



2023

# State of Patient Engagement

Exploring opportunities to improve patient engagement for urgent care providers.



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# Introduction

In the age of consumerism, you've likely heard the phrase “**consumer is king**”. It means that the consumer rules all and dictates the behavior of businesses. Over the past decade, companies have evolved from merely satisfying customers' requirements to crafting solutions that effortlessly integrate into their everyday lives and spark delight. In 2023, businesses, especially healthcare, must orient around this new norm and be consumer-centric.

Healthcare, including on-demand and convenient care, is expected to cater to patients in new ways. Whether it's a neighborhood urgent care or an urgent care connected to a larger hospital system, urgent care is often a patient's first step to seeking healthcare when they need it most.

Most urgent care platforms recognize that patients have new expectations around access to care. But the question that continues to develop is, what do patients want? What do they expect? And ultimately, how can clinics use these expectations to instill patient loyalty and drive bottom-line results?

By surveying patients who use Solv to find and book care, we aimed to answer these questions and gain a deeper understanding of patients' behaviors and desires. We found that patients, like many consumers of today, care about speed,

convenience, and transparency. Patients increasingly seek more healthcare services on-demand, creating a unique opportunity for urgent care to expand.

This report seeks to bridge the gap between patients and providers and uncover insights into how urgent care can exceed patient expectations, provide better care, shift operational outcomes, and ultimately connect with more patients.



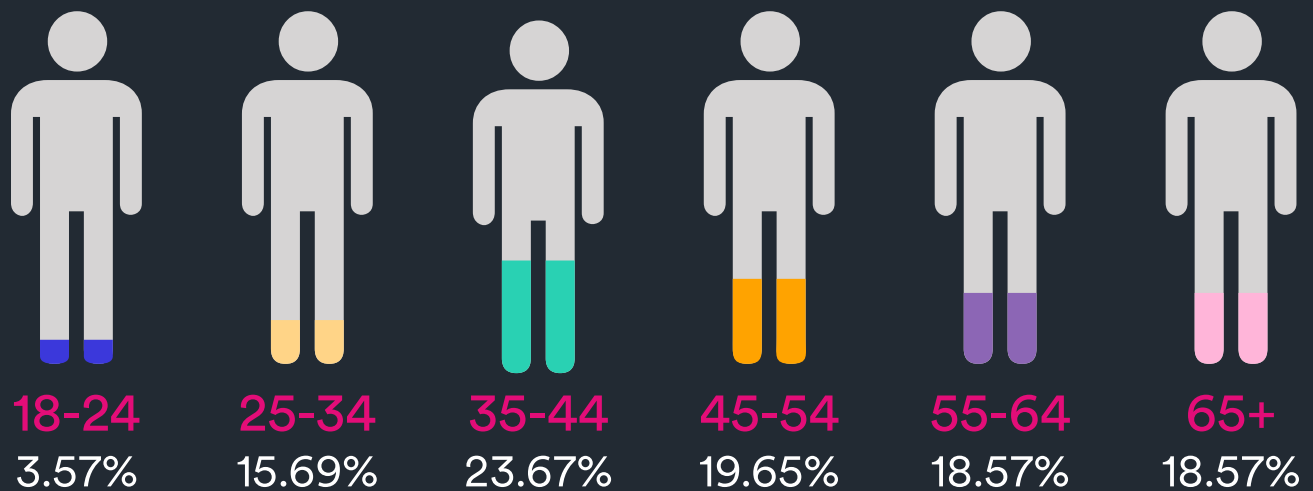
# Methodology

In 2018, Solv set out to answer some of these questions by surveying **1,386** patients about their experiences, desires, and behaviors for urgent care, which developed into our initial report: the [Rise of the Practical Patient.](#)



After the pandemic upended healthcare in 2023, we set out to understand how patient expectations have changed or stayed the same. This time, we surveyed 1,786 patients, asking the same questions to track what has changed and some additional questions to gather further insight.

## 2023 Survey Age Demographics (1,786 surveyed)



## Why Solv.

Solv has unique insights into both patient viewpoints and provider viewpoints. We interact with over **6 million patients** looking for convenient care and support hundreds of providers in delivering that care.

# Summary of Patient Insights

We found that how quickly patients can be seen and accessibility is even more important today. At the same time, other factors, such as loyalty, online reviews, and price transparency, continue to influence the behavior of patients.

We've broken out this report into four sections to explore:

- 01 Fast access to care:** How patients want access to care, what makes them choose specific locations over others, and what to do about it.
- 02 Convenient primary care services:** What primary care services patients are most interested in at their urgent care, and how to best plan for expanding services.
- 03 Trust and online reviews** The relationship between online reviews and loyalty, and how to create a process that inspires repeat visits.
- 04 Cost and transparency:** How patients are feeling about the current economic situation and their ability to afford healthcare

# Fast access to care

What patients want in their care experience.

# Fast access to care

Most patients have access to day-to-day needs with a few taps from their phone, so, unsurprisingly, quick digital access to care is incredibly important. Speed matters regarding same-day availability and is especially important for parents.

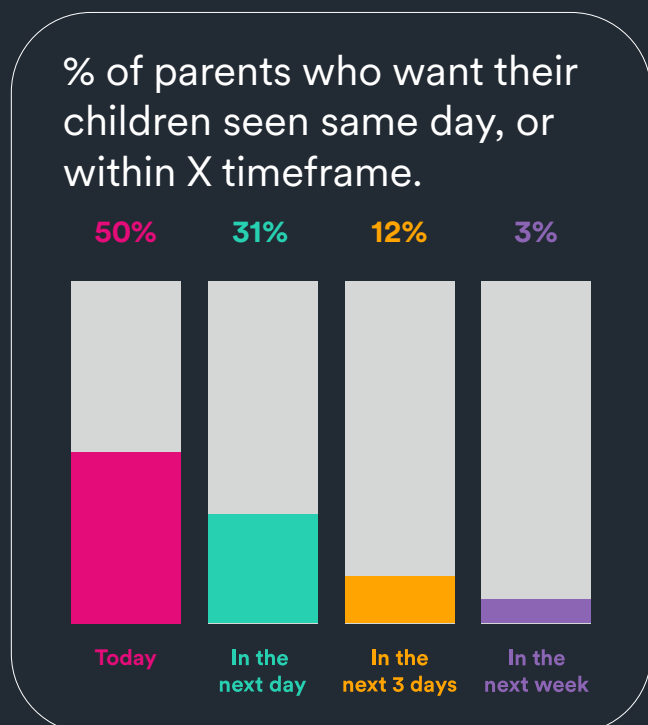
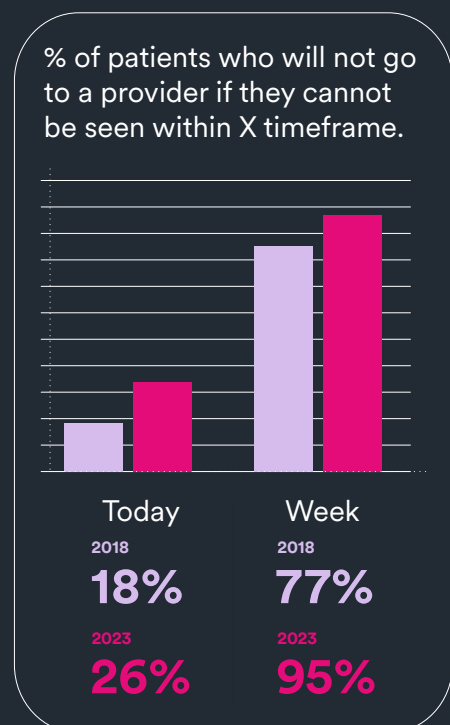
## Same-day availability

Patients are less willing to wait to see a provider than ever before. When we asked patients how long they'd be willing to wait for any care, not just urgent care, 26% of patients surveyed wanted to be seen today.

Same-day care is also the #1 factor for patients choosing urgent care for telemed.

## ... and it matters more for parents

While availability is essential for all patients, speed matters even more for those with children under 18. 50% of parents with children under 18 said they would not wait to see a provider beyond today. In addition, 81% said they would not wait beyond the next day.



# Patients want care that's simple and easy

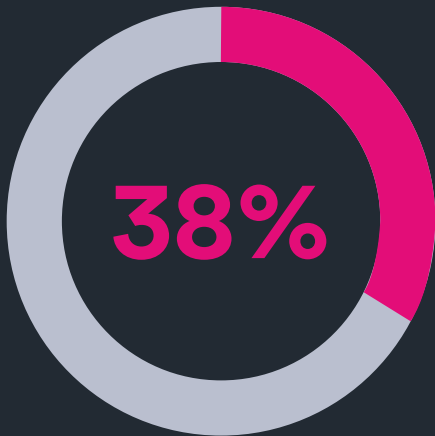
## Location matters

While a pleasant digital experience certainly makes a difference, 38% of patients said they choose their urgent care based on location. This could be influenced by factors like the proximity to the location, the ease of getting in and out of the center, or how close a pharmacy might be nearby.

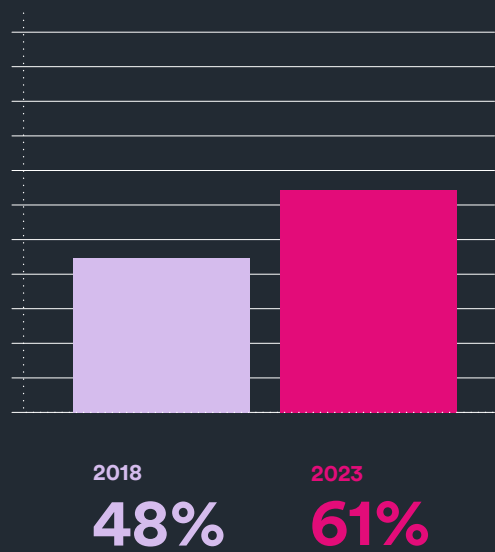
## Paperless check-in

Being able to check in digitally is even more important now than in 2018. A majority of patients (61%) say that paperless check-in would meaningfully improve their experience.

% of patients who indicate distance is one of their top 3 factors when selecting a UC.



% of patients who say paperless check-in would meaningfully improve their healthcare experience





# Best practices for enabling faster access to care

Leading urgent cares adapt to these needs with investments in online scheduling and digital registration tools to give patients and staff a seamless workflow.

## Allow people to book online

Patients want to be seen quickly, and they don't want to sit in a waiting room. Urgent cares need to expand from a walk-in-only model with the ability to book same-day and next-day appointments. Not only do appointment scheduling capabilities improve the patient experience, but it also helps attract new patients to your website and, ultimately, to your clinic.

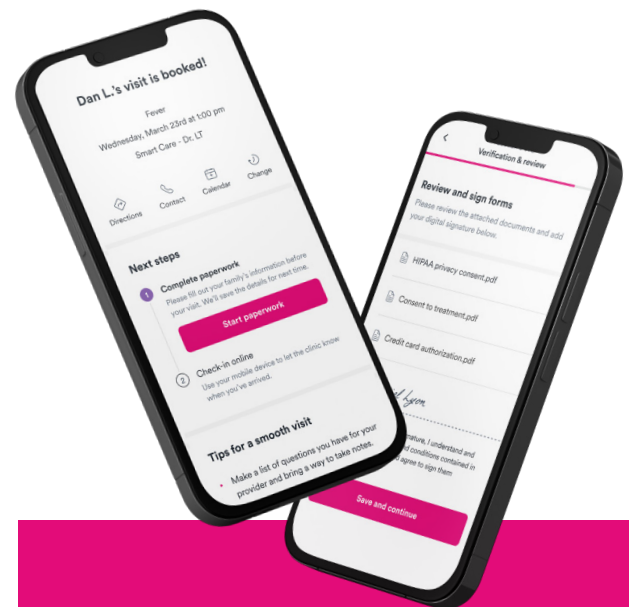
A seamless online experience and online booking are key to meeting the demand for speed. Leaders in the urgent care space recognize that the slightest difference in delivering quick access to care is a major competitive advantage.

## Create a digital check-in experience

When patients can complete the check-in process before they arrive, it creates a more efficient process for everyone, including your staff. The patient has a more seamless process, and it optimizes the operational workflow in the office.

Patients can enter their information directly, reducing the potential for errors or missing information. This, in turn, allows healthcare providers to gain quick access to accurate patient information and improve the overall quality of care by—

- Saving front desk workers an average of 4-10 minutes per patient
- Reducing billing issues and claim denials
- Enhancing the patient experience



**2.7x**  
per year

**Average rebooks for patients who use Solv.**

# Convenient primary care services

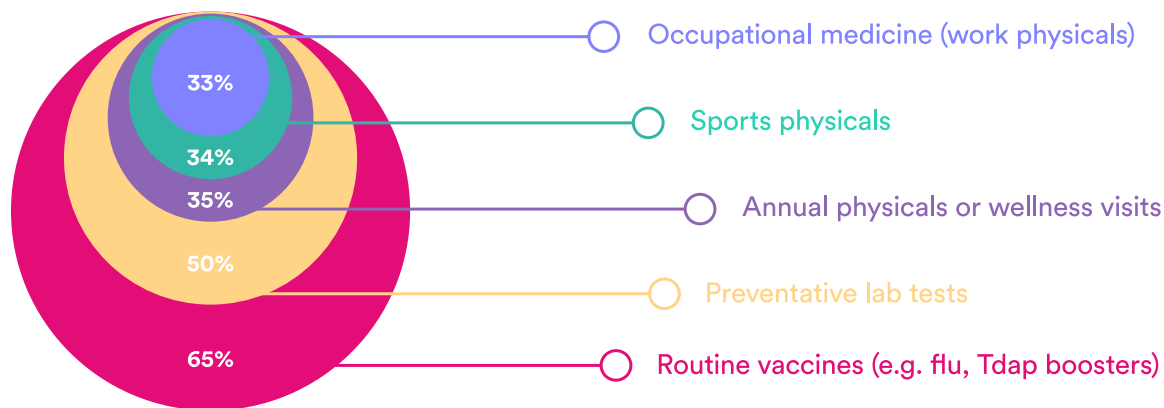
What services patients are interested in receiving at their urgent care.



# Convenient primary care services

Historically, urgent care has had a distinct advantage in providing immediate high-quality care to patients, and now patients are signaling that they want more. Instead of seeing urgent care as solely a place for last-minute illnesses, broken bones, etc., patients want access to primary care services at their urgent care.

When asked what services they'd be interested in seeing at your urgent care, patients responded—



## Expanding services through primary care

Over 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of patients are interested in getting vaccines at urgent care. When you meet a patient where they are at for their nonacute needs, they will come back. This unlocks growth for urgent care.

## Access to patients with a higher lifetime value (LTV)

Primary care services open new avenues for patients with urgent and nonurgent needs. When a patient gets sick twice a year, if they need vaccinations, or have children that need services, all are opportunities for them to come back to you for care.

Leaders in the space have already expanded access to some services to help support patients as they wait for a primary care physician (often a 6-month waiting process). For health systems, urgent care can fill a gap until you have a PCP available.

## New avenues of growth

- Preventative screenings
- Mental health consults
- Vaccinations
- Women's and Men's Health Services
- Occupational Medicine
- Travel Medicine
- In-network referral management

# Best practices for expanding your base of care

More and more patients have shifted away from wanting a solo relationship with their primary care physician to wanting access to some primary care services in urgent care settings. By offering primary care services, you can increase the lifetime value of existing patients, see more new patients, and diversify your revenue sources. However, expanding services is an operational lift. If you are looking to expand your base of care with PCP services, here are 3 things you should do first—

## Survey your patients

Survey your patients to assess their appetite for more services. Then, use the results to inform your decision on which services to invest in first.

## Evaluate your payor contracting

Look at your current insurance contracts. If you are under service 20 (urgent care) then you'll need to get a contract addendum to include PCP services. However, if you are already set up for service 11 (PCP) you can add those services without any changes.

If you want to keep POS 11 from POS 11, consider having a bank of midlevel providers become your PCP provider.

## Set up financial models

To understand the true cost of setting up PCP services, you'll want to create a financial model for the various services you may offer. This way, you can evaluate what potential costs and gains may be.



# Tip:

If you plan to roll out vaccines, do so in the summer, so you can connect with back to school students and college students that need vaccines!

# Trust and online reviews

What factors patients  
look for to build trust.

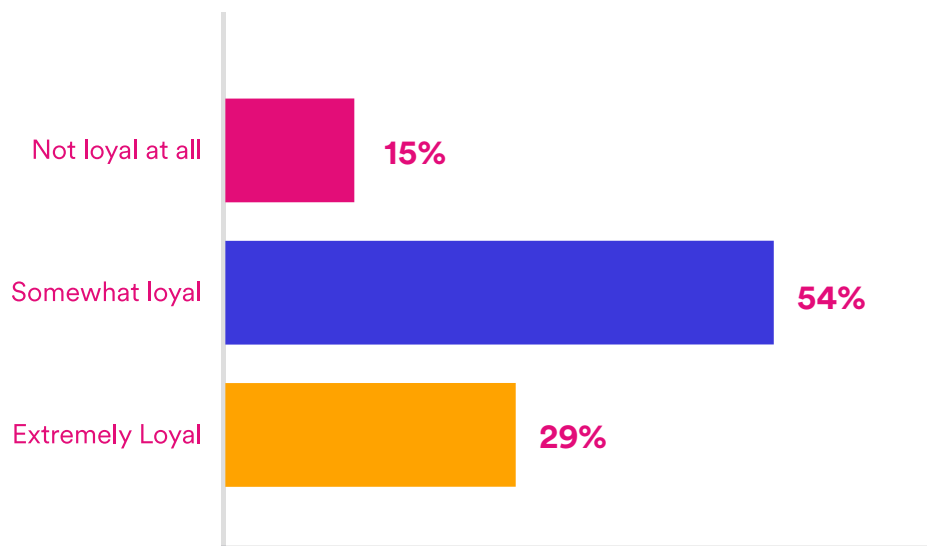


# Trust and online reviews

Speed and convenience will always play a big role in the urgent care setting, but loyalty continues to be a critical factor in choosing an urgent care.

When we asked patients if they are loyal to a specific urgent care or brand, 54% of patients said somewhat loyal, while another 29% said extremely loyal.

**How loyal are you to a specific urgent brand or location? (all surveyed responses)**

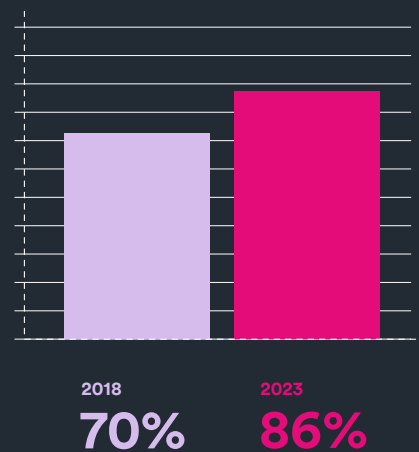


## Online reviews

For most healthcare settings, Google reviews have become a staple of customer experience. Online reviews influence patient behaviors, especially new patients.

**86% of patients** said that online reviews influence their choice of provider.

% of patients who said online reviews are important when choosing a provider



# Best practices to get more (and better) online reviews

Positive reviews build trust with your existing patients and are crucial for attracting new patients. Forward-thinking urgent cares are proactively managing and building their reputation through online reviews.

Here are four best practices to consider increasing your online reviews:

## Make it simple (SMS is key)

Give patients a quick reminder text immediately after their visit asking for a review. You can also send a follow-up via email, increasing the likelihood that patients will leave a review. As we've seen above, patients prefer digital experiences, and utilizing SMS can improve response rate.

## Separate NPS and online reviews

Avoid asking patients for two reviews at the same time. A best practice is to ask 70% of patients for online reviews and send the other 30% of patients an NPS satisfaction flow.

## Ask for reviews in person

One of the most effective ways to increase online reviews is simply to ask patients to leave them. Providers can ask patients at the end of their appointment. The front desk can also remind patients on their way out of the clinic. Consider staff training and incentives around the value of reviews to drive this habit.

## Respond to reviews

Responding to reviews, especially negative ones, shows patients that the provider values their feedback and is committed to improving their experience. Google reviews do not allow you to hide negative reviews. Thus, you'll want to respond in a timely and professional manner, addressing any concerns or issues raised by the patient. It's also good to respond to positive reviews, as it can help build a sense of community and engagement with patients.

# Tip:

Consider posting positive reviews on a TV screen, or a similar device in the break room.

# Cost and transparency

How patients are feeling about current economic situation and affording care.



# Cost and transparency

Price has always mattered for patients in their choice of healthcare and influences how and where they seek care. 51% of patients choose their urgent care based on whether it is in-network with their insurance, and another **70% of patients say that price transparency matters to them.**

## Economic fear and confusion

The combination of general healthcare and insurance confusion, paired with recent inflation and other economic pressures, is weighing on patients.

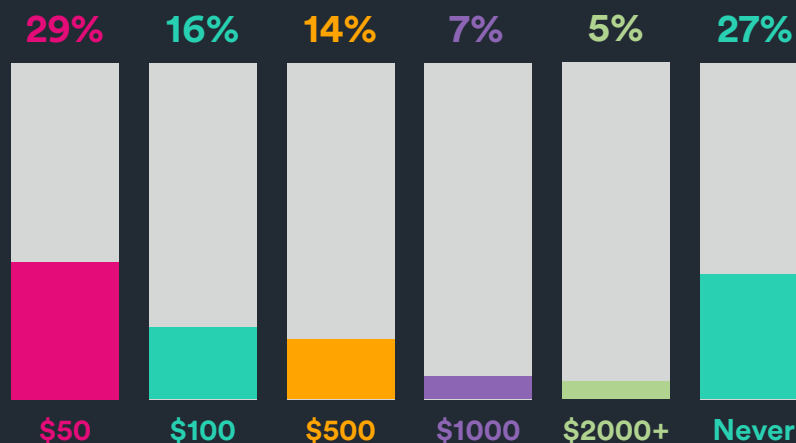
Patients are 35% more concerned with healthcare affordability than last year.

Compared to 2018, there still seems to be a lot of confusion about healthcare costs, with over **40% of patients stating that they feel generally confused or uncomfortable asking for prices.**

## Payment plans

Payment plans have become a staple in other industries. In our survey, patients expressed significant interest in payment plans for urgent care.

Over what dollar amount would you be interested in setting up a monthly payment plan to pay for a medical bill?



# How can you improve price transparency?

Patients have long been confused about prices and healthcare. According to Instamed (a JP Morgan) report, **87% of people reported being surprised by a medical bill**. While another 75% of health-insured consumers reported being concerned about financial hardship due to medical bills.

In urgent care, it's especially important because any information you display on your pricing can so often be what separates a patient's decision between you and a competitor.

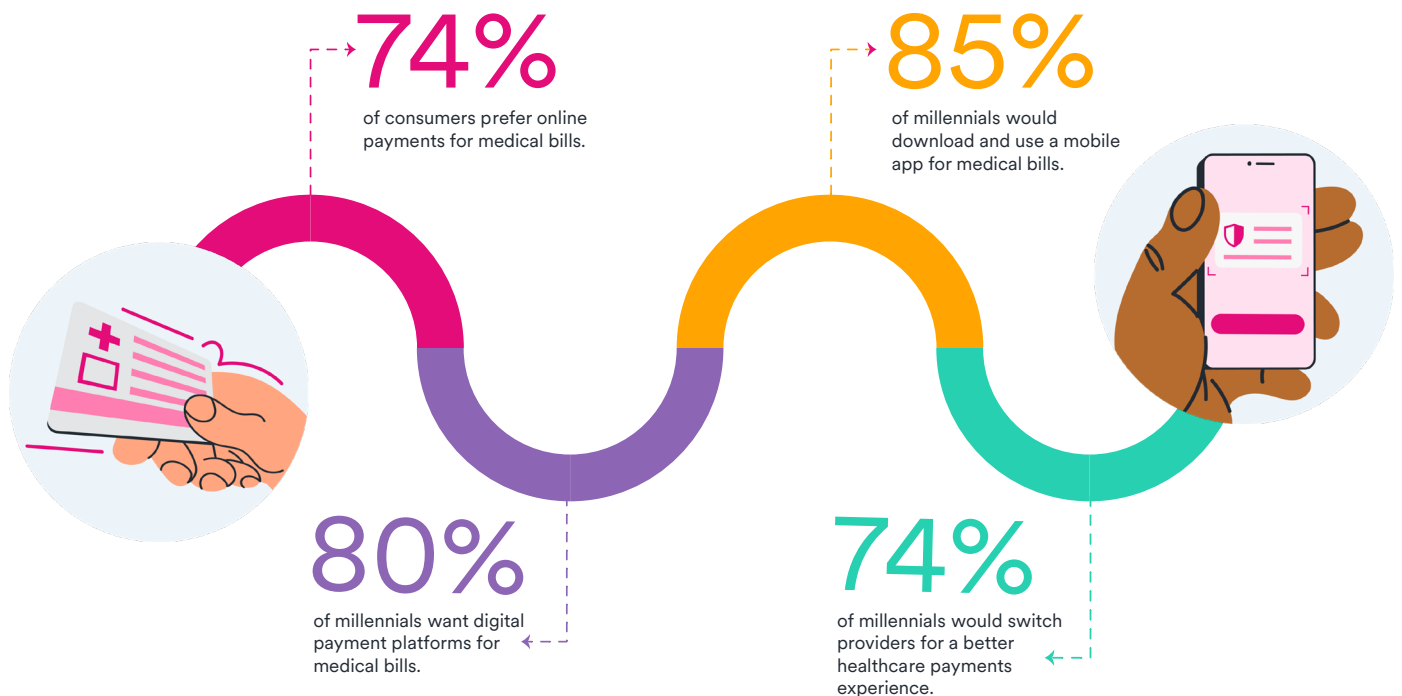
## Provide clear and concise pricing information

Providers can make it easier for patients to understand the costs of care by providing clear and concise pricing information.

Successful urgent cares have found that publishing self-pay prices for common procedures and services and providing a detailed estimate of costs creates trust earlier on.

## Use technology to improve pricing information

Providers can use technology like Solv to make pricing information more accessible and understandable to patients. This way, patients can see what they can expect to pay while they are booking.



# What does this mean for 2023?



# What does this mean for 2023?

The healthcare industry has persevered through visit volume challenges, changing regulations, and staffing shortages over the last few years. Patient demand for fast access to care is not going anywhere and we predict a continued expansion into primary care services in the urgent care setting. It may be tempting to cut costs or get back to basics, but you will be left behind by innovators in urgent care who double down on investments in patient experience and expanding services to drive value for their business, patients, and staff.

## Urgent Care

By understanding how patient expectations have evolved, urgent care can strategically begin to change and innovate your operations and workflow to address the needs of patients today and in the future. This sets clinics up to grow their practice and drive patient loyalty.

Urgent care has a unique opportunity to expand and improve their scheduling and registration workflow, explore primary care expansion and improve the payment experience, and ultimately deliver the care that patients want and need.



## Healthcare systems

Urgent care can play a crucial role in acquiring new patients via streamlined access to health systems. Not only does urgent care introduce new patients to health systems, but those new patients have a high lifetime value.

Patients are seeking convenient care opportunities from urgent care centers. The urgent care model allows healthcare systems to provide the same-day convenient care that patients are asking for.

# Solv.

Get more insights into your operations  
and create better patient experiences with Solv.

Schedule a Demo now.



Email: [partners@solvhealth.com](mailto:partners@solvhealth.com)

[solvhealth.com](https://solvhealth.com)