

Boosting engagement through patient portals: Delivering the content patients want

Key findings:

1. Patients want to actively use portal housed educational information and links
2. Adding educational and savings offer content can enhance patients' perceptions of patient portals
3. Adding educational and savings offer content is likely to encourage higher rates of portal enrollment and increased engagement

EHR-driven patient portals have become commonplace in today's medical landscape. But questions remain regarding their value to patients. Are portals delivering the content patients want? Perhaps more importantly, what is the potential benefit of shifting portal content to include more educational information as well as links to current savings offers and relevant patient resources?

In an effort to understand the potential engagement impact of adding such content to portals, ConnectiveRx recently conducted survey research among a sample of 1,002 consumers, patients,

and caregivers (collectively referred to in this report as "patients") aged 19 to 80 years. The survey excluded patients with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or indefinable health insurance status, as well those who had not had a healthcare professional (HCP) visit in the last 12 months.

[NOTE: To see background findings from this research, including data regarding the percentage of patients currently using their provider's EHR patient portal, what patients want to accomplish as they use portals, and how they want to receive alerts from portals, visit the Resources section on ConnectiveRx.com and download the companion white paper, "EHR patient portals: Understanding patient participation and preferences."]

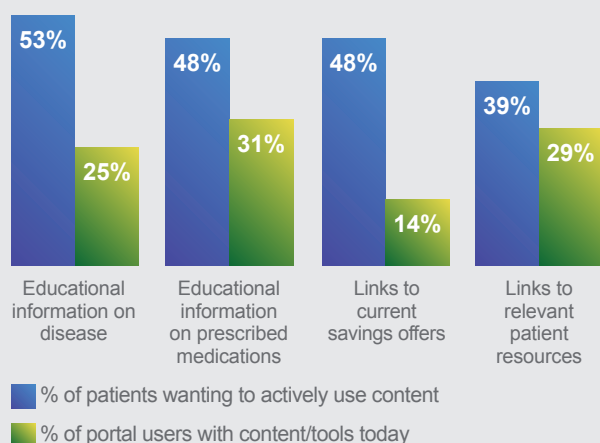
In this survey, a patient portal was defined as a secure online website or app provided by a patient's healthcare provider that enables a patient to interact and communicate with their provider. Portal capabilities vary, though typically, at a minimum, they allow patients to view some parts of their medical record (chosen by the provider), such as vaccination records or some standard lab results, and communicate with the provider through secure messaging. In this survey, reference to patient portals does not include insurance websites or apps, apps for wearable technology- or online health-related support communities or social media forums. The results include three key findings.

Key Survey Finding #1: Patients want to actively use portal-housed educational information and links

A substantial gap exists between what patients want to see in patient portals vs. what they perceive as currently

Figure 1: Patients want to actively use educational information and links housed in portals

Demand for content and tools



Source: ConnectiveRx patient portal survey, July 2017. n (patients) = 1,002; n (signed up for portal today) = 683
 Q: Which, if any, of the following tools/types of information do you have access to in your patient portal? Q: Which, if any, of the following tools/types of information would you likely actively use (when appropriate) if available in your patient portal?

available. As shown in Figure 1, survey findings indicate that many respondents want their patient portal to include “Educational information on disease” (53%), “educational information on prescribed medications” (48%), “Links to current offers” (48%) and “Links to relevant patient resources” (39%). Unfortunately, less than a third of respondents report that these resources are available in their current portals.

Although these educational and support resources may not be widely available in patient portals today, patients say they hold significant value. In the survey, patients were shown a drug-specific EHR-deliverable

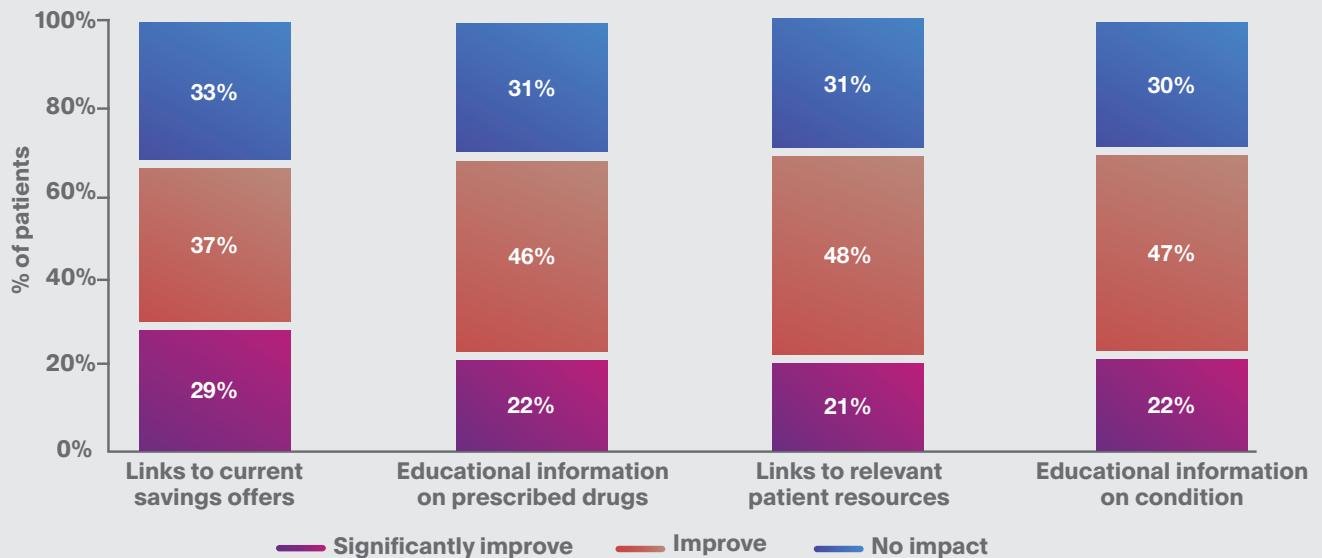
patient education document that can be personalized to patient, prescriber and pharmacy (see ScriptGuide inset above). When asked to rate the value of a patient guide containing such information, 60% of respondents said it was “very valuable” (37%) or extremely valuable (22%)

Key Survey Finding #2: Adding educational and savings offer content can enhance patients’ perceptions of patient portals

Survey responses suggest that adding robust content and tools to patient portals would improve patients’ perception of portals.

Figure 2: Adding educational and savings offer content can enhance patients’ perceptions of patient portals

Impact of new content and tools on perception of the portal



Source: ConnectiveRx patient portal survey, July 2017. n = 1,002

Q: What impact would the following tools/types of information have on your perception of the portal if they were available through the patient portal?

As detailed in Figure 2, the in-portal availability of key educational information and links to current savings offers and relevant patient resources would “improve” or “significantly improve” the perception of a portal for two-thirds of patients.

Key Survey Finding #3: Adding educational and savings offer content is likely to encourage higher rates of portal enrollment and increased engagement

While enhancing patients’ perception of portals is important, increasing their use of portals is even more important. As shown in Figure 3, survey responses suggest that even patients not currently enrolled in a portal would eagerly embrace additional educational resources and links. In fact, when asked about their expected use of portals housing such new content over a 12 month period, three-quarters of those not currently enrolled said they would likely access these resources at least one time per year. And affordability content may have a particularly powerful effect on portal use; nearly half of current non-users say they would likely access links to current savings offers 4 times per year or more.

These are important findings, suggesting that portal developers have a significant opportunity to enhance the value of patient portals by increasing the availability of disease- and drug-related information as well as links to relevant patient resources.

THREE CORE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Take steps now to add content patients say they want.** In our survey, patients clearly voiced their support for portals that include more disease- and drug-specific educational information as well as links to current savings offers and relevant patient resources. At a minimum, consider providing these resources as soon as possible.
- 2. Continue to ask patients to identify the types of content they would like to see in patient portals.** Recognize that patients’ specific desires for portal-based content will continue to grow over time. Establish systems that enable you to be constantly monitoring the pulse of patients’ expectations.
- 3. Keep searching for more and better patient portal content.** Patients may not be aware of all the resources that could be provided in a patient portal, so they don’t know to ask for them. As a result, it is crucial for EHR developers to always be on the lookout for new and valuable content that could be added to patient portals.

Final thought:

ConnectiveRx delivers patient communications through the EHR via ScriptGuide. Personalized to prescriber, patient and pharmacy, ScriptGuide supports patients’ efforts to both fill their prescriptions and stay educated about their prescribed therapies along the connective medication journey.

For more information, please visit ConnectiveRx.com

