



Technology Is Changing Patient Expectations, Creating New Opportunities For Chiropractors

by Dr. Steven J. Kraus

They say that societal change is occurring at a faster pace than ever before in the history of mankind. Chiropractors are themselves experiencing the change of rules and standards of care that is a major part of their decision to move towards an electronic health record (EHR). And while those are critically important, we must also consider the patient's perspective when it comes to adding EHR technology into your practice.

Meeting and exceeding patient expectations

I believe the expectations of our patients may be changing at a more rapid pace than at any other time in the history of chiropractic. The use of technology is becoming the norm for consumers, and as such, their expectations about how health care providers communicate and conduct business with them is changing.

Doctors that are able to understand and manage this change, will position themselves as the doctors of choice for an ever-growing tech-savvy population. Consider the following:

- There are now more mobile

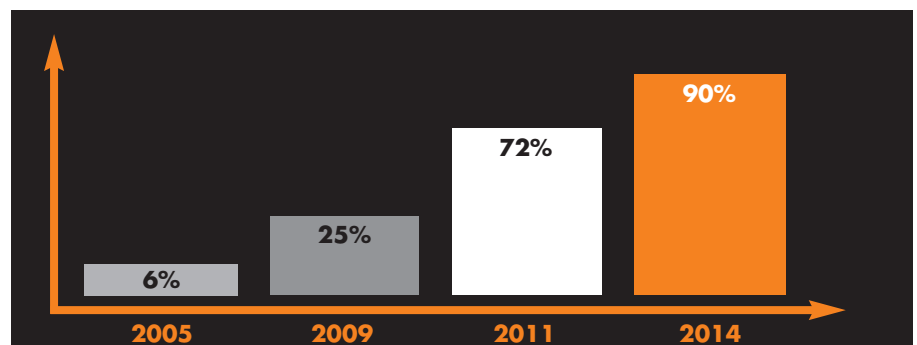
devices on earth than people. (Source: *Pew Internet & American Life Project*)

- An increasing number of patients are indicating they would use a patient portal to retrieve their health information, communicate with their doctor, pay bills online, and schedule appointments.
- Consider that Google and Apple, two of the leading trendsetters in the world, are offering cloud-based health care and payment apps.

Consumers are spending more and more time online and on

mobile devices. The fact is that this is how consumers want to interact; how they expect to conduct business. They will show up for the adjustment, but today their expectation is that they want to conduct the remainder of their transactions digitally.

Meeting patient expectations is nothing new. Through the ages chiropractors have adapted to consumer behavior changes in order to remain relevant and stand out from the crowd. In today's world, remaining relevant also includes communicating and doing business with your patients



National surveys show an increase in patients responses saying they would use a patient portal to retrieve their health information, communicate with their doctor, pay bills online, and schedule appointments.

in manners that are rapidly becoming the norm for them.

Change before you have to.

— Jack Welch

One example of changing consumer expectations is the area of customer service. Customer service excellence has long been one of the proven principles for successful chiropractic practices. Successful chiropractors have known that the level of service they provide, or in other words, how well they meet patient expectations, goes a long way to retaining patients, increasing patient satisfaction, and increasing referrals.

But what happens when your patients' expectations about customer service change? Today's electronic health record technology perfectly delivers what patients and consumers are looking for:

1. A mobile portal for communicating with their doctor, verifying appointments, making payments, and communicating digitally home care recommendations.
2. The ability to retrieve and access records and test results ordered from providers and diagnostic imaging centers.
3. Having their doctor connected to the patient's healthcare community of providers using modern technology while securing and protecting their personal records.

Old Way: Call to check appointment openings.

New Way: Check open time slots via computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Old Way: Call to schedule appointment.

New Way: Schedule appointment digitally.

Old Way: Call and try to find time to ask the doctor a question; or even worse ask the office staff your private question so the doctor can return your phone call at their convenience.

New Way: Ask the doctor your pri-

vate questions via secure HIPAA private patient portal.

Old Way: Go through the hassle of getting "paper" health records that another health care provider needs.

New Way: Have your health records summary sent electronically, securely, and privately shared directly with those you designate.

Old Way: Spend hours on the phone, or worse, in person to figure out bills.

New Way: Have immediate access to your own health record, bills, and the ability to pay online.

While consumer expectations are an indicator of the coming reality, there are other sectors of change that should be considered. As the

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government continues to change the rules and the standards of care to the point that consumers are used to all their health care experiences involving technology – will you be seen as a modern, up-to-date doctor, or as an out-of-date, old-fashioned one?

As technology becomes the standard in health care, the ability of consumers to analyze data will also become an increasing aspect of chiropractic credibility and consumer trust in their doctor. The patient of the future expects to know the outcomes of their doctor in treating certain conditions.

Electronic health record systems will become the drivers for the analytics that consumers will be looking for. From the perspective of you,

the doctor, the same technology that patients seek and want offers incredible benefits to you and your practice.

- You can enjoy the convenience and access to your software, anywhere, anytime.
- You can reclaim control of your practice with real-time business analytics and metrics.
- You can improve patient care with automated clinical support and mobile outcome tools.
- You can empower your staff with efficient, chiropractic specific workflow.
- You can relax, and use compliant resources for ICD-10, MU, 1500 form changes, PQRS, and HIPAA.
- You can gain more time using modern software architecture and hyper-speed notes.
- You can give your patients an interactive patient portal and the technology experience they are coming to expect.

Change is inevitable. Consumer adaptation of technology in terms of how patients communicate and how they prefer to conduct their business and personal health is impacting health care providers at an alarming speed. The right electronic health record can help chiropractors take advantage of the opportunity to meet these consumer expectations, increase patient satisfaction, gain referrals, and position yourself as a clinic of the future – today.

About The Author — Steven J. Kraus, DC, DIBCN, FIACN, FASA, FICC, is the founder and CEO of Future Health. You can learn more by calling 888-919-9919 or visit www.FutureHealthSoftware.com. Dr. Kraus provides complimentary webinars and speaks to state associations and organizations on documentation, EHR, and HIPAA regulations impacting chiropractic practices.