only analyze a single channel of feedback, you may not observe the significance of a particular issue. Bringing all sources of feedback data into a single hub enables you to understand the “voice of the customer.”

For example, by analyzing CAHPS, social media comments and call center surveys together, you will see a more complete picture. Only then can you prioritize where and how to make changes. Here is where NLP is especially critical to keep up with the vast amount of unstructured feedback, let alone analyze sentiment and key themes. That’s how providers can quickly learn and improve before issues turn into bigger problems.



# Conclusion

Consumers have spoken — providers and payers must step up and be more transparent, more responsive to ratings and reviews, and have a digital presence everywhere a consumer searches for care online.

Consumers are sharing their experiences for all the world to see. It's time for healthcare providers and payers to play a more active role in that conversation by utilizing software that allows them to participate in the feedback economy.

→ Reach out to Reputation's dedicated Healthcare Team to learn more.

## About Reputation

Reputation (formerly Reputation.com) changes the way healthcare organizations gather and act on patient feedback to drive decision-making and enhance Consumer Experience programs. The company is backed by Ascension Ventures, Bessemer Ventures, Heritage Partners, Kleiner Perkins, Marlin Equity Partners, and trusted by over 250 integration partners. Visit [reputation.com](https://reputation.com) to learn more.