



Reframing the Patient Experience

A new scorecard for healthcare leaders

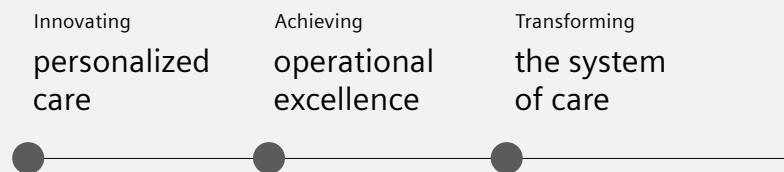
A thought leadership paper on "Innovating personalized care", "Achieving operational excellence" and "Transforming the system of care" co-authored with Jason A. Wolf., Ph.D., CPXP

Preface

The Insights Series

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Executive summary

One of the many changes wrought by COVID-19 is a broadening of the healthcare industry's understanding of the "patient experience". In addition, the pandemic has accelerated the industry's acceptance that patient experience must shape more provider behaviors and inform more decisions. This is because patients are emerging from this pandemic more determined than ever to experience healthcare on their own terms.

In 2018, Siemens Healthineers acknowledged the importance of patient experience in a paper titled "A Blueprint for Setting up an Impactful Patient Experience Program."¹ The paper was co-written with The Beryl Institute, and it included a scorecard for healthcare providers to use in planning and executing patient experience improvement programs.

Three years later, Siemens Healthineers is submitting this paper, titled "Reframing the Patient Experience." It builds

on the foundation laid by the 2018 paper and explores and applies the lessons learned during COVID-19. It also contains an updated scorecard. Shaped by the pandemic, this scorecard is more detailed and comprehensive, reflecting what must be the new reality in healthcare. Perhaps its most interesting feature is the evolution of what patients expect from providers and what goes into creating what will be perceived as a positive patient experience. From lower costs to easier access to greater convenience, patients are very clear that these are no longer aspects of their experience on which they are prepared to compromise. And more than ever before, patients are making it clear that they want to be treated with humanity. They want respect, they want to be communicated to clearly, consulted on and included. They want to feel safe and cared for.

From these perspectives, it is clear: patients are demanding a reframing of their healthcare experience.

Introduction

“The global conversation on the patient experience has progressed significantly in recent years, from a debate on if experience is essential and what it includes, to, now, what is ultimately most critical about the experience and how it is most effectively delivered.”

The Beryl Institute report –
Consumer Perspectives on Patient Experience 2021²

As the world contemplates a post-COVID healthcare system, many unanswered questions remain. One of the many aspects of healthcare that was profoundly disrupted by the pandemic has been patient experience. For patients, the pandemic was a time of intense vulnerability and uncertainty. The healthcare systems that people had grown to trust and count on appeared to be shaken and off-balance, often as confused about how to proceed as the patients in their care. This has led to a re-evaluation of these systems by patients, and demands one from healthcare leaders as well. Expectations must be recalibrated, priorities readjusted and processes adapted. Many patients had frustrating healthcare experiences during the pandemic; they are likely to insist on positive ones going forward.

Recognition of the importance of patient experience is not a new development. In 2011 the first “State of Patient Experience”³ benchmarking study was done by The Beryl Institute. In 2014, The Beryl Institute launched the first Patient Experience Week, an event “recognizing and encouraging global efforts to improve the healthcare experience for patients, their families, and caregivers.” Since then, the critical importance of patient experience has become well-established. Not only is it in the best interests of patients, it is an essential business and strategic priority affecting an organization’s reputation, financial stability, and even health outcomes.



Sustainability in the experience of care

Patient experience is an essential business and strategic priority affecting an organization’s reputation and financial stability.

The Insights Series paper “A Blueprint for Setting up an Impactful Patient Experience Program”¹ was written in 2018 in conjunction with The Beryl Institute’s “To Care is Human” paper.⁴ It contained what was, at that time, a forward-looking and innovative set of proposals on how to improve the patient experience. Today, much of what appeared in that paper seems insufficient and out of date, simply because the pandemic has so thoroughly upended the world’s understanding of what patients need and expect.

This paper is a follow-up to the material published in 2018, with updated analysis and a current review of the factors patients consider important in shaping the quality of their experience. It also advances suggestions for how these contemporary priorities can be acted upon.

Much of the data in this paper is based on an analysis of a survey² conducted by The Beryl Institute in late 2020. This survey of more than 2,000 people gathered far-ranging information about the factors that influence patient experience. This paper also draws on observations from the High Value Care reform taking place in Europe and more than 20,000 consumer perspectives analyzed in 27 countries by IPSOS in 2020.⁵

Background

Healthcare is about human beings caring for other human beings and providing services along the continuum of care. Historically however, it has been apparent that other service industries include more the opinions, preferences and wishes of the people receiving their services. Throughout the rest of the "service" sector, the focus on customer-centricity has gotten significantly higher than it has in healthcare.

Efforts to measure patient experience were, in the past, usually quite limited, to the extent that healthcare organizations concerned themselves with measuring the patient experience by looking at the number and types of patient complaints. Patient opinions were neither actively sought nor considered. And few healthcare systems considered linking patient experience to reimbursement.

Previously, there had emerged an understanding that quality, safety, and outcomes, the core institutional goals in healthcare, did not directly correlate with patient satisfaction. However, the overall healthcare experience is what determines satisfaction, and in recent years, healthcare providers have started to deal with the reality that patients often find healthcare experience to be unsatisfactory.

Indeed, the evolution of patient experience – how it is viewed and dealt with in healthcare – has been very much about reorienting focus from clinical medical outcomes to a broader awareness of how patients experience care. There has been, over the past quarter century, a shift in focus from patient complaints to patient rights. This evolved further to patient advocacy, through patient satisfaction, and finally to a point where we understand patient experience to be a combination of factors, encompassing engagement, quality, safety, service, cost, outcomes and, "yes, an overall positive experience."

2018 Baseline

"The experience era has taken hold in healthcare. It calls for new ways of thinking about how care is delivered, and it is driving how those who seek care – the healthcare consumers – will make their future healthcare choices."

Siemens Healthineers Insights Series Paper –

A Blueprint for Setting up an Impactful Patient Experience Program

The Insights Series paper entitled "A Blueprint for Setting up an Impactful Patient Experience Program" began with an acknowledgment that patient experience can no longer be treated as an afterthought. The paper highlighted four strategic goals that healthcare organizations looking to develop successful patient experience programs should consider:

1. Engage patients and families to set an expectation for a hospital stay
2. Optimize the diagnostic experience to make better treatment decisions
3. Deliver outcomes that matter to patients
4. Sustain patient loyalty beyond the stay

These remain the cornerstones for reframing patient experience, however with the COVID-19 pandemic, now with more focus in the overall healthcare environment, as well as digital and out-patient care encounters.

The Challenge

A clear understanding of what healthcare consumers want has long been elusive for healthcare providers, whose focus has historically been on outcomes, necessities like safety, and operational efficiencies. At Future-Health Basel 2021, an online conference focused on “Rethinking Patient Experience,” Dr. Ghada Trotabas, Head of Marketing and Sales Operations for Siemens Healthineers, identified five essential points for today’s healthcare users:

1. Convenience
2. Wellness
3. Equity of Access
4. Simplicity
5. Empathy

The other essential point, of course, is a positive health outcome. It is almost not worth mentioning anymore, because it is assumed by patients to be obvious. For patients, their “experience”⁶ is what happens in the course of obtaining those positive health outcomes.

As Dr. Trotabas explained, convenience has become a common measuring stick for patients, who increasingly compare their healthcare interactions to the experiences they have shopping online, paying bills, or streaming music. Wellness remains a top priority but must be



Redefining patient experience

Convenience has become a common measuring stick for patients, who now increasingly compare it to their experiences with other industries.

understood not just in the context of treating people who are sick but also of preventing them from becoming sick in the first place. The importance of Equity of Access has been heightened by the pandemic, and here technology is playing an important role. Simplicity is lacking in almost every facet of healthcare, from retail health to health insurance. And empathy remains in short supply, largely because of the competing demands on the time of physicians; here, too, technology including Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help.

“The population in general is getting more sophisticated in their health-care engagement and are no longer engaging as passive passengers on a care journey.”

The Beryl Institute report –
Consumer Perspectives on Patient Experience 2021

Patients today

The Ipsos Global Health Service Monitor 2020⁵ provides on-the-ground perspectives on what the public sees as the major health challenges facing their country, alongside their ratings of their health service now and in the future. The survey indicates amongst other points that people see wait times as the biggest challenge associated with healthcare systems, with 62 percent agreeing with the statement, “Waiting times to get an appointment with doctors are too long in my country.”

Overall, people are generally satisfied with the health-care they are receiving, but there are some concerns about the future. Fifty-Five percent of people worldwide say that their country’s healthcare system is overstretched. When asked about their expectations of their healthcare in the coming years, only 32 percent expect it to improve, and 16 percent expect it to get worse.

One takeaway from the survey is that people today have high expectations of their healthcare systems and are very engaged in assessing the quality of their experiences with those systems.

Evaluation of users of the present and future of healthcare services*

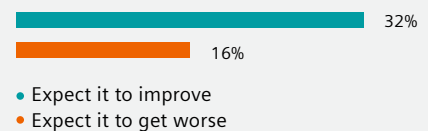
Today:



55%

My country's
healthcare system is
overstretched

In the future:



*Data from consumer analysis from 2020⁵

The pandemic has transformed how patients experience care, how patients and providers think about care, and how we measure patient experience. Patients have become more demanding and more autonomous. They want care, but their anxiety level is high when their needs are not attended to immediately. This anxiety can in turn complicate healthcare providers' operations and further affect treatment outcomes. Patients are more informed. Access to health information is easily available – 6 out of 10 consumers use the internet to try to diagnose themselves – but the “information” they rely on is not always dependable.⁷

There is also now an increased focus on public health issues related to social equity. There is a greater demand for home health and telehealth options, as well as increased interest in personal wellness and prevention.

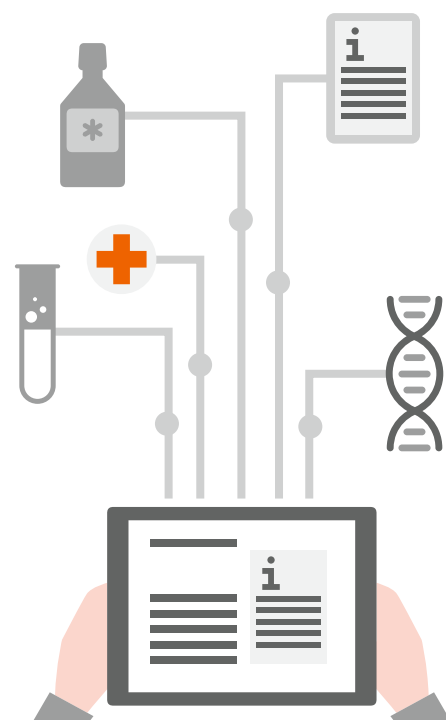
In other words, patients are emerging from the pandemic with a host of concerns, a lot of questions, and opinions – some of which take the form of outright demands. With a higher degree of digitalizing services and access to information, patients are making their voices heard. They want easy and fast explanations of what is going on, online or in person. They want to have a say in their own care pathway. And if they don't get the response they want, they will simply seek care elsewhere.

In one of The Beryl Institute's publications at the end of 2020, it was reported that leaving aside health outcomes, the biggest influence on the patient experience is basic human interaction. That finding is echoed in a Siemens Healthineers Insights Series paper entitled “Patient Trust – Why it matters for COVID-19 and beyond,”⁸ which noted that while the manner in which care is delivered today may have changed, the commitment to patient-centered care – to treating patients first and foremost as people – has not.



Patients today

Patients and relatives have easier access to information, seek autonomy and expertise as well as empathy in their care.



The solution

Reframing the patient experience

What does “reframing the patient experience” mean? It means understanding that healthcare must do a better job of addressing patients’ human needs, not just their medical needs. Furthermore, reframing the patient experience is an acknowledgement that the pandemic has heightened patients’ awareness that they have significant influence on many parts of their own healthcare journey.

The Siemens Healthineers Insights Series paper entitled “A blueprint for setting an impactful patient experience program”¹ from 2018, proposed four strategic goals healthcare leaders should follow if they want to improve patient experience. These are as useful today as they were before the pandemic. With this follow up paper and updated scorecard, we accelerate and expand the approach needed to achieve those goals. It builds on what we have learned during the pandemic and what respondents told us in the survey conducted by The Beryl Institute, in 2020, as well as anticipating what patients will increasingly demand as the pandemic recedes.

1. Engage patients and families

Surveys of patients, families and leading healthcare providers have made one thing very clear: Patients do not want to be excluded from the conversation. They want to be communicated with and listened to. Most patients are not clinical experts, but they are experts when it comes to their own experiences, preferences and wishes. For most patients, medical terminology is confusing and medical procedures are somewhat intimidating. Healthcare providers need to take the time to communicate – online and on site – with patients and their families in a way they understand, customized to their needs. It’s helpful to make time for questions before procedures and treatments start and to give answers that both clarify and reassure.

The Beryl Institute’s “Consumer Perspectives on Patient Experience 2021”² asked over 1000 consumers from the United States and collected 250 responses from Australia, Canada, the Philippines and the United Kingdom in early December 2020. The selection was made to match the study in 2018 and ensure consistency in the data collection process. To the following question:

“When you think about having a good patient/family experience, which are the most important points for you?”

Patients and patient advocates answered as follows:

95% said it was very or extremely important that the healthcare provider communicates clearly in a way they and their relatives can understand.

94% said it was very or extremely important that the provider listens to their health and personal concerns.

93% said it was very or extremely important that the healthcare provider asks questions and tries to understand their needs and preferences.

93% said it was very or extremely important that the healthcare provider offers a clear plan of care.

*“Convenience, wellness, equity of access, simplicity and empathy.
That’s what healthcare consumers really want.”*

Dr. Ghada Trotabas

Head of Marketing and Sales Operations, Siemens Healthineers

Very clearly, The Beryl Institute’s Consumer Perspectives on Patient Experience 2021 highlights the need to “communicate, listen, be clear on care plans and clearly engage people as partners in their care.” In short, patients want to be thought of as people instead of symptoms, diagnoses, ethnic groups, or diseases. And they want the way they are addressed and treated by providers to reflect that.

An important development coming out of the pandemic is increased patient sophistication and understanding of digital engagement and remote care. This type of care, which was accelerated dramatically by the safety requirements of the pandemic, can be thought of as

moving care outside the four walls. During a webinar in January 2021 hosted by “Becker’s Hospital Review”, Wendy Cofran, Senior Director of Global Provider Strategy at Salesforce, took the notion even further than moving care outside the walls. She spoke about the importance of continuously refining the segmentation of the population by disease groups and risk categories and developing preventive and personalized interventions for each patient. In this new day and age, she mentioned that, we need to monitor patients wherever they are, using several streams of available data and engage with them meaningfully in reaction to their lifestyle habits to optimize their health outcomes.⁹

95%

said it was very or extremely important that the provider communicates clearly in a way they could understand

94%

said it was very or extremely important that the provider listens to them

93%

said it was very or extremely important that the provider asks questions and tries to understand their needs and preferences

93%

said it was very or extremely important that the provider offers a clear plan of care



* Data from consumer analysis from 2021²

2. Optimize the diagnostic experience

In 2020, the Insights Series paper¹⁰ exploring how best to optimize the patient diagnostic experience concluded with the following:

“Patient Diagnostic Experience matters! It matters for the wellbeing of patients; it doesn’t just “make them feel good”, it affects their actual physical health. It also plays a vitally important role in helping healthcare providers reach their goals: revenue stability, strong finances, a positive reputation, loyal and motivated staff, and high standards of quality, safety and outcomes.”

Diagnostic tests and procedures can often be stressful experiences for patients and their families. Thus, they demand empathy, compassion and transparency from healthcare providers. Patients expect providers to address their anxieties, answer their questions, and focus on their comfort.

Research indicates that how people are engaged in the diagnostic experience is as important, or even more important, than the mechanisms of the diagnostic process itself. Any clinical interaction with patients should be seen as an opportunity for empathy, efficiency, and transparency. To whatever extent possible, technology should be patient-friendly in order to improve the effectiveness and comfort of the diagnostic experience. And easy access to tests must be a priority, at all times and in all situations.

In 2020, The Beryl Institute released a paper entitled “A Global Inquiry on Excellence in the Diagnostic Journey: The Power of Human Experience in Healthcare”.¹¹ One of the paper’s main conclusions and the key considerations in excelling at the diagnostic experience include: (a) how care teams communicate matters, (b) taking time to be present for patients is important, (c) focus on outcomes,

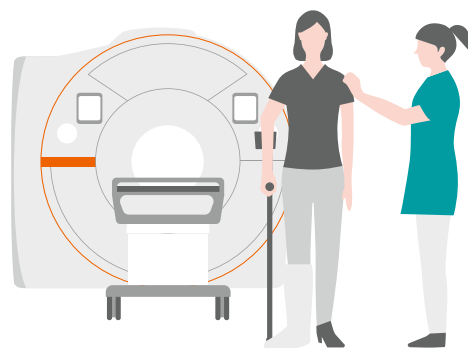


Access to integrated diagnostics

Diagnostic tests and procedures can often be stressful experiences. Patients need providers to offer access to services and technology, address their anxieties, and provide an integrated picture of their diagnosis.

(d) establish a foundational commitment to efficiency and (e) care teams provide opportunities for partnership. In addition to the basics of human communication, respondents to The Beryl Institute survey mentioned the importance of clear signage and easy wayfinding, as well as the cleanliness of the facility and a physical ambience of well-being.

What the above makes clear is that there are a number of ways of optimizing the diagnostic experience, and healthcare providers would do well by considering them. From compassion to transparency to increased access to better all around efficiency, providers now have a list of ways they can improve the diagnostic experience, and they also have clear signals from patients that this is what is expected.



3. Deliver outcomes that matter to patients

Clearly, healthcare providers must remain focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for patients – be it through digital tools, in ambulatory or out-patient facilities or through care in the hospital. But research indicates that they also need to expand their understanding of what outcomes matter to patients the most.

The Insights Series paper entitled “Do One Thing, And Do It Better Than Anyone Else,”¹² offered an in-depth look at Hamburg’s Martini-Klinik, which has attained singular success in optimizing their clinical operations through the disciplined and strategic application of a number of operational principles focused around patient-reported outcomes

and clinical outcomes. This case study also suggests that the manner in which those outcomes are delivered is so important that it almost becomes part of the outcome itself:

“Smooth, well-tested processes, ultra-experienced staff, and superior technology excite patients. This is coupled with a focus on the customer’s needs.”

The link between a positive patient experience and engagement is still difficult to measure. But the experience of the Martini-Klinik suggests that patients who are pleased with their overall experience are more likely to engage in their treatment protocols.



4. Sustain Patient Loyalty

In a world where patients are searching for a better healthcare experience, how do healthcare organizations build and retain patient loyalty? How do they ensure trust between referring physicians, care teams and patients?

Patient loyalty starts with the most recent interaction. Patients always compare encounters with health systems and care providers with previous experiences. Loyalty depends on the sum of the interactions the patient has with the care provider, from access to diagnosis through clinical procedures decided jointly to understandable and actionable health and pathway education.

Clearly, adhering to the three previous strategic goals is critical. In addition, responding on a common sense and human level to what we know patients care about, makes a great deal of sense.

To that end, it is worth considering the following:

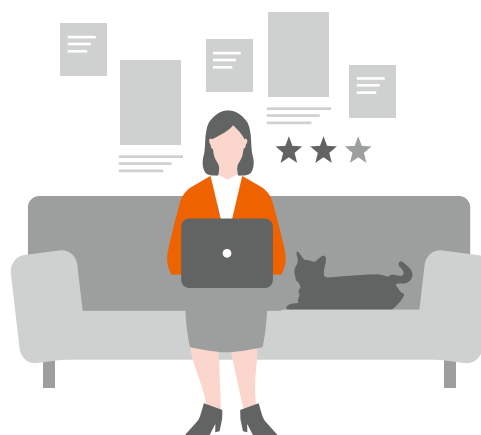
- **Cost.** Keep affordability in mind, because we know this is an issue for all patients.
- **Access.** Remember that if care is difficult to access, patients often will not consider it.
- **Convenience.** Increasingly, patients are turning to providers who make the entire process as easy and convenient as possible.
- **Humanity.** Patients want to be thought of referred to, and treated as humans being helped by other humans.



Seamless experience

Loyalty depends on the sum of the interactions the patient has with the care provider - online and on site.

As a summary, if healthcare providers want to sustain patient loyalty, they must respond to the preferences and aspects patients find important in every interaction from the collection of lab tests, to the imaging, treatment and even to the digital care pathway information. Humanity, convenience, access and cost are the cornerstones to maintaining a trustful relationship between patients, families and care teams.



Scorecard for 2021 and onwards

Our “Reframing the Patient Experience” scorecard is designed to assist healthcare leaders to identify how activities may be prioritized in alignment with the expectations of patients and care teams. It is also a program that bridges to the future – a future where the patient experience is part of the non-negotiable healthcare priorities.

The scorecard identifies drivers for a positive patient experience, behind which qualitative and operational Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the healthcare system could be considered. It provides a self-assessment by which providers can measure their progress in meeting patient priorities and preferences.

What has changed

What we have learned about patient experience over the past three years is that the elements that go into creating a positive patient experience have become much more specific and they take into account the digital ecosystem in which healthcare currently takes place.

Looking into the engagement of patients and families, three years ago patients spoke about the need for effective communication – which often meant the opportunity to ask questions. Today, more than 90 percent want effective and proactive strategic communication, in particular beyond the four walls of the facility. They also want personalized treatment focusing on the mental aspects of the treatment such as emotional distress and anxiety needs – including proactive measures by staff to address any doubts, fear, anxiety or stress. More than 70 percent want equality of access to care regardless of health, wealth, or digital capability.

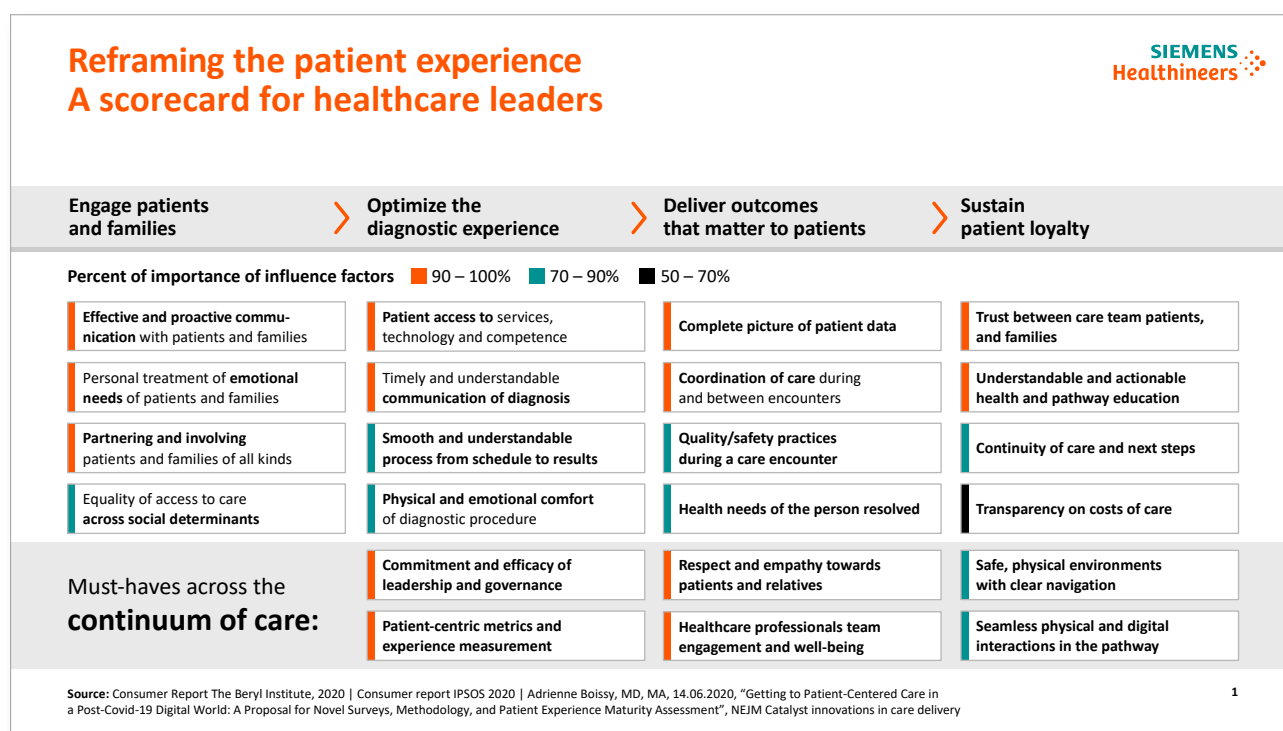
For the optimization of the diagnostic experience, three years ago patients prioritized teamwork among the care team. Today, more than 90 percent want easy access to services, technology and experts in their diagnosis, including: virtual visits, easier online appointment booking and being able to consult with physicians remotely via devices, as well as timely and understandable communication of diagnosis.

When evaluating outcomes that matter to patients and families, three years ago, they wanted to see coordination of care during and in between encounters. Today, more than 90 percent want a complete and comprehensible picture of their data, fully integrated, in order to facilitate joint decision-making in the treatment path. More than 70 percent want their health needs – physical, mental and emotional – resolved in a measurable manner and noted in patient-reported outcome scores.

Three years ago, patients and high-performers in patient experience indicated that their loyalty was mainly influenced by a high engagement level of employees. Today, more than 90 percent want trust between care teams, patients and families as an integral part of the institution’s culture. Clear health and pathway education for patients, such as guidance on prescriptions, behavioral management and health risks are also a priority now. In addition, more than 70 percent want continuity of care and direction about follow-up, next steps, home monitoring and financial planning.

“As healthcare organizations look to [reopen] care for the communities they serve, the experience they provide may have no greater importance than ensuring viability in operations and ultimately fulfill their mission to care for others.”

The Beryl Institute report –
Consumer Perspectives on Patient Experience 2021



For patient experience programs to be successfully implemented in an institution, the scorecard here provides a guide to constantly evaluate and measure key performance indicators and metrics which enrich Net Promoter Scores or patient experience measurements. Assess for yourself where your patient experience program stands. Where do you stand in comparison to the expectations of today? Follow the QR code for a 10-min self-assessment.



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reframing-scorecard

Conclusion

“The future of human experience will call on healthcare to turn inside out, to meet people where they are, to provide the infrastructure and support to get care where and in the moment it is needed. This is not an easy transformation... [but] when healthcare shows up for the communities it serves, listens and is willing to act with a collection of all voices, that is where the true opportunities for change will bloom.”

2020 The Beryl Institute report –
Human Experience 2030: A Vision for the Future of Healthcare¹³

Some organizations may want to adapt the scorecard we present here while others may make full use of it as it is. It is offered as a framework for how to think about patient experience. Three years ago, the Insights Series paper for “A Blueprint for Setting up an Impactful Patient Experience Program”¹ correctly argued that if providers are going to meet patients where they are, and listen to what patients have to say, then they must know what to ask. It is also essential to measure actions against patient responses. This was true then, and it is true now.

Over the past three years, our understanding has evolved just as patients have evolved their sense of what a health experience should be. The COVID-19 pandemic has instilled in patients around the world a sense of caution about healthcare safety, combined with a strong desire to control their care pathway. The healthcare world is now “woke” to the subject of patient experience. That newfound awareness has in many cases yet to translate into action, but it will. There was once a time when the expression “the customer is always right” did not, mysteriously, seem to apply to healthcare. That is no longer the case. The customer, in this case the patient, needs to be heard.



Suggested follow-up reports:

siemens-healthineers.com/patient-experience

- Insights Series, issue 22: Strengthening patient trust: a priority for healthcare sustainability . Available at: siemens-healthineers.com/insights/news/patient-trust-a-priority-for-healthcare-sustainability
- Insights Series, issue 23: Key factors to optimize the diagnostic experience. Available at: siemens-healthineers.com/insights/news/how-to-optimize-the-diagnostic-experience
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Information:

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Jason Wolf is a globally recognized expert on patient experience improvement, organization culture and sustaining high performance in healthcare. Jason has led the growth of The Beryl Institute into the leading global community of practice committed to transforming the human experience in healthcare, engaging 60,000 people in over 85 countries and establishing the framework for the profession of patient experience. Jason is the Founding Editor of the Patient Experience Journal and also established and serves as President of Patient Experience Institute, which offers continuing education and formal certification for patient experience professionals. Jason is a sought-after speaker and author of numerous publications, including two books and over 70 white papers and articles on patient experience excellence and improvement. Jason received the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) 2018 Dean Conley Award for his article "Patient Experience: The New Heart of Healthcare Leadership." He is now leading a global effort to reimagine the future of healthcare with the recent call for action, the *Declaration for Human Experience*, found at <https://transformhx.org>



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Isabel Nieto Alvarez, MSc. is passionate about innovating and transforming the experience of care to be human-centered. She is an expert of the Siemens Healthineers Global Innovation Network on mental and physical stressors in the experience of care. Isabel leads cross-functional teams in innovative projects on patient experience. Prior to her current role, she has served as a marketing



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manager and business developer for the company, and as Professor at the Universidad Anáhuac, México focused on sustainability in healthcare for medical students and psychology. Passionate about improving the patient and care team experience, she presents and writes globally on the subject.

She is a biomedical engineer from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico, holds a Master in Science on Mind and Body Medicine from Saybrook University in California, U.S. and Certifications on Leadership in Healthcare without Harm and Design Thinking. Her scientific background on mind and body health and neuroscience, combined with experience in medical technology innovation are cornerstones of her expertise and passion.

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