

## Americans want docs to be online

By *mmiliard*

Created 03/03/2011

CARY, NC – A new survey from Intuit Health, the developer of patient portal and communication technology, finds two major trends when it comes to Americans and their healthcare: they're worried about their medical bills, and they expect their physicians to be easily accessible online.

Intuit's second annual Health Care Check-Up Survey shows that Americans are now accustomed to paying bills online – and they expect that same convenience and connectivity from their doctor's office.

**[See also: [Intuit buys Medfusion.](#)]**

Seventy-three percent of Americans surveyed would use a secure online communication solution to make it easier to get lab results, request appointments, pay medical bills, and communicate with their doctor's office, the poll finds.

Significantly, that "anytime, anywhere" access is so important that nearly half of patients would consider switching doctors for a practice that offered online services such as those.

In addition to those findings, the Intuit survey shows that rising healthcare costs continue to be a major concern for people.

- Seventy percent said they are somewhat or very concerned about managing their health care bills, the same percentage as last year.
- Two-thirds believe their health care costs will increase in the future.
- Sixty-two percent said their healthcare costs increased in 2010.

Baby Boomers were most concerned with rising costs: 66 percent said their costs have increased and 72 percent are most concerned with rising costs in the future. That's compared with 59 percent of Gen Y and Gen X respondents who said their healthcare costs have increased, and 62 percent who were concerned with rising costs in the future.

"Patient anxiety is rising," said Steve Malik, president and general manager of Intuit Health. "They want some measure of control, convenience and better communication with their doctor. Doctors who offer secure online solutions can meet this patient demand while increasing office efficiency and enhancing the doctor-patient relationship."

Malik added that "online solutions, like a patient portal, have proven to improve staff and patient satisfaction levels, while positively impacting the physician's bottom line by reducing patient no-

shows and increasing the speed at which payments are received."

**[See also: [Intuit Health makes its debut.](#)]**

The survey confirmed that increasing consumer utilization and comfort with online solutions is extending to healthcare.

Specifically, the ability to easily connect with their doctor remains an issue for patients. Nearly 20 percent of Americans feel they cannot easily reach their doctor's office to ask questions, make appointments or obtain lab results. Moreover:

- **Americans want more efficient visits with their physicians.** Eighty-one percent would schedule their own appointment via a secure Web service and fill out medical/registration forms online prior to their appointment.
- **Patients want easy, secure access to their information.** Seventy-eight percent of respondents would use a secure online method to access their medical histories and share information with their doctor.
- **Younger patients prefer online.** Fifty-nine percent of Gen Y respondents said they would switch doctors for one with better online access compared with only 29 percent of Baby Boomers.

The survey also provided insight into patients' perspectives on medical bills and payment methods.

- **Many question the accuracy of medical bills.** Forty-one percent of consumers do not have confidence that the billed amount is correct.
- **One in five is unsure whether to pay their doctor or the insurance company.** Gen Y respondents were most unsure whom to pay – 28 percent versus 8 percent of Baby Boomers.
- **Accounts receivable can become bad debt.** Fifty-seven percent have had at least one medical bill go to a collection agency. Women are twice as likely as men to let a medical bill go past due.
- **Medical bill payments are stuck in the past.** Forty-five percent of patients wait more than a month to pay their doctor bill, and when they pay, half still send a paper check in the mail.

**Source URL:** <http://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/americans-want-docs-be-online>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.healthcareitnews.com/contest>

[2] <http://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/intuit-buys-medfusion>

[3] <http://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/intuit-health-makes-its-debut>