# Healthcare data fragmentation derails the consumer experience

Article

**The news:** Consumers would be less frustrated with the healthcare system if they had access to a one-stop-shop platform for all of their health-related needs, according to a new survey from PYMNTS and Lynx.

**Digging into the data:** More than **2,500 US consumers** were surveyed on their interest in using a digital platform to manage their healthcare services and benefits.

Key findings include:

- **81.2%** of consumers expressed some interest in using a **unified digital solution** for various healthcare-related purposes including **filling out forms, scheduling appointments, looking up benefits information, paying medical bills, and sharing health data with providers**.

- Consumer interest holds strong across all populations surveyed. Although **baby boomers** and **seniors** were least intrigued, **nearly two-thirds (65.1%)** still expressed some level of interest in a one-stop digital healthcare solution.

- The top reasons respondents gave for wanting a single digital platform were **to improve healthcare knowledge and management (30.1%), have access to all data in one place (24.7%), and for convenience and saving time (21.8%)**.

**Healthcare = hassle for patients:** Consumers want to be able to easily maneuver around the healthcare system. But more often than not, they get a fragmented, cumbersome, and frustrating experience.

- **67% of consumers said every step of the <u>healthcare process</u> is an inconvenience,** according to a May 2020 survey from The Harris Poll and Change Healthcare.

- **56%** of patients said their <u>**medical billing and payment experience**</u> **was either OK or awful**, per Salucro's 2022 Patient Payment Technology Report.

- Common challenges consumers encounter with medical care and insurance benefits include **having to navigate multiple channels for each**, the PYMNTS and Lynx survey revealed.

**But who would provide the platform?** A single solution to address all health-related needs sounds great on the surface, but it's not likely to be offered anytime soon.

- Healthcare providers, payers, and pharmacies operate as separate entities, and their patient data is spread across numerous tech systems.

- Plus, consumers now have more options to get care than ever before—such as through telehealth and at urgent care centers and retail health clinics—which disperses patient data even further.

Some products like **Apple's Health Records** tool and **b.Well Connected Health's** app do bring together various patient data into one place. But they don't deliver an end-to-end consumer experience, and they still rely on one-off relationships with providers and payers.
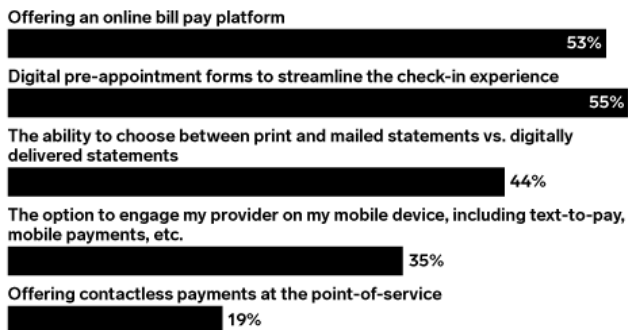
When asked which entity should manage the unified healthcare solution, consumer responses were a mixed bag:

- **49%** said they'd like their health insurer to oversee it
- **39%** said a health tech company should
- **31%** chose their provider

**Our take:** A one-stop-shop platform might be tomorrow's problem to solve, but providers and payers can still take important steps to improve their access points today. These include beefing up their online presence, automating routine tasks, and investing in tech such as apps and AI chatbots. If they don't, they'll be at risk of losing patients to a competitor who can offer an easier, more digitized experience.

**What Type of Digital Experience Would Influence Whether US Healthcare Consumers Choose to Return to Their Healthcare Provider?**
*% of respondents, Summer 2021*

Offering an online bill pay platform
**53%**

Digital pre-appointment forms to streamline the check-in experience
**55%**

The ability to choose between print and mailed statements vs. digitally delivered statements
**44%**

The option to engage my provider on my mobile device, including text-to-pay, mobile payments, etc.
**35%**

Offering contactless payments at the point-of-service
**19%**

Note: ages 26-65; attested to paying a medical bill online within the last 18 months and had annual income of $30K-$200K per year
Source: Salucro, "2021 Patient Payment Technology Report," Dec 6, 2021

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