2023 Release

Patient Payment Technology Report

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Introduction

Delivering innovative patient financial engagement solutions through integrated EHR workflow solutions.

Salucro's 2023 Patient Payment Technology Report is designed to give healthcare leadership and their revenue cycle teams a panoramic view of their patients' payment and billing preferences – and how to take action to create a world class patient financial experience from directly within existing EHR workflow solutions. As healthcare providers continue to invest in tools and implement strategies to keep up with the pace of change, the goal remains a seamless and efficient process for patients and providers.

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Key Takeaways & Trends

For years, digital transformation in healthcare has been centered around clarity, transparency, and seamless workflow integrations. And patients are increasingly benchmarking their healthcare financial experience against interactions and standards set by other industry sectors. This means that the entire patient journey - from pre-service outreach to clinical care to the final billing statement - needs to meet these evolving standards.

In this release of our annual Patient Payment Technology Report, we highlight a notable rise in digital payment preferences, with the demand for recurring payment plans increasing by 11% since 2019, showing that while the demand for healthcare services remains high, healthcare consumers are not immune from ongoing financial concerns and the impact of inflation on the U.S. marketplace. Additionally, the preference for contactless payments has doubled within two years and a significant number of patients would prefer to use digital wallets, PayPal, and Venmo to pay their medical bills if given the choice.

78%
of patients say the billing process is somewhat or very important when selecting a healthcare provider.

72%
of patients report trusting their healthcare provider or partnered technology firms to handle their medical payment data.

66%
of patients say that they prefer email or text message notifications when it comes to receiving billing and payment reminders.

53%
of patients who have had a negative financial experience with their provider report having left a bad review.

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However, this digital swing does not render more traditional payment and communication methods obsolete. 32% of patients still prefer to receive their healthcare billing statements in the mail, and 27% still pay by check, driving home the need for a measured billing strategy. Amidst the push for a digital-first payments and billing approach across the healthcare market, it's as important as ever to have comprehensive and inclusive fallbacks that allow providers to meet patients where they're most likely to take action, regardless of preferred communication channels.

The billing process continues to play a critical role when patients are evaluating a new provider. 78% ranked it as "very important" or "somewhat important" when selecting a healthcare provider. This statistic has remained consistently high over the four years of tracking.

While emerging payment technology solutions continue to see traction, patients who report being either very or somewhat confident in the security of their personal information with online payments in healthcare has dipped by 10% as compared to previous year survey results – a possible consequence due to the increase in healthcare data breaches, with an estimated 39 million[1] individuals affected by a data breach in the first half of 2023. However, 72% of patients believe their healthcare provider or partnered technology firms focused on medical payments data are best equipped to handle their sensitive financial information – highlighting that providers and their partners are a patients' first choice for healthcare payments, with only 12% reporting trusting large technology organizations like Amazon and Google.

32% of patients still prefer to receive their healthcare statements in the mail, and 27% still pay by check, driving home the need for a measured billing strategy.

[1] - https://healthitsecurity.com/features/biggest-healthcare-data-breaches-reported-this-year-so-far

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Methodology

The 2023 Patient Payment Technology Report includes survey data that was collected from 1,514 U.S. healthcare consumers[2] by Salucro Healthcare Solutions in the Summer of 2023. The respondents represent a distribution of adults 26-65 years old with annual incomes between $25K and $200K, who attested to paying a healthcare bill in the last 18 months.
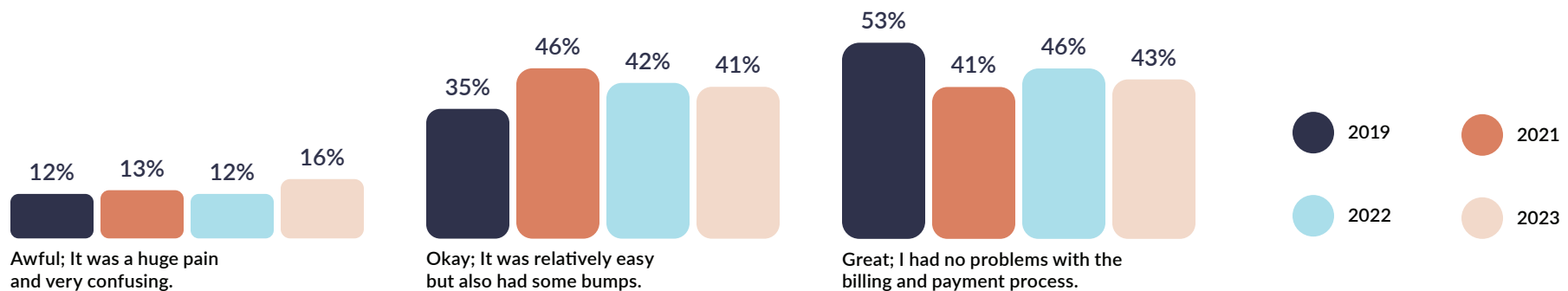
Historical data from previous years of this annual report may appear to help identify trends in patient preferences. Similar surveys were conducted by Salucro in 2019, 2021, and 2022.

[2] - 1,514 survey respondents were chosen at random and were not affiliated with Salucro Healthcare Solutions, LLC or Salucro clients.

Consumer Confidence & Patient Loyalty

As healthcare providers strive for clinical excellence, parallel efforts are made in support of the financial experience to foster patient trust, loyalty, and positive brand perception. People have grown accustomed to the immediacy of digital banking and online retail, but healthcare providers face a variety of unique challenges including training, compliance, costs, vendor optimization, and patient education to offer a comparable experience in healthcare.

When you think of your most recent experience with your doctor's office or healthcare provider, how would you describe the billing and payment process?

Awful; It was a huge pain and very confusing.
- 12%
- 13%
- 12%
- 16%

Okay; It was relatively easy but also had some bumps.
- 35%
- 46%
- 42%
- 41%

Great; I had no problems with the billing and payment process.
- 53%
- 41%
- 46%
- 43%

Legend:
- 2019
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023

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The percentage of patients who described the billing and payment process with their provider as "great" decreased from 53% in 2019 to 43% in 2023. This 10% drop over four years suggests a growing need for providers to reevaluate their investments in and the impact of the patient financial journey, ensuring that it aligns with the expectations of modern healthcare consumers.

In the same four-year span, more patients described the billing process as "okay" or "awful." To move these numbers in the right direction, healthcare providers should consider leveraging technology that makes the financial journey user-friendly and intuitive.

Have you ever had a negative financial experience with a past or present medical provider?

	Yes	No
2021	65%	35%
2022	65%	35%
2023	68%	32%

2021   2022   2023

Negative financial experiences with healthcare providers remain high.
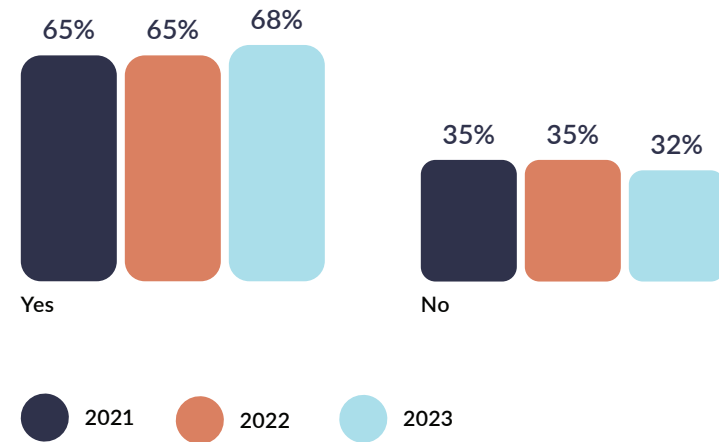
With nearly 70% of respondents reporting a negative financial experience with a medical provider, healthcare organizations should prioritize transparency, communication strategies, and digital solutions to help reduce these pain points. Implementing digital tools that offer a clear breakdown of bills, easy-to-access and on-demand customer service, and convenient payment options can help to significantly improve this narrative and provide a more positive financial experience for patients.

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A poor billing experience can significantly impact provider reputation amongst patients.
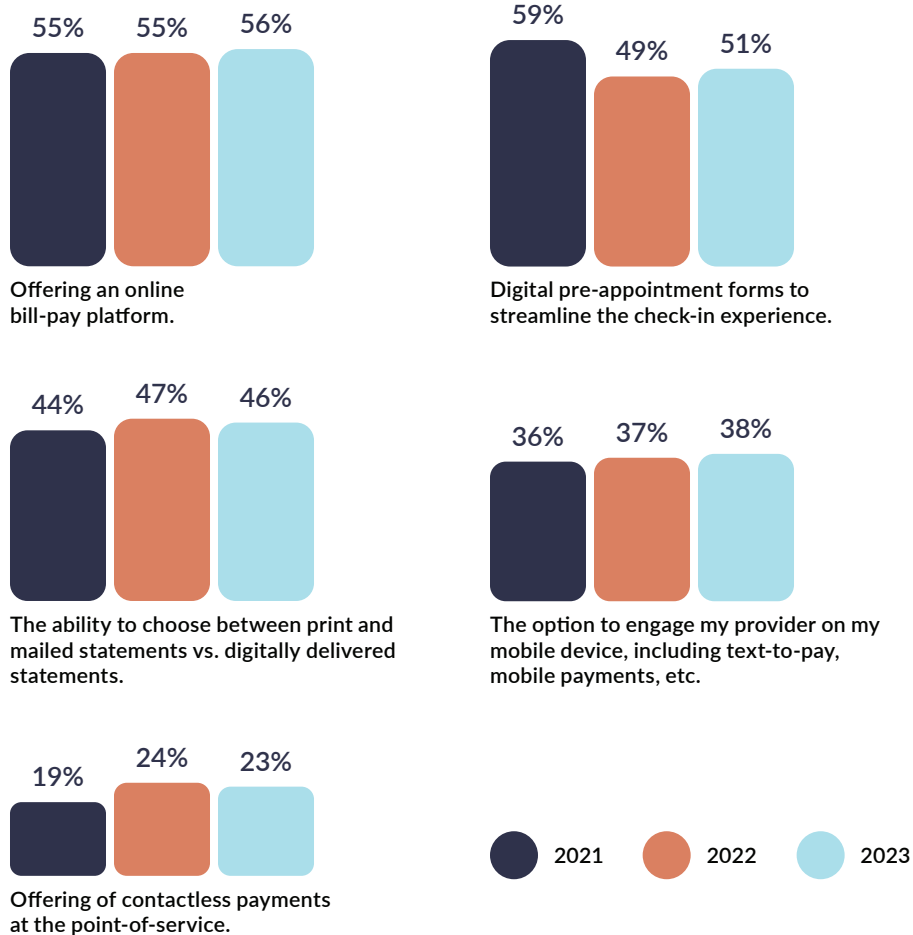
Online reviews are the modern word-of-mouth, and they can make or break the reputation of healthcare providers in the eyes of prospective patients. The rising number of reported negative reviews rooted in billing or payment issues, up 11% compared to last year, underscores the significant impact of financial interactions on overall patient satisfaction.

Negative experiences resonate loudly. Of the 68% of patients who responded "Yes" to having had a negative financial experience with a past or present medical provider, over half (53%) have attested to leaving a negative review for their healthcare provider, highlighting the impact that a poor financial experience can have on provider reputation.

Have you ever left a bad review for a healthcare provider due to a poor billing or payment experience?

- Yes: 27% (2022), 38% (2023)
- No: 73% (2022), 62% (2023)

2022
2023

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Exploring the digital experiences that influence patients to return.

What type of digital experience would influence whether you choose to return to your healthcare provider? (Choose All That Apply)

55% **55%** **56%**

Offering an online bill-pay platform.

59% **49%** **51%**

Digital pre-appointment forms to streamline the check-in experience.

44% **47%** **46%**

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

36% **37%** **38%**

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

19% **24%** **23%**

Offering of contactless payments at the point-of-service.
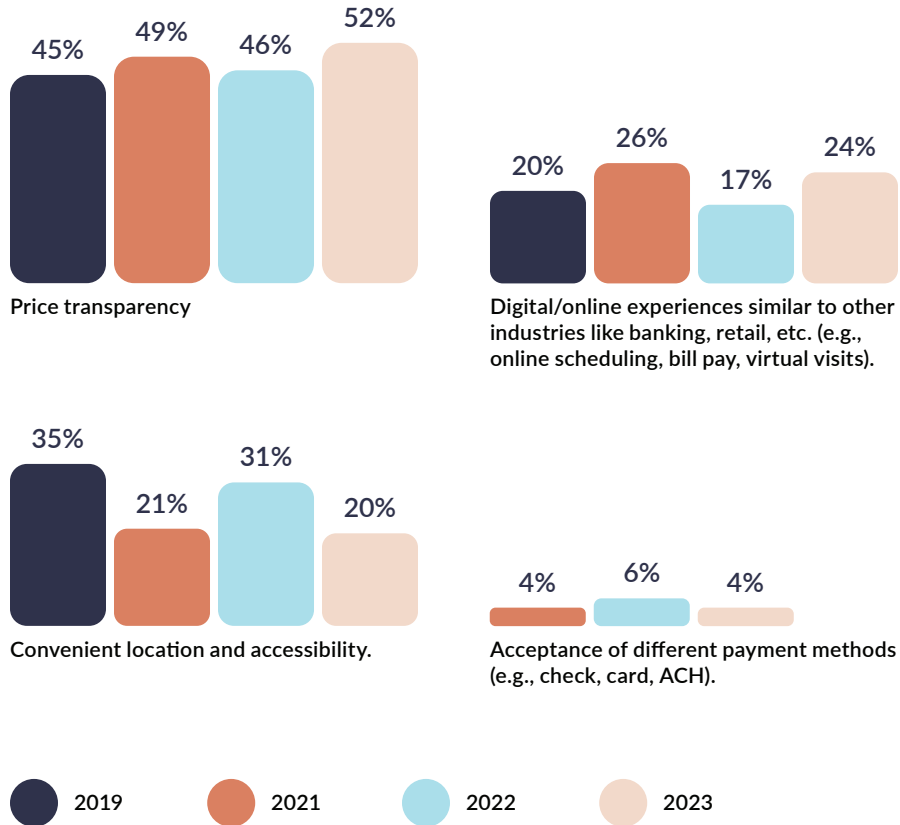
● **2021** ● **2022** ● **2023**

A majority of respondents, 56%, said an online bill-pay platform would influence whether they choose to return to their healthcare provider. In a world shaped by e-commerce and online banking, patients now expect a seamless, secure, and immediate method to settle their medical bills. Revenue cycle leaders should see this as an opportunity to help reduce overhead costs, minimize late payments, and enhance patient satisfaction by optimizing their online payment systems.

A 21% increase, from 19% in 2021 to 23% in 2023, of interest in contactless payments shows a consistent rise in interest that seems to be sustained beyond the contactless payment revolution driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Price transparency continues to have a strong impact on patient loyalty to providers.

Other than high-quality care, what factor would most strongly contribute to deepening your loyalty to a specific healthcare provider (hospital, health system, doctor's office)?

Price transparency
- 45%
- 49%
- 46%
- 52%

Digital/online experiences similar to other industries like banking, retail, etc. (e.g., online scheduling, bill pay, virtual visits).
- 20%
- 26%
- 17%
- 24%

Convenient location and accessibility.
- 35%
- 21%
- 31%
- 20%

Acceptance of different payment methods (e.g., check, card, ACH).
- 4%
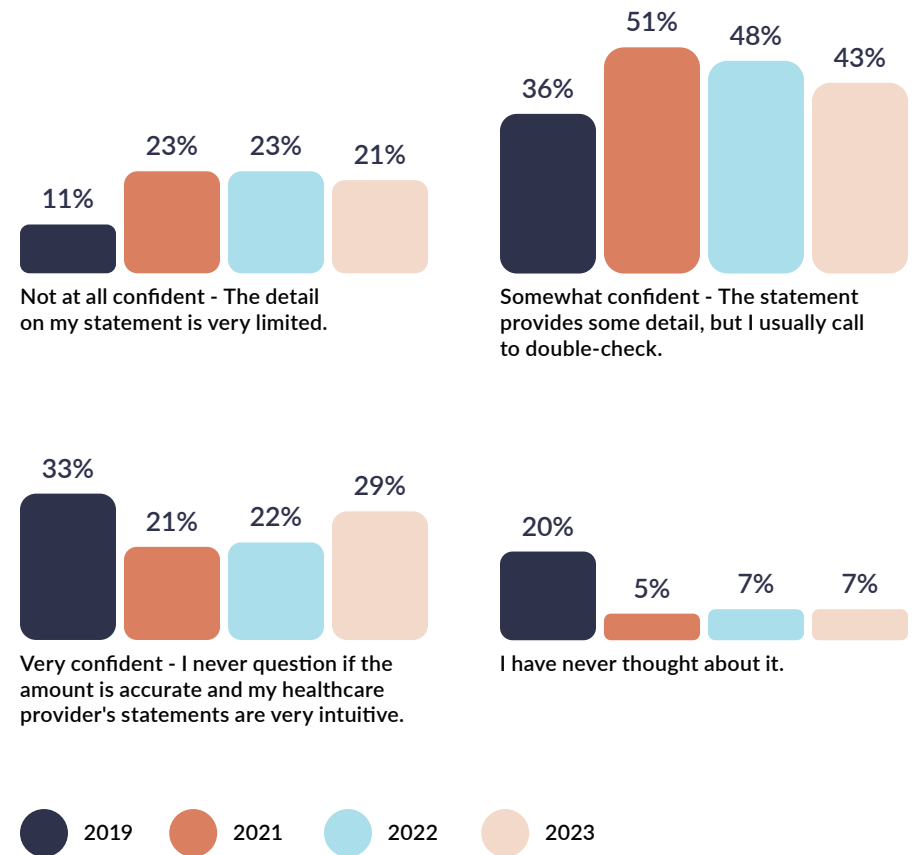- 6%
- 4%

Legend: 2019 • 2021 • 2022 • 2023

What truly sets providers apart in the eyes of patients is the broader experience they offer. In an industry often criticized for its opaque billing practices, it's clear that transparency isn't just a compliance issue; it's a mandate to earn the trust of nearly half of all patients. Patients are asking for clarity, predictability, and no hidden surprises when it comes to their medical bills. Revenue cycle leaders should prioritize clear, detailed patient billing with a breakdown of services rendered, ensuring patients understand the value they're receiving, and the costs associated.

The demand for digital experiences, favored by nearly a quarter of respondents, suggests a broader shift in consumer behavior. As other industries are setting high benchmarks for seamless digital interactions, people increasingly expect their healthcare experiences to be on par. This goes beyond just having an online portal. It's about having intuitive platforms that represent the holistic relationship between the patient and their provider.

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The trust patients place in their medical bills is intrinsically linked to their overall experience with a healthcare provider. Ambiguous statements that are disconnected from an explanation of benefits and don't highlight guarantor vs. insurance responsibility and coverage can leave patients feeling lost and more prone to disputing charges. The absence of clarity could also lead to delayed payments, increased administrative work, and a potential erosion of trust – all ultimately leading to an increased time and cost to collect on healthcare services.
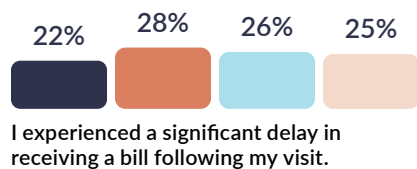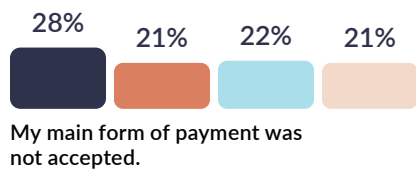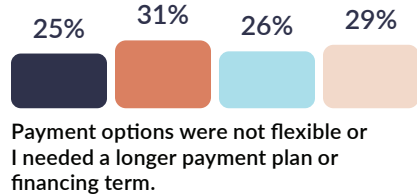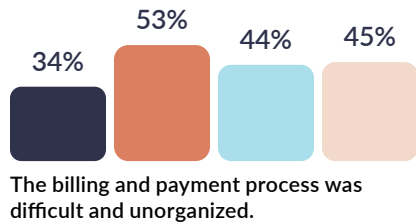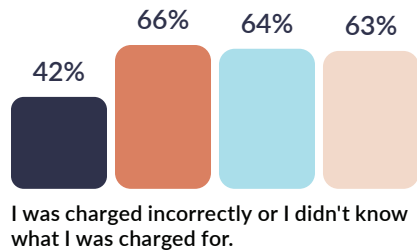
With 64% of patients responding in 2023 as either "somewhat confident" or "not at all confident" in the accuracy of their medical bill, there is a clear demand for more detailed and accurate statements.

How confident are you that the bill you receive from your hospital/provider is accurate?

11% 23% 23% 21%

Not at all confident - The detail on my statement is very limited.

36% 51% 48% 43%

Somewhat confident - The statement provides some detail, but I usually call to double-check.

33% 21% 22% 29%

Very confident - I never question if the amount is accurate and my healthcare provider's statements are very intuitive.

20% 5% 7% 7%

I have never thought about it.

● 2019 ● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023

Patients remain wary of the accuracy of their medical bill.

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What type of negative financial experience would keep you from returning to your medical provider? (Choose All That Apply)

Limited self-service capabilities - I had to call customer service instead of confirming my payment online or via text.
- 24% (2019)
- 35% (2021)
- 28% (2022)
- 36% (2023)

I was charged incorrectly or I didn't know what I was charged for.
- 42% (2019)
- 66% (2021)
- 64% (2022)
- 63% (2023)

The billing and payment process was difficult and unorganized.
- 34% (2019)
- 53% (2021)
- 44% (2022)
- 45% (2023)

Payment options were not flexible or I needed a longer payment plan or financing term.
- 25% (2019)
- 31% (2021)
- 26% (2022)
- 29% (2023)

My main form of payment was not accepted.
- 28% (2019)
- 21% (2021)
- 22% (2022)
- 21% (2023)

I experienced a significant delay in receiving a bill following my visit.
- 22% (2019)
- 28% (2021)
- 26% (2022)
- 25% (2023)

Legend: ● 2019 ● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023

The most prominent concern among patients is being charged incorrectly or not understanding their charges. This indicates a significant gap in transparency and communication between providers and patients. Healthcare providers should prioritize fast and frequent communication, itemized billing statements, and 24/7 customer service support to help support patients where standardized billing methods and practices aren't enough.

The data shows that many patients view the billing and payment process as difficult and unorganized. An integrated and streamlined billing process can address this issue by automating backend processes, thereby reducing manual tasks and the potential for errors.

Over a third of respondents in 2023 said that limited self-service capabilities would keep them from returning to their provider, reflecting the increasing importance of autonomy in the payment process. Enhancing self-service portals, ensuring they're intuitive, mobile-responsive, and comprehensive, can help give patients the financial independence they are asking for.

The key factors leading to dissatisfaction with the payment process.

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Six Patient Financial Challenges and How to Solve Them

Actionable strategies to tackle common financial challenges faced by patients.

1. Limited Self-Service Capabilities

Patients may feel restricted when forced to call customer service for payment confirmations, causing frustration and dissatisfaction.

Solution

Implement online patient portals and text-based services that offer instant payment confirmations, and on-demand support as needed.

Provide training to staff on all digital platforms to offer support when patients face difficulties, and provide scripting to help solve common issues that patients may face.

2. Unclear or Incorrect Charges

Patients are understandably frustrated when charges are unclear or appear erroneous, leading to mistrust in the billing process.

Solution

Adopt a transparent billing practice, itemizing services clearly and reinforcing value.

Implement redundant quality assurance mechanisms to ensure patient billing statements are accurate before being sent out.

Ensure that patient concerns are addressed promptly with 24/7 live chat support.

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Six Patient Financial Challenges and How to Solve Them

3. Disorganized Billing & Payment Process

A convoluted payment process can confuse and deter patients from returning.

Solution

Streamline the patient billing process, ensuring steps are logical and straightforward.

Offer FAQs and guidance material to educate patients on the billing process.

Regularly review and update processes based on patient feedback.

4. Limited Payment Options

Restrictive payment terms can push patients away, especially those facing financial constraints.

Solution

Offer a variety of payment options and flexible payment plans.

Partner with third-party financing solutions if direct financing is not feasible.

Inform patients of all available payment options during their appointment and advertise through online portals.

5. Preferred Payment Method Not Accepted

Patients feel inconvenienced when their preferred payment method isn't accepted.

Solution

Regularly survey patients, and evaluate industry data through reports like this, to stay updated on patients' preferred payment methods.

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Six Patient Financial Challenges and How to Solve Them

Expand payment channels to accommodate emerging payment methods like digital wallets and text-to-pay.

Clearly communicate accepted payment methods on bills, websites, and in person.

6. Delays in Bill Delivery

Billing delays can lead patients to feel confused and distrustful.

Solution

Implement a rigorous timeline for managing and resolving billing issues with payers to ensure that patient bills are delivered in a timely manner post-care.

Set up automated reminders for billing departments to avoid oversights.

Provide patients with a tentative timeline on when they can expect their bill.

"Increasingly patients are seeking out efficient, transparent, and automated ways to pay that reduce the risk of billing confusion. Digital first payment solutions enable access to a variety of payment options and are key to delivering patient satisfaction. In addition, providers will benefit from operational efficiencies that help them get paid quickly, accurately, and predictably."
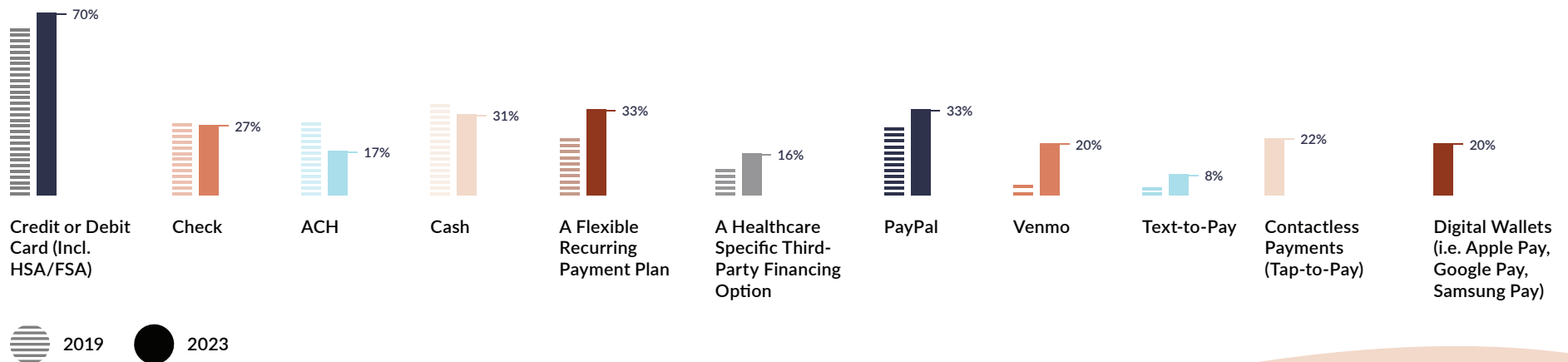
Christopher Lolli
VP/GM Sales and Marketing at American Express

Patient Financial Preferences

Patient expectations are transforming how medical bills are settled. While providers continue to cater to a patient demographic who prefer receiving paper statements in the mail and paying by check, they must also utilize a variety of digital tools and payment options to appease a new and growing demographic of patients who want simple, efficient, and convenient solutions.

If the flexibility was offered, what type of payment options would you utilize? (Choose All That Apply)

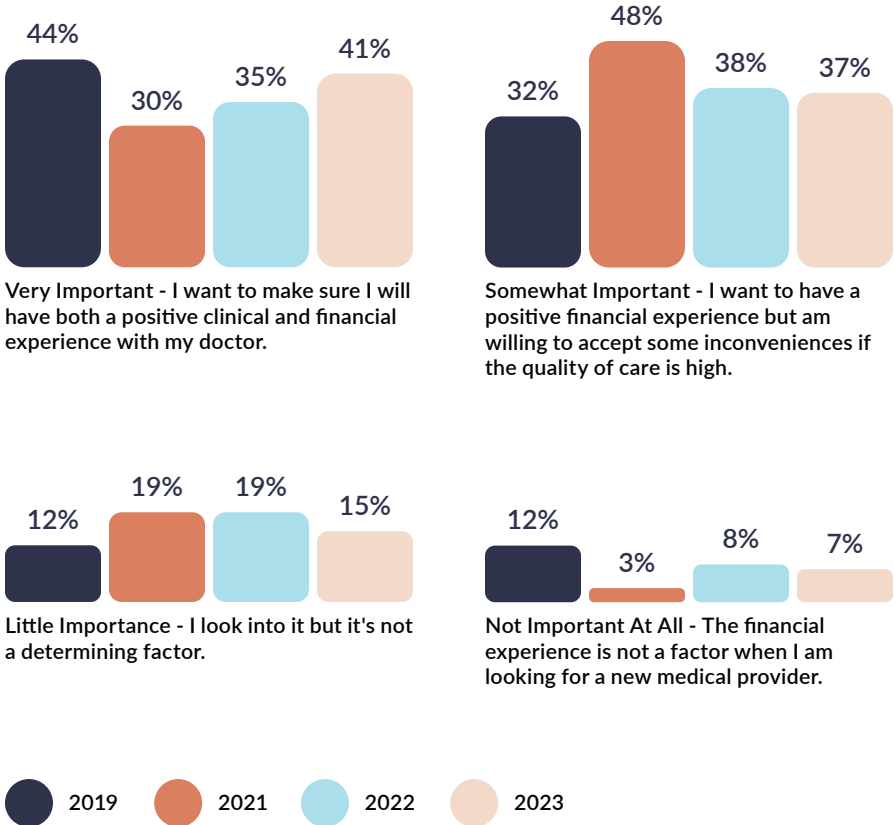| Payment Option	2023
Credit or Debit Card (Incl. HSA/FSA)	70%
Check	27%
ACH	17%
Cash	31%
A Flexible Recurring Payment Plan	33%
A Healthcare Specific Third-Party Financing Option	16%
PayPal	33%
Venmo	20%
Text-to-Pay	8%
Contactless Payments (Tap-to-Pay)	22%
Digital Wallets (i.e. Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay)	20%

Legend: 2019 / 2023

The most preferred payment options amongst patients.

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There has been a significant shift in the payment methods that patients lean towards in the last several years. While familiar payment options like credit or debit card and check remain relatively stable, the demand for recurring payment plans is up 11% since 2019, and Venmo is up 16% in the same timeframe. Similarly, digital wallets like Apple Pay and Google Pay have secured a foothold, holding steady at a 20% preference rate in their first two years of survey data inclusion.

The demand for contactless payments has doubled in just two years - from 11% in 2021 to 22% in 2023. As these payment methods become more mainstream in retail, incorporating these methods – especially in outpatient or point-of-service scenarios – can help improve patient satisfaction and streamline on-the-spot payments, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive on-premise device strategy when considering new patient payment service implementations.

Adaptability is key. Revenue cycle solutions need to be agile, aligning with both emerging payment trends and unwavering preferences. By offering an array of payment options and prioritizing security, healthcare providers can enhance patient trust, minimize friction in the payment process, and encourage higher collection rates.

The importance of the billing process in provider selection.

How important to you is the billing and payment process when evaluating a new medical provider?

Very Important - I want to make sure I will have both a positive clinical and financial experience with my doctor.
44% 30% 35% 41%

Somewhat Important - I want to have a positive financial experience but am willing to accept some inconveniences if the quality of care is high.
32% 48% 38% 37%

Little Importance - I look into it but it's not a determining factor.
12% 19% 19% 15%

Not Important At All - The financial experience is not a factor when I am looking for a new medical provider.
12% 3% 8% 7%

Legend: ● 2019 ● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023

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Revenue cycle solutions need to be agile, aligning with both emerging payment trends and unwavering preferences.

The patient journey is not confined to the quality of clinical care received. 78% of respondents emphasize the billing and payment process as either "very important" or "somewhat important" when evaluating a new medical provider. In 2023, the financial experience is becoming almost as critical as the clinical one in a patient's evaluation process.

While a combined 22% of respondents said the billing process has "little importance" or is "not important at all," it would be a strategic misstep to ignore this demographic. They represent a section of the patient base that may prioritize clinical excellence above all. However, a positive clinical experience can still be overshadowed by financial inconveniences or uncertainties, impacting their overall perception of care.

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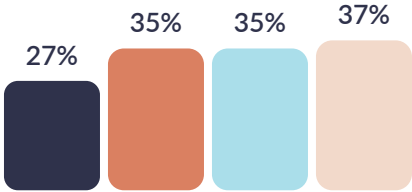A persistent demand for integrated, flexible payment plans.

What capabilities do you expect from an online bill payment experience with your medical provider? (Choose All That Apply)
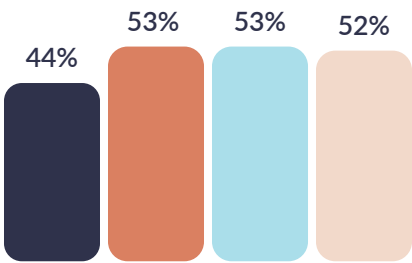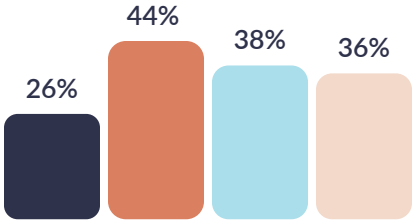
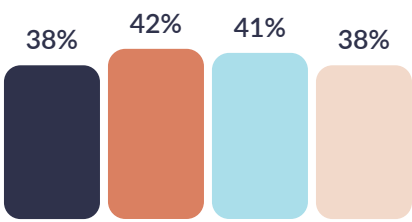**The ability to set up a flexible payment plan online.**
- 44%
- 53%
- 53%
- 52%
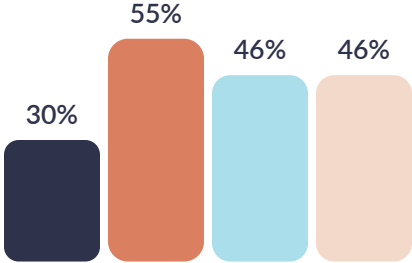
Quick access to online support and live chat.
- 30%
- 55%
- 46%
- 46%

I want my card information to easily be saved on the portal for future use.
- 27%
- 35%
- 35%
- 37%

I want all of my family's information and bills in one place.
- 26%
- 44%
- 38%
- 36%

I want a provider who accepts all types of payments (cards, e-checks, PayPal, etc.) and offers contactless payment options during in-person visits.
- 38%
- 42%
- 41%
- 38%
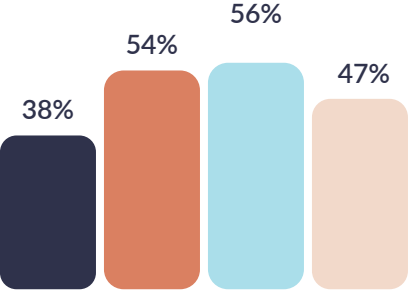
I want to easily view my payment history, including prior statements and receipts.
- 38%
- 54%
- 56%
- 47%
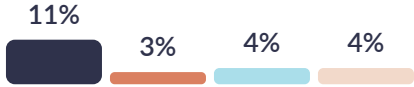
I would never pay my healthcare bills online.
- 11%
- 3%
- 4%
- 4%

Legend: 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023

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From 2019 to 2023, patients consistently highlighted the need for flexible payment plans, with roughly half of respondents selecting this option. Patients continue to want payment plans that accommodate their financial situations. That's why providers should select platforms with adaptability in mind. Customization, scalability, and user-friendliness should be core features that are regularly audited.

The steady percentage over the years on card information being saved highlights the importance of a secure yet convenient payment experience. Patients are likely more willing to leave their financial details online if they are confident in their provider's security measures.

The ability to view payment history, including prior statements and receipts, reflects a growing emphasis on transparency and easy access to personal financial data. An all-encompassing dashboard that centralizes billing and provides a detailed payment history can reassure patients that their provider is transparent and investing in tools that make the billing process easy and convenient.

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What is your most preferred method of receiving new bill notifications or payment reminders from your healthcare provider?
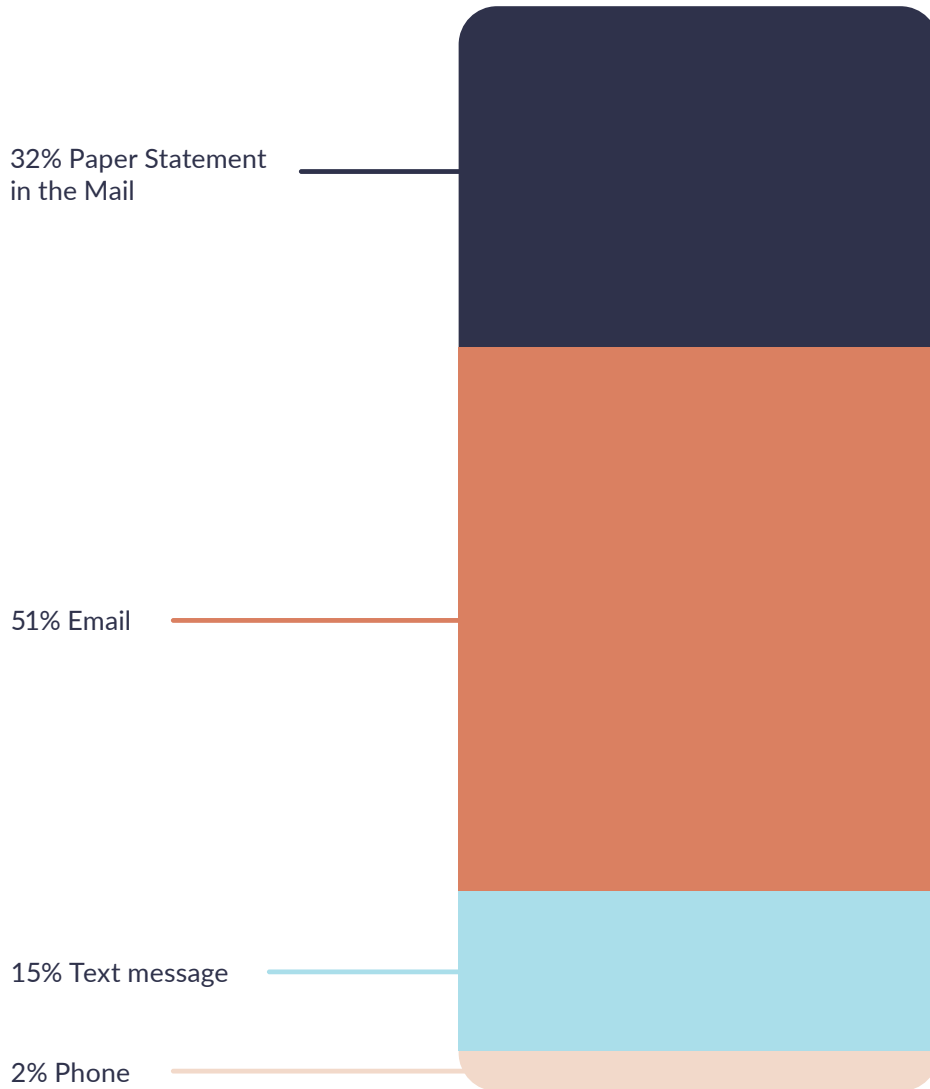
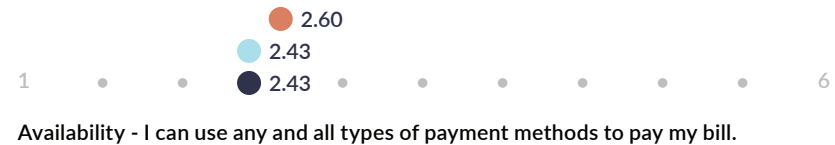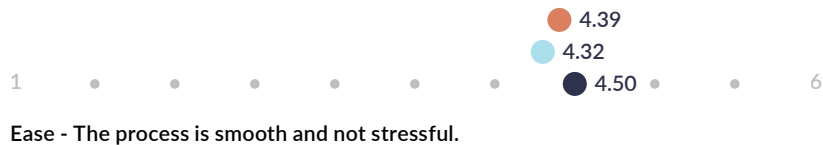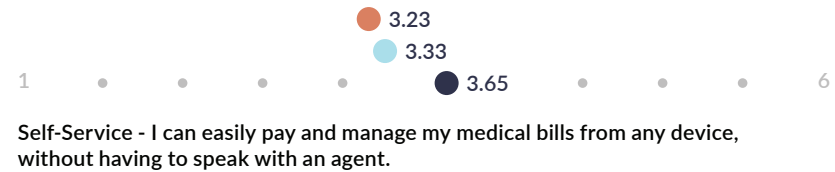## Adopting a patient-centric notification strategy.

32% Paper Statement in the Mail

51% Email

15% Text message

2% Phone

Over half of survey respondents said they prefer email as their primary method of receiving bill notifications or payment reminders. This could be attributed to the ease of archiving, searching, and responding to emails, which makes it a versatile communication tool.

Though a significant 32% still prefer traditional paper statements, this communication channel may see a further decline as digital literacy grows. Age may also play a role, as 69% of those who said they prefer paper statements in the mail are 45 or older. This trend serves as a reminder that while a digital-first patient financial engagement strategy is likely the future, not all patient segments can be addressed with a one-size-fits-all approach.

With only 2% preferring phone calls, it's evident that this communication channel is viewed as more intrusive and less convenient, signaling to providers to reserve phone communications for more urgent or personalized matters.

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With one being the most important, and six being the least important, how would you rank the most important factors for you in a payment experience?

● 4.98 (2022)
● 3.76 (2021)　● 4.74 (2023)

1 6

Transparency - I know what I am paying for, and statements are clear and concise.

● 4.39 (2022)
● 4.32 (2023)
● 4.50 (2021)

1 6

Ease - The process is smooth and not stressful.

● 3.52 (2022)
● 3.49 (2023)
● 3.42 (2021)

1 6

Support - I am able to ask questions and discuss any issues with my bill.

● 3.23 (2022)
● 3.33 (2023)
● 3.65 (2021)

1 6

Self-Service - I can easily pay and manage my medical bills from any device, without having to speak with an agent.

● 2.60 (2022)
● 2.43 (2023)
● 2.43 (2021)

1 6

Availability - I can use any and all types of payment methods to pay my bill.

● 2.28 (2022)
● 2.68 (2023)
● 3.26 (2021)

1 6

Flexibility - My provider offers flexible payment plan options that make paying for larger healthcare bills more affordable.
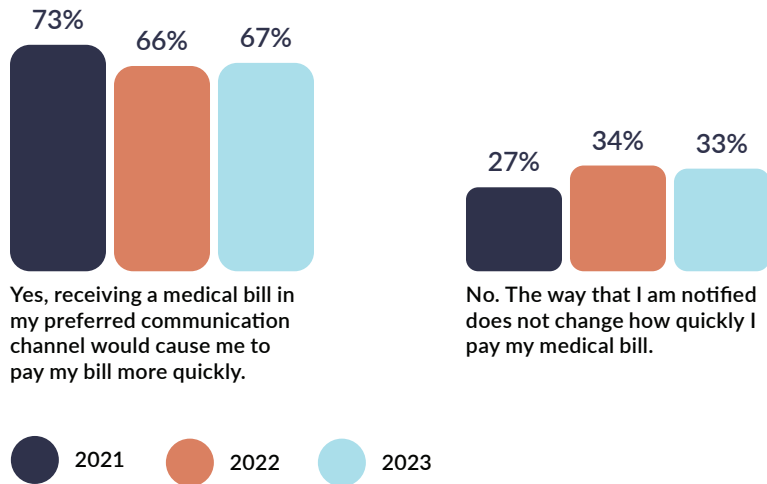
In the last three years, patients have consistently expressed the importance of flexible payment plan options. Support has remained vital as well, underlining the importance of instant, accessible, and compassionate customer service.

While providers can take influence from the success and popularity of digital billing in industries like banking and retail, they must also acknowledge that healthcare is unique in many ways. The last thing a patient needs after what may be an unnerving medical visit is a convoluted way to pay for it.

Simply put, patients want a stress-free billing process.

Patients prioritize flexibility, availability, and support.

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Do you believe that the type of billing statement you receive affects how quickly you pay your medical bills?

73%   66%   67%

27%   34%   33%

Yes, receiving a medical bill in my preferred communication channel would cause me to pay my bill more quickly.

No. The way that I am notified does not change how quickly I pay my medical bill.

● 2021   ● 2022   ● 2023

A significant majority of respondents indicated that the type of billing statement they receive does influence their speed of payment. Providers should invest in mechanisms that identify and cater to these preferences.

"With two-thirds of patients saying that the type of billing statement they receive directly affects their speed to payment, the importance of offering an omni-channel approach to patient billing and payments cannot be overstated. Providers looking to improve patient payment collection results while decreasing the cost to collect should look closely at investing in digital-first tools, helping to tap into the 34% of patients[3] who would pay their bill more quickly with a text message payment reminder."

Rebecca Grossman
SVP, Strategy and Business Development at Salucro

Preferred communication channels clearly impact payment timelines.

[3] - 2022 Trends in Patient Payment Communications Report, Salucro

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Five Strategies to Identify Billing Statement Preferences

1. Integrate Preference Questions at Registration

When a patient is registering for services, whether it's online or in person, integrate a few quick questions about their preferred billing method. This not only captures the preference at the onset but also sets expectations.

2. Analyze Payment Behaviors

Utilize analytics to better understand patient behaviors. For instance, if a subset of your patient audience consistently pays quickly via one method but delays with another, this could be a good indicator of their preferences.

3. Segmented Email Campaigns

Send out a series of emails to your patient database, each highlighting a different billing method. Monitor the open rates, click rates, and direct feedback from these emails to gather data on preferences.

4. Feedback After Payments

After a patient completes a payment, offer a feedback form asking them about their experience and if they'd prefer a different billing method in the future.

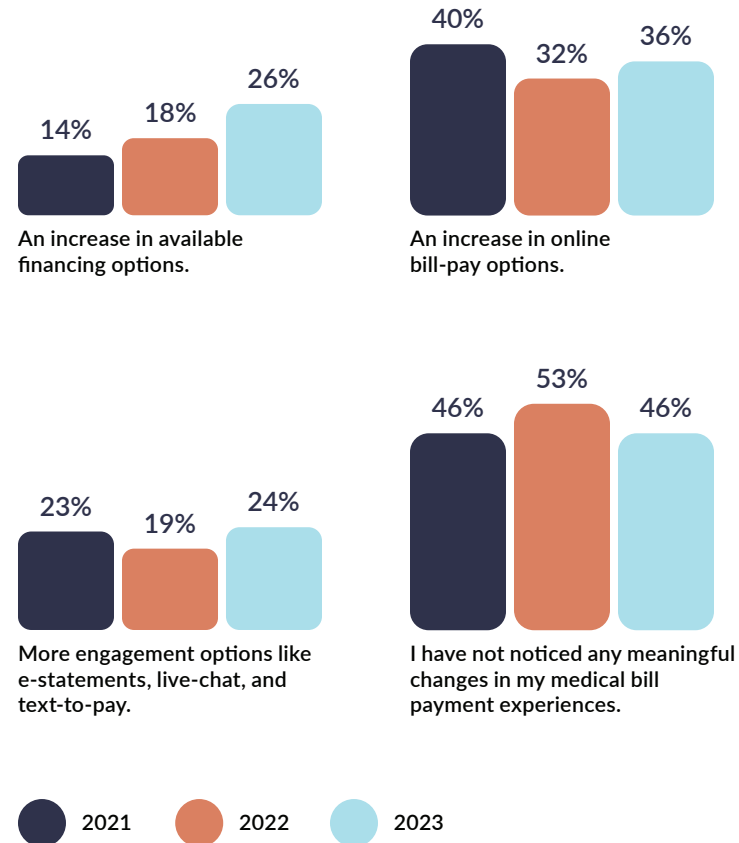### 5. Engage Front Desk Staff

Train the front desk staff to engage in casual conversations with patients about their billing experiences and preferences. As the first line of interaction, they can provide valuable insights.

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The most prominent change observed by patients is the growth in online payment methods. This shift is in line with the digital transformation trends seen in other sectors like retail and banking, reflecting a consumer preference for online transactions.

Nearly half of patients haven't perceived any significant changes in their medical bill payment process. This could indicate a potential gap between the technological advancements made by healthcare providers and patients' awareness or utilization of them. Providers should continue to inform patients about new billing features, how to access them, and their benefits.
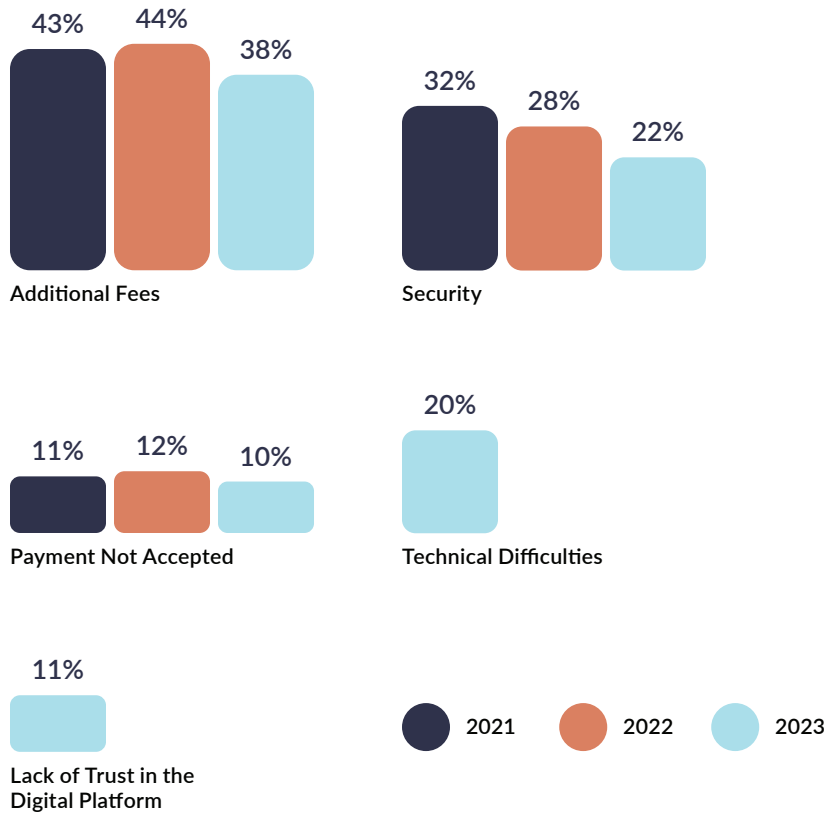
To gather more regular data, create mechanisms for continuous feedback. This could be post-payment feedback forms or periodic short surveys to understand evolving patient needs.

Providers continue to invest in integrated online bill-pay workflow solutions.

What changes, if any, have you noticed in your medical bill payment experiences in the last 12 months? (Choose All That Apply)

14% 18% 26%
An increase in available financing options.

40% 32% 36%
An increase in online bill-pay options.

23% 19% 24%
More engagement options like e-statements, live-chat, and text-to-pay.

46% 53% 46%
I have not noticed any meaningful changes in my medical bill payment experiences.

● 2021   ● 2022   ● 2023

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What barriers have you faced for using digital payment methods?

Additional Fees
- 43% (2021)
- 44% (2022)
- 38% (2023)

Security
- 32% (2021)
- 28% (2022)
- 22% (2023)

Payment Not Accepted
- 11% (2021)
- 12% (2022)
- 10% (2023)

Technical Difficulties
- 20% (2023)

Lack of Trust in the Digital Platform
- 11% (2023)

Legend:
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023

Patients perceive additional fees as the biggest barrier to making digital payments, suggesting that while patients may be willing to shift to digital payment methods, they might be deterred by potential extra charges associated with it. While some healthcare providers may choose to pass on surcharges associated with online bill pay to their patients, this can have a negative consequence if it decreases utilization of online bill pay, which may ultimately increase the cost and time to collect. This strategy could end up costing providers more than it would have been to not pass those fees on to begin with.

Close behind are concerns about security (22%) and technical difficulties (20%), indicating that while patients know the technology is there, they may not fully trust it or find it challenging to navigate.

Fees and security concerns are among the biggest barriers for digital payments.

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Checklist for Eliminating Digital Payment Barriers

Transparent Fee Structure

Provide a transparent fee breakdown and look into ways to minimize or eliminate any extraneous fees associated with digital payments.

Security Enhancements

Invest in technology and payment partners with top-tier encryption methods and security certifications and clearly communicate these security measures to your patients to alleviate concerns.

Usability Testing

Conduct thorough usability testing of digital platforms to help identify pain points and improve the user experience.

Expand Payment Options

Expand the range of accepted payment options to cater to a broader patient base.
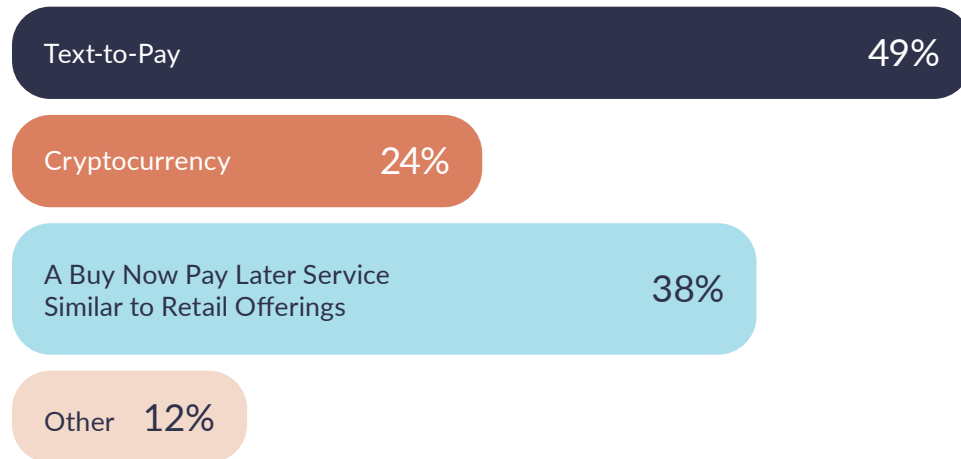
Building Trust

Create patient education campaigns to offer resources, like FAQs and how-to videos, to help them feel more at ease.

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Trust In Technology & Security

The intrinsic value and sensitivity of medical payment data makes it critical for healthcare providers and their third-party vendors to ensure its safety.

Which emerging technologies would you be comfortable using for healthcare payments? (Choose All That Apply)

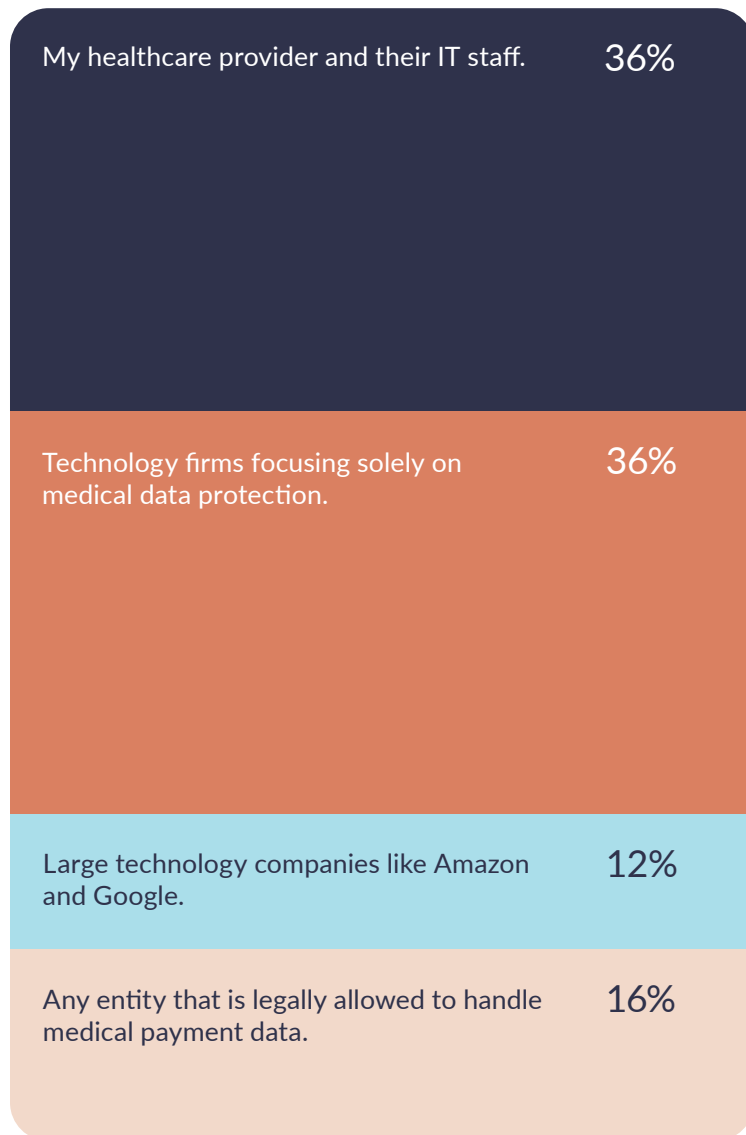|	
Text-to-Pay	49%
Cryptocurrency	24%
A Buy Now Pay Later Service Similar to Retail Offerings	38%
Other	12%

A clear openness to emerging technologies in healthcare payments.

Nearly half of surveyed patients say they are comfortable using Text-to-Pay for their healthcare payments. Buy Now Pay Later services are also popular, resonating with 38% of respondents – showing continued demand for third-party financing for healthcare services, whether recourse or non-recourse, when presented as an option to patients.

Some healthcare providers do accept cryptocurrencies for payment, but most in the industry have been slow to embrace the emerging market of cryptocurrency. While nearly a quarter of patients would be comfortable using it to make healthcare payments, providers should measure the ROI and gauge ongoing patient sentiment before diving deep into cryptocurrency.

Those who selected "other" identified an openness to using emerging technologies like Zelle, Venmo, PayPal, third-party financing, Apple Wallet, and Tap-to-Pay.

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Who do you believe is best equipped to handle and protect your medical payment data?

My healthcare provider and their IT staff.	36%
Technology firms focusing solely on medical data protection.	36%
Large technology companies like Amazon and Google.	12%
Any entity that is legally allowed to handle medical payment data.	16%

Patients say healthcare providers and their technology partners are best equipped to handle their data.

Most survey respondents believe their healthcare provider or partnered technology firms focused on medical payments data are best equipped to handle their sensitive healthcare financial information.

2023 patient survey results show that respondents have limited confidence in large technology conglomerates like Amazon and Google, with only 12% of respondents believing in their capabilities to manage medical payment data. Amazon continues to move further into healthcare with its acquisition of OneMedical[4] and increased focus on patient engagement. Meanwhile, Google is leveraging its generative artificial intelligence technology[5] to improve clinician workflows in healthcare. While technology organizations like these may have a lead in consumer engagement, they are behind existing healthcare providers and their partners in patient trust.

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Collaborating with specialized technology firms helps healthcare providers offload much of the security and compliance burden that comes with offering digital payment options. These collaborations can merge healthcare expertise with advanced technology solutions, ensuring optimum data protection.

The number of patients who are either "very confident" or "somewhat confident" in the security of their personal information dropped from 76% to 66% in the last year. A material increase in "neutral" and "not very confident" responses suggests a potential lack of information or awareness about the security measures in place, or that customer trust has been eroded due to recent healthcare data breaches. Tailored communication campaigns and educational content could help in guiding this group towards a more confident stance.

How confident are you in the security of your personal information when making online medical payments with your healthcare provider?
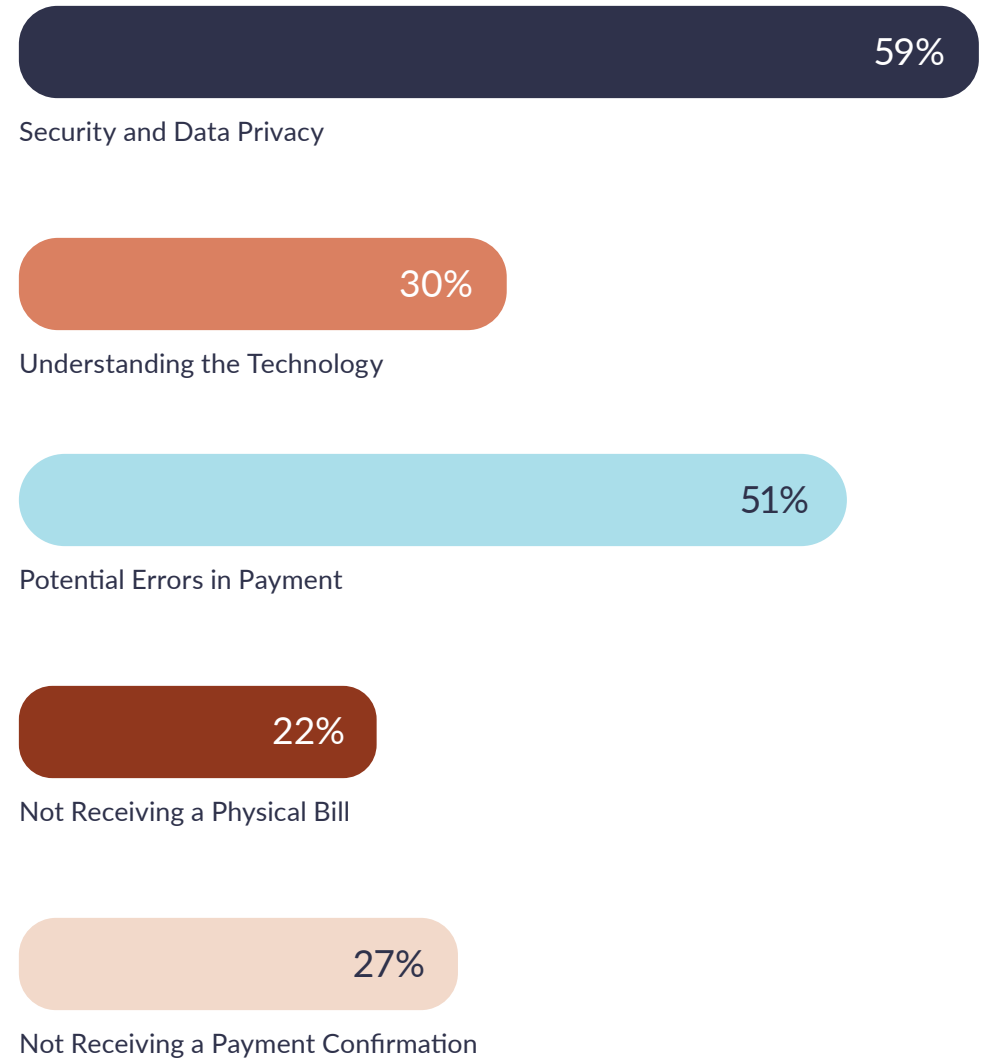

2022

2023

● Very Confident   ● Somewhat Confident   ● Neutral

● Not Very Confident   ● Not Confident at All
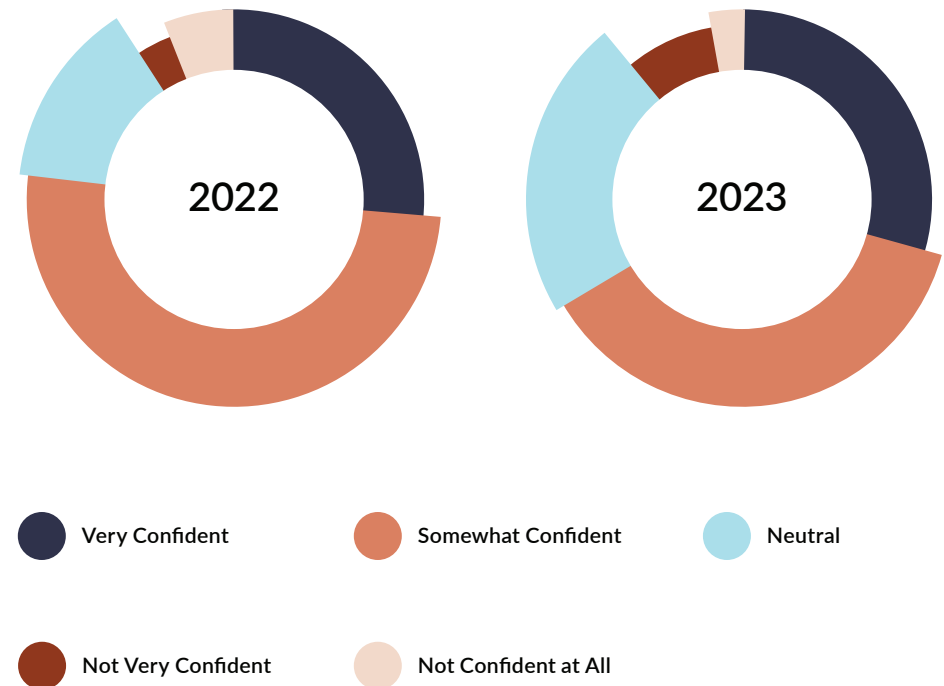
Patient confidence in the security of online medical payments drops.

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The principal concerns surrounding online healthcare payments.

When respondents were asked about their primary apprehensions surrounding online medical payments, 59% pointed to security and data privacy. Over half were also concerned about potential errors in their payment. Notably, patients were least concerned about not receiving a physical bill, indicating a continued comfort with digital payments.

What are your main concerns about online medical payments? (Choose All That Apply)

59%

Security and Data Privacy

30%

Understanding the Technology

51%

Potential Errors in Payment

22%

Not Receiving a Physical Bill

27%

Not Receiving a Payment Confirmation

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5 Ways to Address Online Payment Concerns

1. Strengthen and Showcase Security Protocols - Given that security and data privacy is a prime concern for a majority of patients, providers should not just reinforce their cybersecurity measures but also actively inform patients about them. Providing details about security measures such as encryption, two-factor authentication, and regular security audits can alleviate some of these concerns.

2. Integrate Payment Systems to Reduce Errors - With half of respondents worried about potential errors in payments, it's important to streamline the payment process by implementing user-friendly interfaces, clear instructions, and an option to review before finalizing the payment.

3. Educate Patients - The fact that 30% find it challenging to understand the technology indicates a gap in patient education. Offering tutorials, FAQs, and 24/7 live chat support can help bridge this knowledge gap.

4. Send Instant Payment Confirmations - To address the 27% who worry about not receiving payment confirmation, an instant acknowledgment via email or SMS text message can be implemented to help reassure the patient that their payment was successful and reduce customer support queries.

5. Offer an Option for Physical Bills - While digital is the way forward, the data shows that a segment still values physical bills. Offering an opt-in service for those who prefer a tangible bill can help cater to this group.

About American Express

American Express is a globally integrated payments company, providing customers with access to products, insights and experiences that enrich lives and build business success. Learn more at americanexpress.com and connect with us on facebook.com/americanexpress, instagram.com/americanexpress, linkedin.com/company/american-express, twitter.com/americanexpress, and youtube.com/americanexpress.

Key links to products, services and corporate sustainability information: personal cards, business cards and services, travel services, gift cards, prepaid cards, merchant services, Accertify, Business Blueprint, Resy, corporate card, business travel, diversity and inclusion, corporate sustainability and Environmental, Social, and Governance reports.

"Going forward, digital payments will be further embedded across every stage of the healthcare sector lifecycle, from patient billing through to buyer/supplier relationships. Specifically, we see that healthcare buyers and suppliers will require payment solutions that continue to improve cashflow while innovating and improving operational efficiencies across information exchange, invoicing and reconciliation. American Express has direct relationships with both buyers and suppliers that allow us to drive solutions for both participants. To drive these outcomes, American Express is building a global, multi-rail B2B network to provide a digital one-stop-shop for businesses, regardless of how they need to pay and be paid."

Christopher Lolli
VP/GM Sales and Marketing at American Express

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About Salucro

Salucro is a Healthcare Financial Technology Company Exclusively Focused on Patient Payments and Billing.

From online bill pay solutions to in-context payment integrations that sit directly within the EHR workflow, the Salucro platform brings cohesive payment experiences to healthcare providers, patients, and technology partners. Salucro belongs to an elite group of organizations worldwide that have earned both PCI DSS Level 1 Service Provider and HITRUST CSF Certified status, proving Salucro's continued commitment to managing risk and improving payment security and compliance.

We are passionate about delivering payment technology to the healthcare market, including hospitals, health systems, physician practices, and ancillary service providers, along with other revenue cycle service and technology companies. To learn more visit **salucro.com**.

"We're seeing a shift in the way patients view their financial experiences with their providers as they are increasingly benchmarking their healthcare financial experience against interactions and standards set by other consumer focused sectors. This means that the entire patient journey - from pre-service outreach to clinical care, following through to the final billing statement - needs to meet or even exceed these evolving standards.

Clayton Bain
Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Salucro