

Performance Insight

Vol. 01

PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

“If patient engagement were a drug, it would be the blockbuster drug of the century and malpractice not to use it.”

Leonard Kish

Principal and Co-Founder at VivaPhi

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Why Patient Engagement?

People want **access.**



of U.S. patients want electronic access to their health records.

37% HAVE ACCESS.



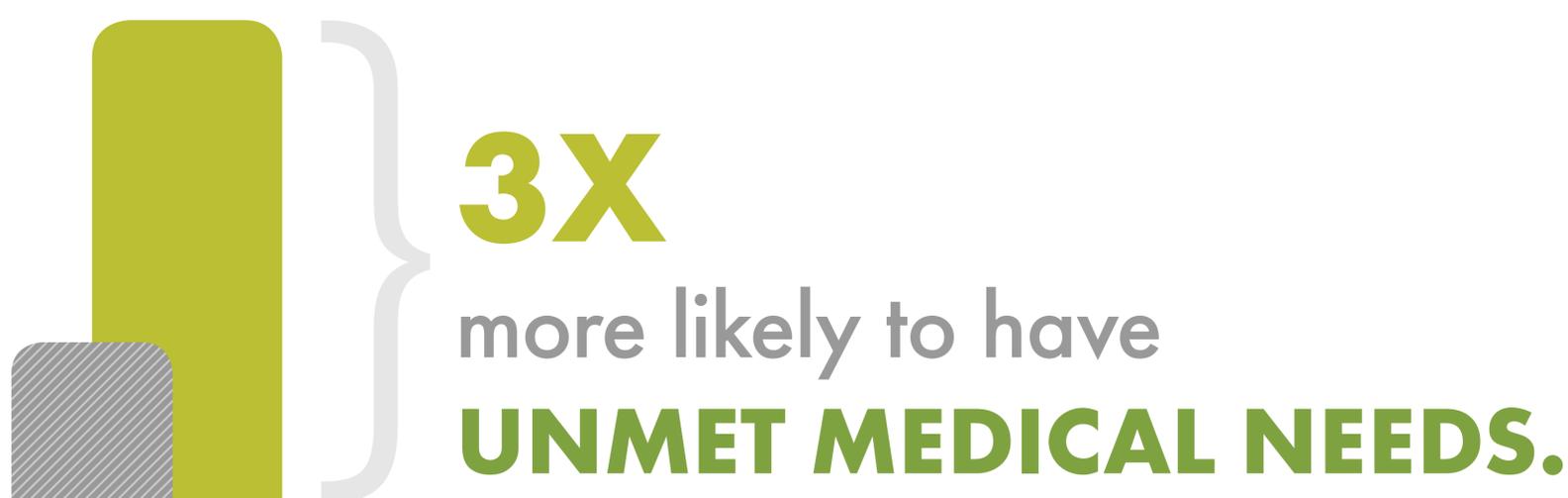
40%+ WOULD SWITCH
providers to get access.

Sources: Accenture, Technology Advice; PubMed PMID; CMS

Why Patient Engagement?

Engagement drives **outcomes.**

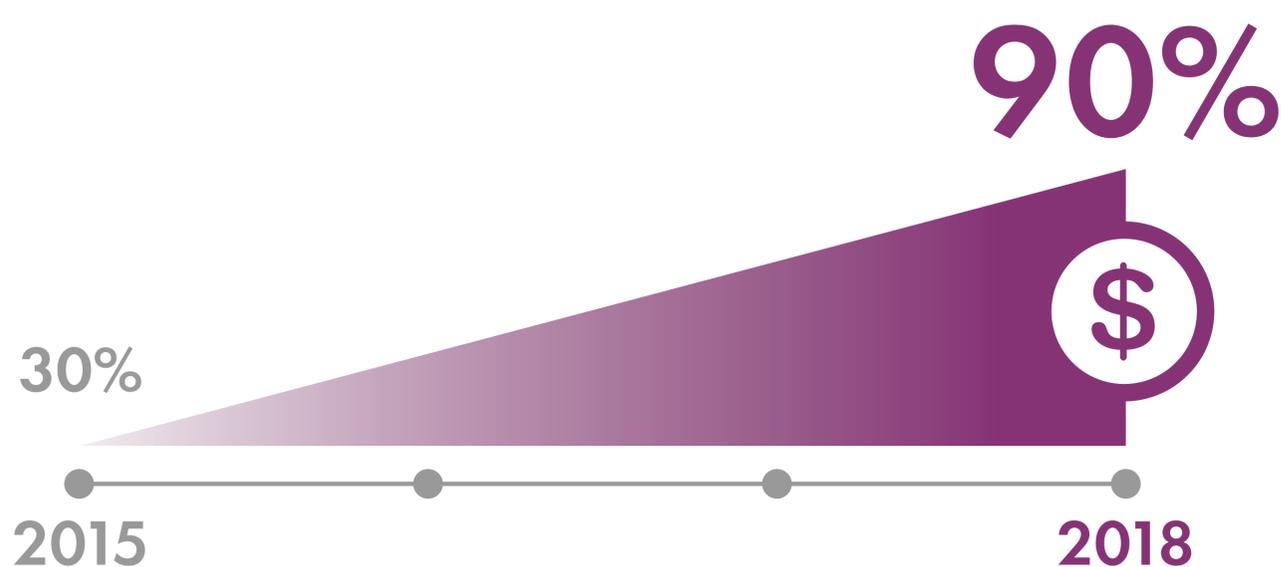
Unengaged patients are...



Sources: Accenture, Technology Advice; PubMed PMID; CMS

Why Patient Engagement?

Engagement
is being rewarded.



BY 2018

most Medicare payments
will be tied to **QUALITY CARE.**

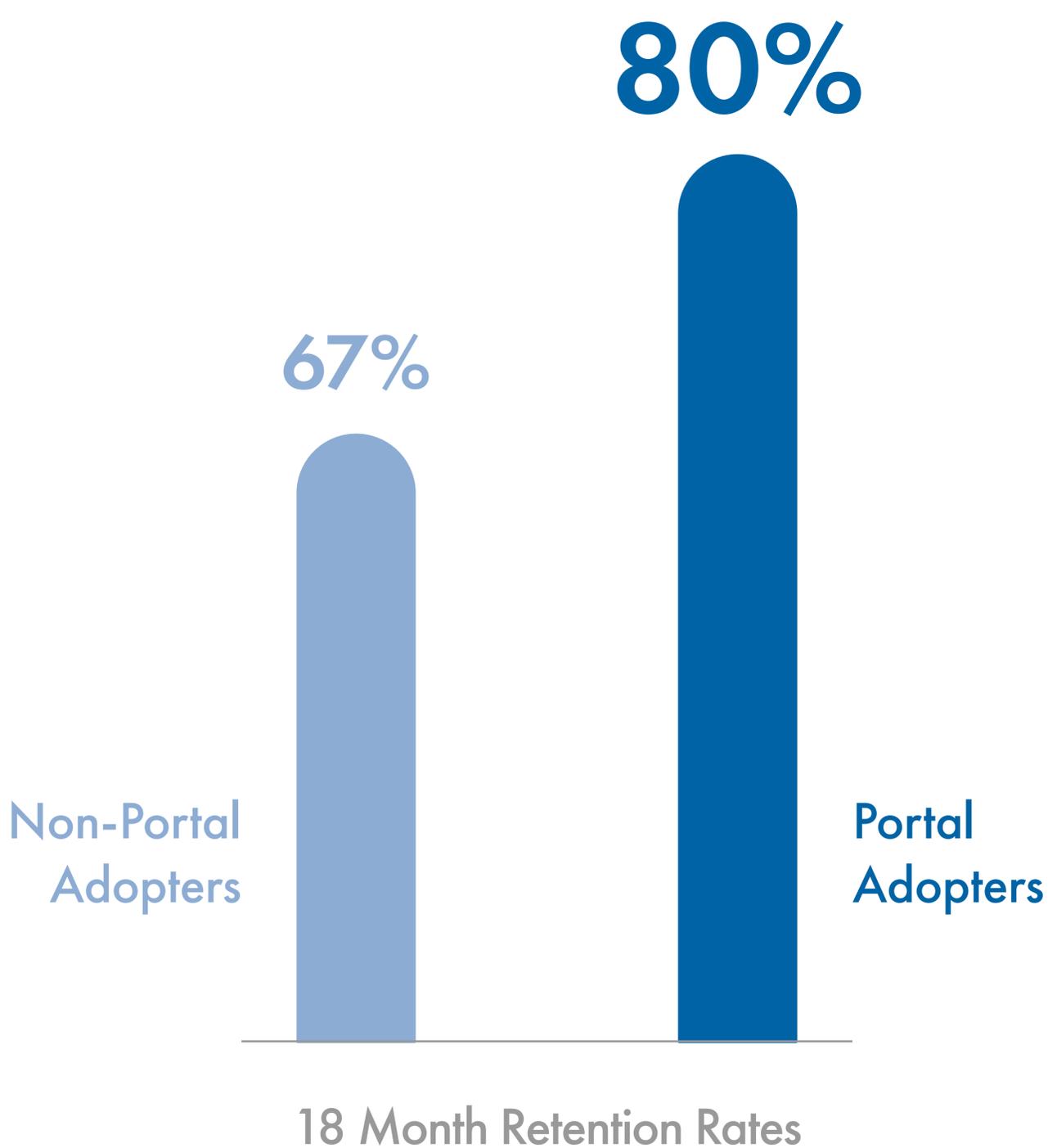
\$40 PER PATIENT PER MONTH average Medicare payments for patients with chronic diseases who receive monthly remote services.



Sources: Accenture, Technology Advice; PubMed PMID; CMS

Why Patient Engagement?

Engagement **drives loyalty.**



**PORTAL ADOPTERS ARE
MORE LOYAL**

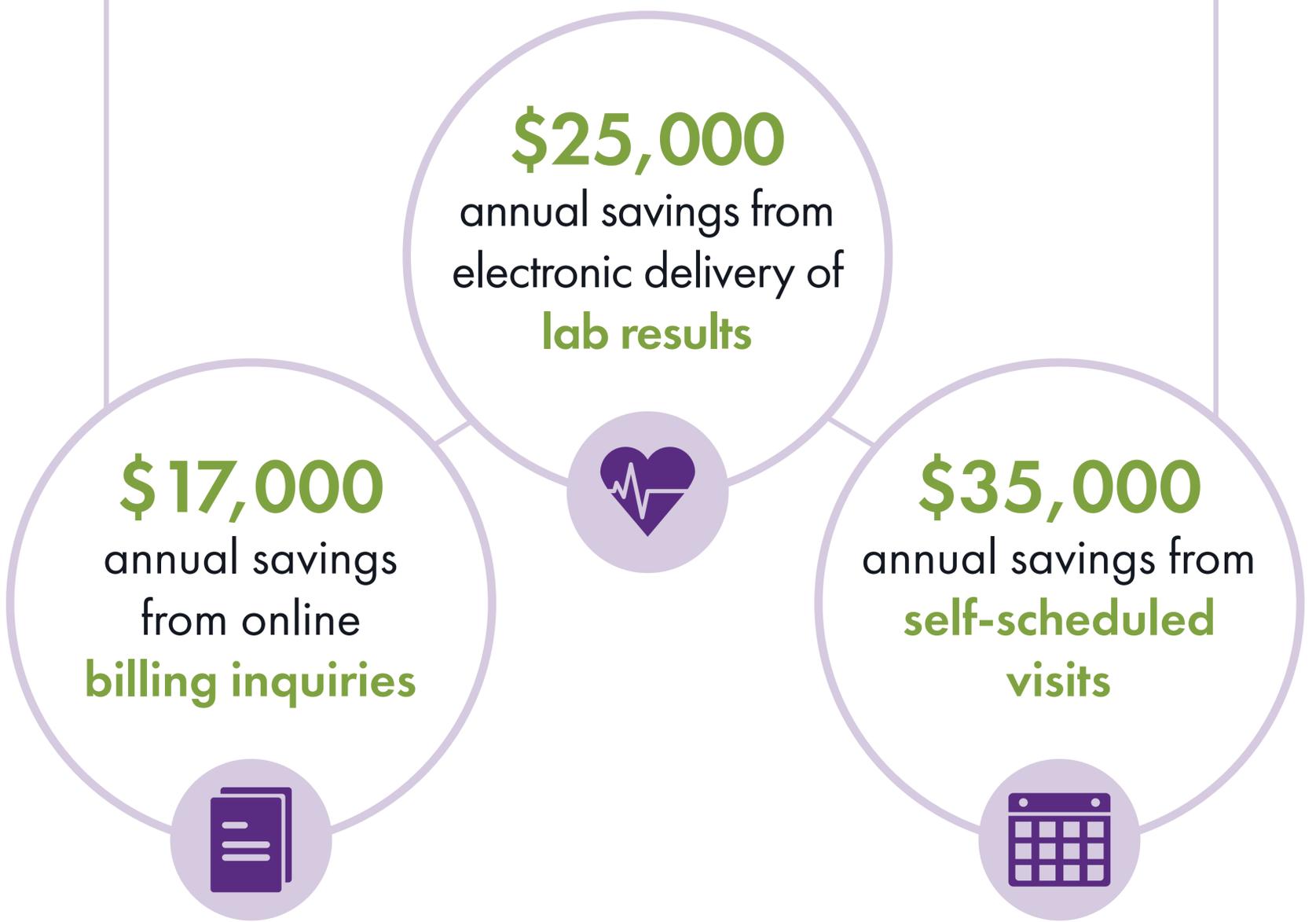
Sources: Accenture, Technology Advice; PubMed PMID; CMS

Opening the door on portal adoption

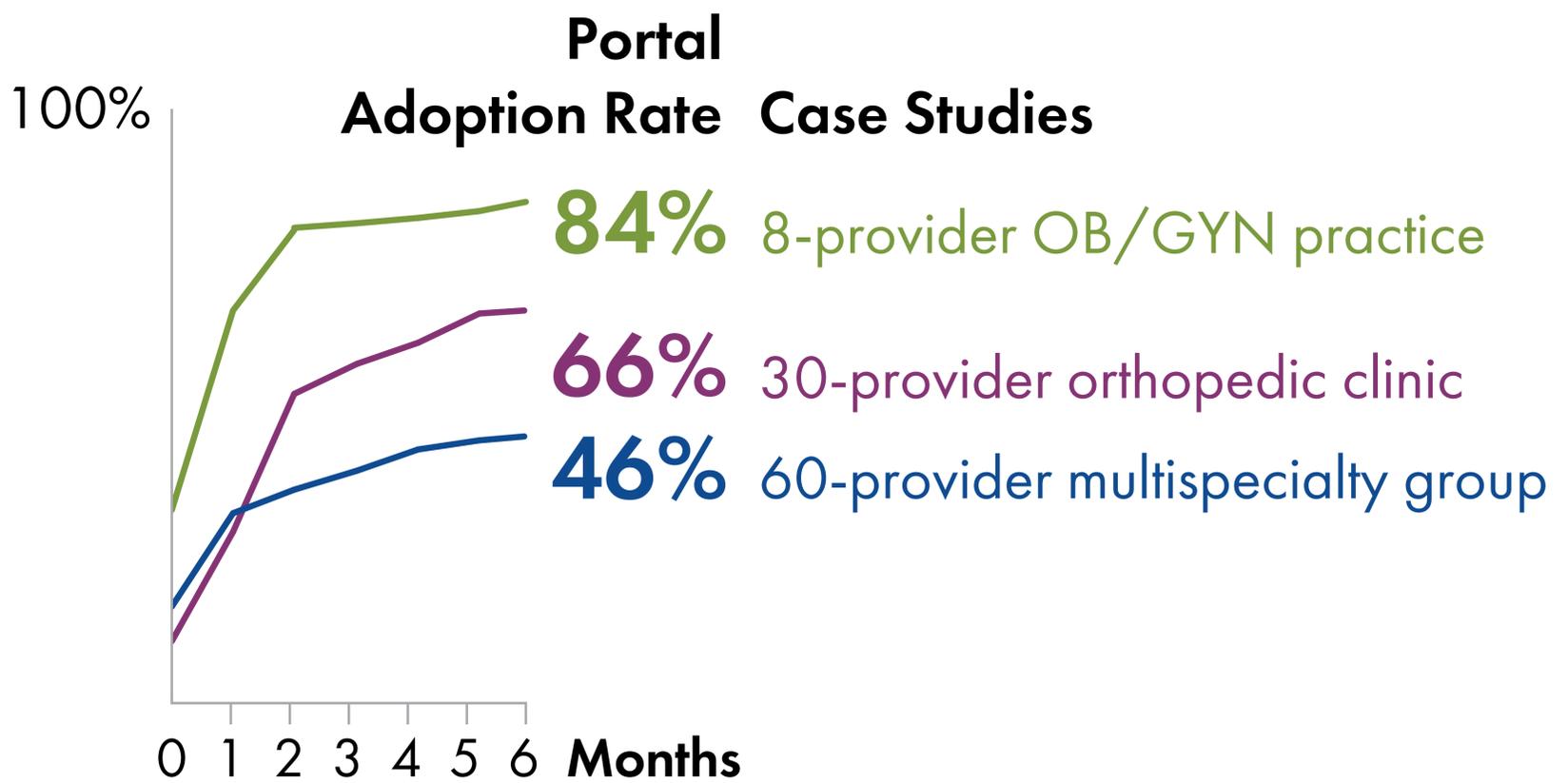
The patient portal is the gateway to **patient engagement**—and should be a critical focus of your patient engagement strategy. It's the key to connecting providers to patients outside the office so they can better manage their own health. Digitally connecting patients and providers improves the patient experience, boosts retention and improves health outcomes. It also caters to a growing trend of the patient as consumer and the penetration of the internet into every facet of our lives.

Portal adoption pays off.

Based on an illustrative 10-physician practice.



You can achieve portal adoption quickly.



“Adoption rate” refers to the percentage of patients seen in the past 18 months who have portal accounts.

Where do you rank?

How do athenahealth clients stack up when it comes to the use of athenaCommunicator's® patient portal? We have assigned our client practices into segments based on their success in encouraging patients to register for portal accounts. We believe that most practices should set pioneer status as their goal—it's obtainable with a strong commitment from staff. Where would you currently rank your practice?

Procrastinators

Portal Adoption

<10%



While they offer a portal to patients, these providers haven't completely bought in. Registration efforts are inconsistent, portal benefits aren't properly communicated, and few patients have portal accounts.

Avg. Email Collection: 21%

Beginners

Portal Adoption

~30%



Providers are using secure messages and electronic lab delivery, and you have a vision for marketing your portal—even if you have varying levels of commitment among providers and staff.

Avg. Email Collection: 39%

Intermediates

Portal Adoption

~60%



Most providers and staff see the value of the portal, and they communicate that value to patients. You may be receiving fewer phone calls, sending fewer lab results by mail, and receiving patient payments faster.

Avg. Email Collection: 63%

Pioneers

Portal Adoption

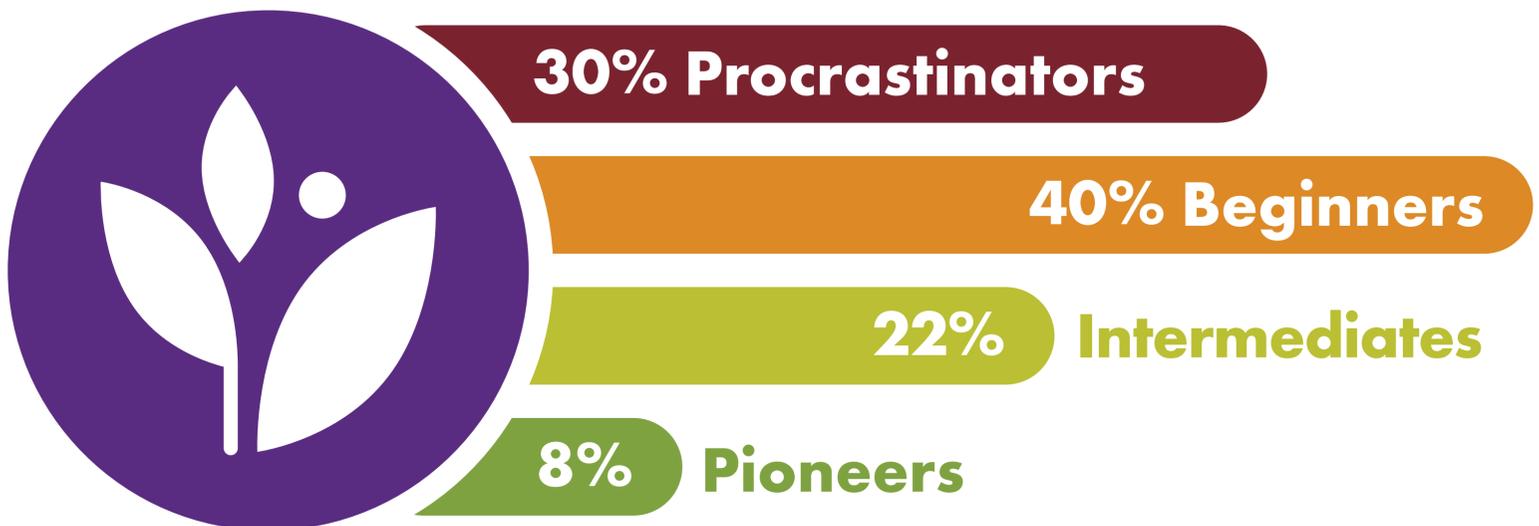
>60%



You are running a digital practice, and you treat secure messaging and electronic health histories as central components of patient-care plans.

Avg. Email Collection: 86%

Here's where our clients fall in the adoption curve:

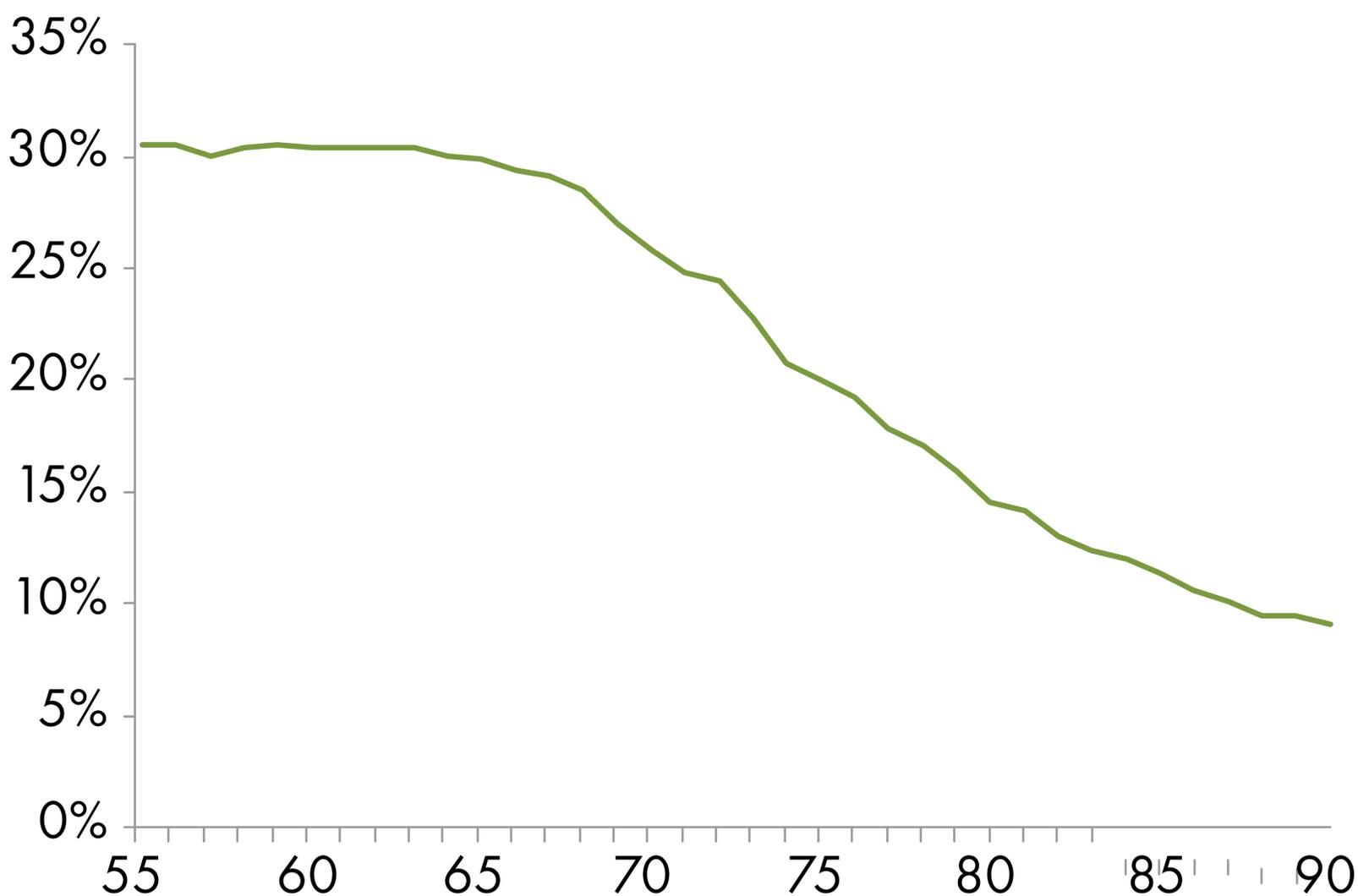


Surprising Facts About Portal Adoption

Many older patients use portals

Up until about age 70, seniors are as likely to use portals as so-called “digital natives” — and patients in their 60s use portals at a higher rate than patients in their 20s. About a fifth of seniors qualify as “super users” who log onto their portals nearly 40 times per year.

Portal adoption rate¹, by age



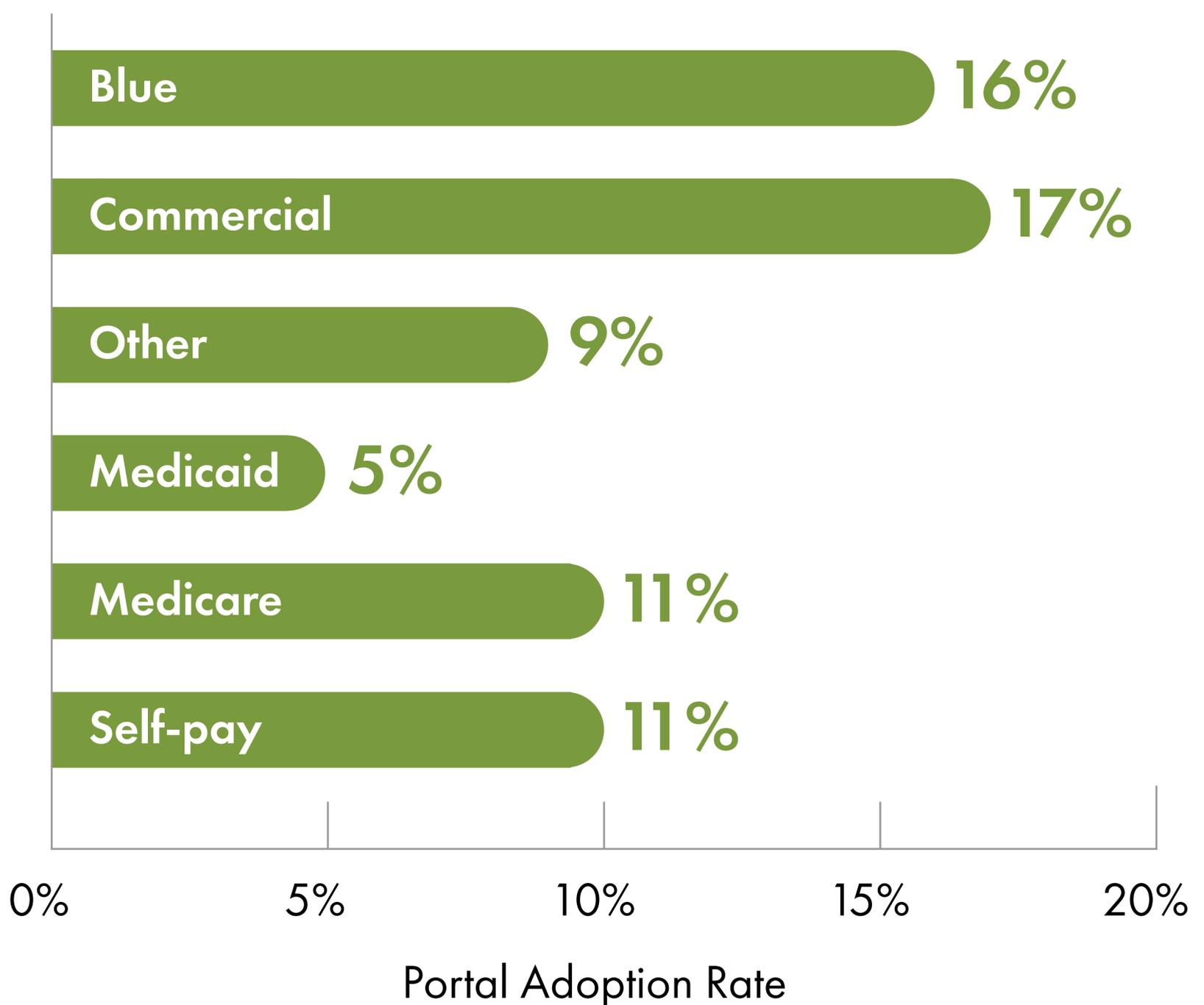
¹ Defined as the proportion of patients who had a portal account within 30 days of their appointment. Sample: 1.9 million patients with appointments in September 2015.

Source: athenaResearch

Medicaid patients can be brought on board.

Medicaid patients are roughly 70% less likely than commercially insured patients to use a patient portal. However, some providers have succeeded in bucking the trend. For example, one OB/GYN practice in Texas with a heavy Medicaid case mix has enrolled 43% of patients on the portal.

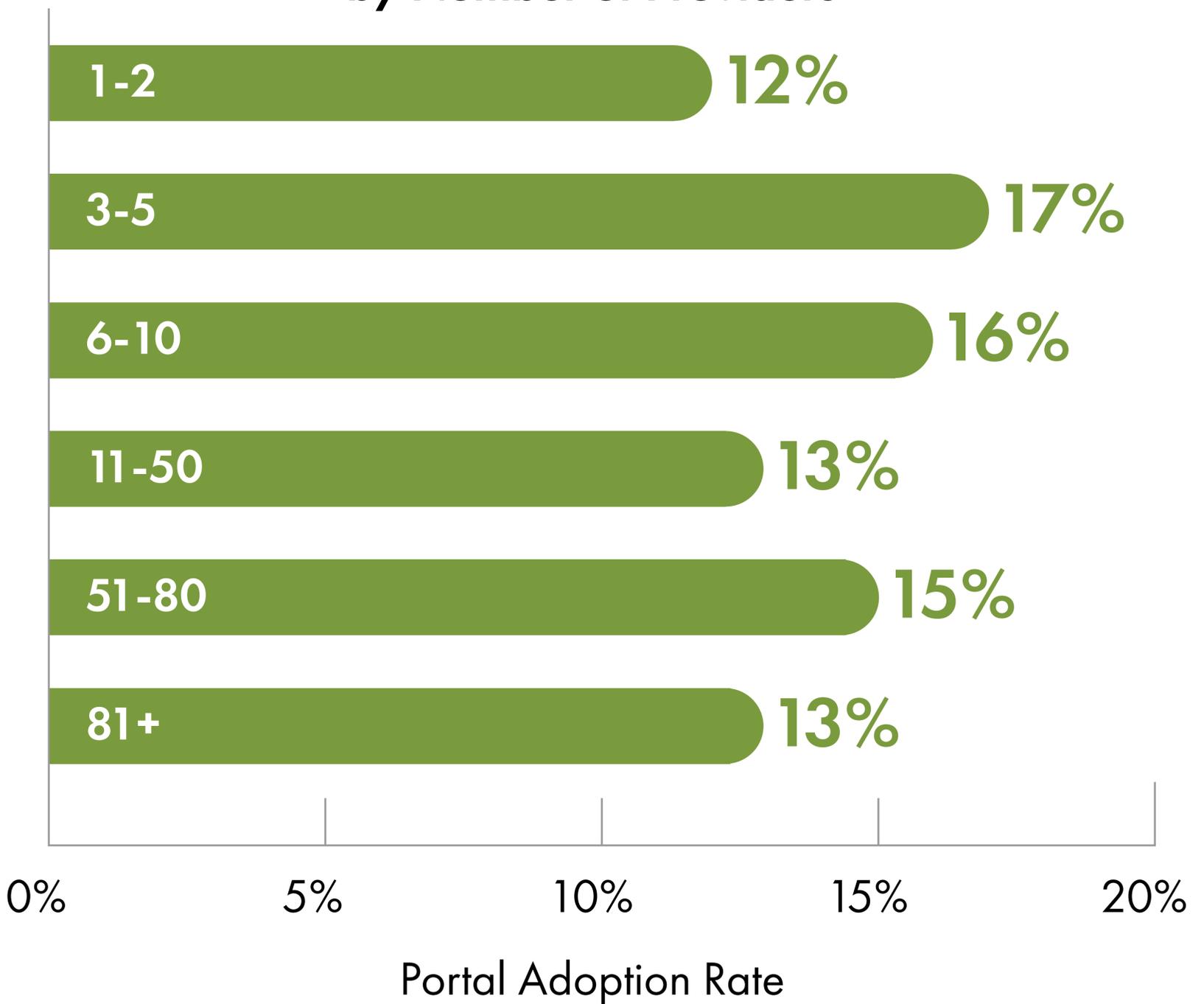
Portal Adoption by Payer Class



Practices of all sizes can be successful.

Practices across the athenahealth network have similar average adoption rates, regardless of the number of providers they employ. However, it may be harder for health systems and large provider groups to achieve uniformly high adoption rates across a multitude of decentralized departments and practice sites.

**Median Portal Adoption Rate
by Number of Providers**





STEPS to SUCCESS

Step 1:

Develop a portal adoption policy

Step 2:

Support in-office portal registration

Step 3:

Ensure the portal delivers value to patients

Step 4:

Implement a streamlined portal training program

Step 5:

Craft a compelling portal marketing message

STEP

1

Develop a portal adoption policy

Psychologists have long known that presenting one option as a default increases the chance it will be chosen. When we're "given" something by default, it becomes more valued than it would have been otherwise—and we are less willing to part with it. Automatically requiring patients to register and use the athenaCommunicator portal rapidly boosts adoption.

Though many practices resist a mandatory portal adoption policy at first, they often discover its implementation to be liberating. These providers avoid the burden of repeatedly "selling" the benefits of the portal to less receptive patients.

3 approaches to adoption policies:

LESS AGGRESSIVE

STRICTER ADOPTION POLICIES DRIVE HIGHER REGISTRATION.



1

Default to portal registration.

Portal use is assumed by default. Patients receive a portal registration email or register in the office by smartphone or in-office kiosks. While strongly suggesting that patients use the portal, the practice will see patients without portal accounts.

2

Make portal use central to patient care.

Clinicians consider use of a portal a central part of a patient's care. Patients who choose not to use the portal must discuss that decision with a clinician.

3

Enforce a strict portal-only policy.

Patients are required to register for portal accounts except in a limited number of cases (e.g., lack of internet access). Practices may choose not to accept new patients who decline to use the portal and may charge for mail delivery of lab results.

MORE AGGRESSIVE

CASE STUDY

Austin Area OB/GYN Austin, TX

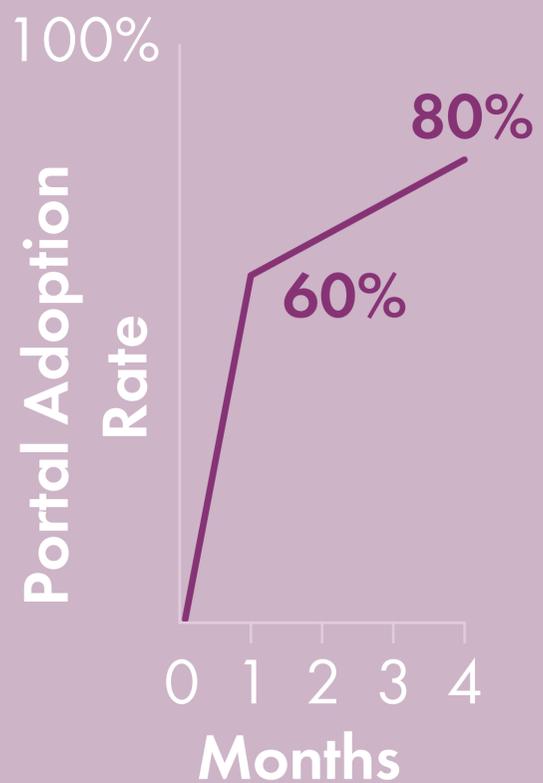
10-physician practice
Portal offered since May 2013

New patients who call to schedule an appointment are asked to register for the portal before their visits. If they have not done so by the time they check in, front desk staff help patients register using one of seven in-office patient computer kiosks.

Because portal use is mandatory, practice staff may reschedule patients who arrive too late to register for the portal before their appointments.

90%
Portal
Adoption

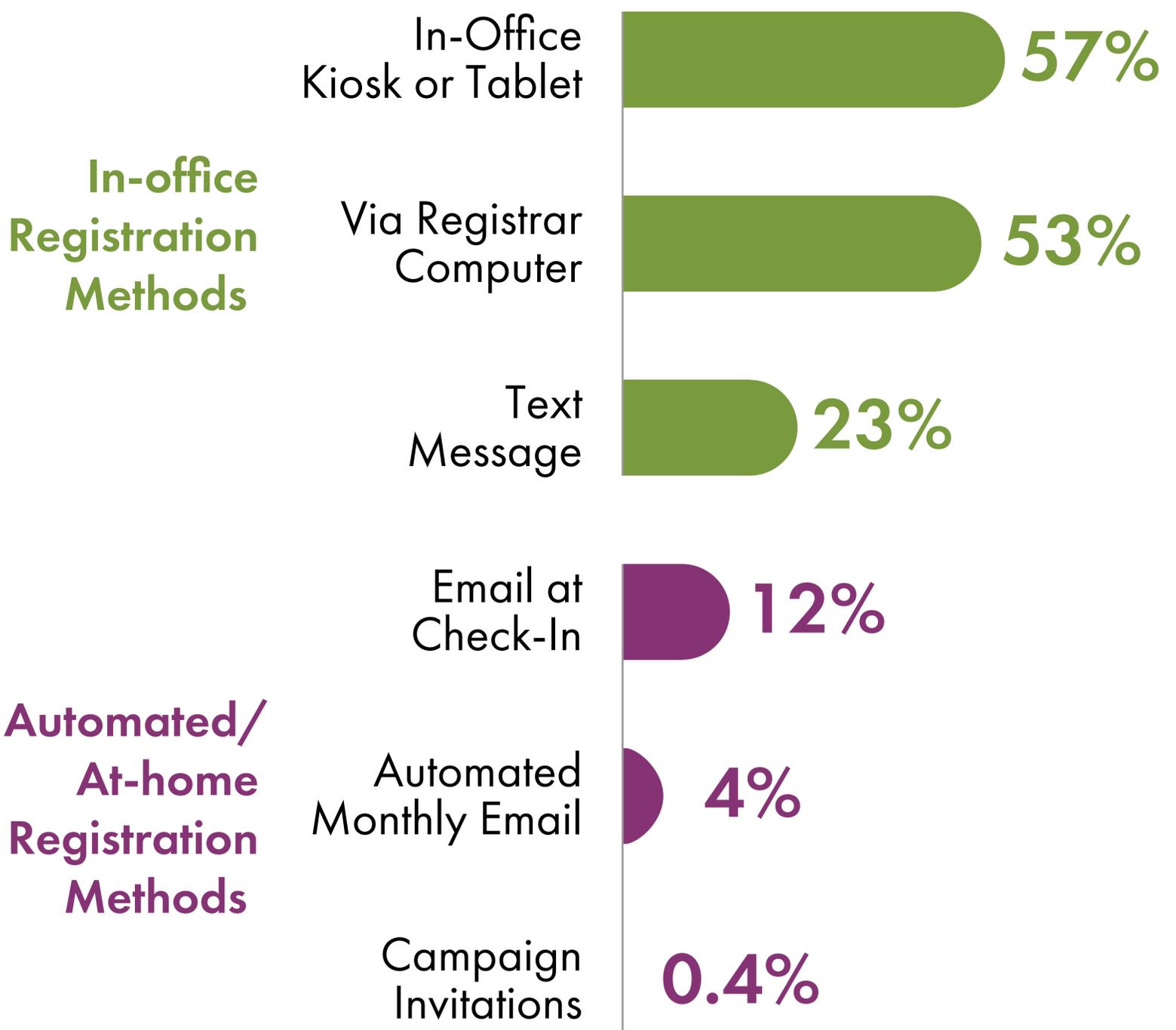
After first 4 months



STEP 2 Support in-office portal registration

Patients are more likely to register for the portal when you get them to do it during the office visit. Once they have headed home, their likelihood to register on their own drops measurably.

In-office Registration Methods Have Vastly Higher Yield



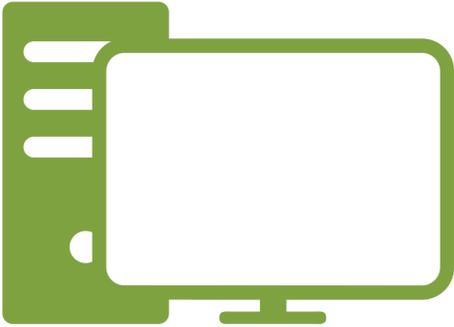
Patients should be able to register for portals through at least one of three methods:

- 1 Using a staff's laptop or tablet directly.
- 2 Using a kiosk in the waiting room or lobby.
- 3 Texting the patient's smartphone while they are in the office.

Kiosk Options:

Practices may wish to invest in new hardware for their kiosk solution. But they don't have to.

Here are three alternative kiosk solutions:



AN UNUSED
DESKTOP COMPUTER



AN UNUSED LAPTOP



AN iPad® OR TABLET

iPad is a trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

CASE STUDY

Los Olivos Women's Medical Group San Francisco, CA

90%
Portal
Adoption

11-physician practice

The group offers patients iPads to register for portal accounts or update their medical history while waiting in the lobby. Patients sign out these iPads when they register and sign them back in before or immediately after their appointments. Although Los Olivos originally purchased the iPads for use by medical assistants, practice leaders have found that offering them to patients has been essential to their continued high portal utilization rates.

STEP

3

Ensure the portal delivers value to patients

Nothing is worse for long-term adoption than urging patients to register for a portal and then providing them with a disappointing experience. Practices should ensure they provide several major portal resources: lab results delivered online, secure messages with timely provider responses, online scheduling and general support for portal questions or requests.

“If a patient visits the portal and there’s nothing there to see or do, they’ll never come back.”

Practice Administrator

Providence Medical Group

Develop a compelling portal experience:

Service

Required Practice Activity



Results Delivery

- Automatically push patient care summaries to the portal after each visit.
- Ensure that providers routinely provide appropriate test results to patients via the portal.



Secure Messaging

- Encourage patients to send secure messages
- Respond to secure messages in a timely fashion



Online Scheduling

- Offer your patients the ability to schedule appointments through the portal.
- Collaborate with physicians and staff to decide which types of appointments can be scheduled.

CASE STUDY

Perrysburg Family Physicians Perrysburg, OH

5-physician practice

Perrysburg's high level of adoption comes almost entirely from emphasizing the value of receiving lab results electronically; the practice is still in the early stages of encouraging online prescription refill requests and secure messages. New patients are provided a handout that explains how a portal allows patients to receive test results faster and at any time from their computers or smartphones.

70%
Portal
Adoption

STEP 4 Implement a streamlined portal training program

Training checklist:

- ✓ **Staff should register each patient during the office visit,** unless extenuating circumstances prevent it.
- ✓ **Staff should provide portal-related collateral.** athenahealth has a library of supporting materials.
- ✓ **Providers should discuss the portal with all patients.** This helps establish a clinical—rather than just an administrative—expectation that patients will register.
- ✓ **Providers should deliver clinical information and test results online for portal users.** Practices should defer to clinical judgment about how sensitive results are shared.
- ✓ **Providers should respond to secure messages.** Practice leaders can devise methods of triaging messages to ensure appropriate use of physicians' time.

Provide talking points to staff:

DO SAY

DON'T SAY

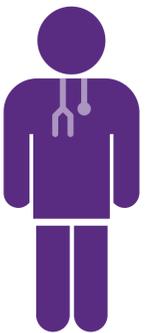


Would you like to have access to your health records online?

May I have your email address?

You may go online at your convenience to view lab results, pay bills and request appointments.

I'll mail you the lab results.



Our preferred method of communicating with you is through the portal.

Call me in a few days.



Can you please review and update your personal information on the portal?

What is your current address and phone?

You may request and refill prescriptions through the portal.

Call us when you need a new prescription.

CASE STUDY

Valley Medical Group Greenfield, MA

25-physician practice

The group held a scavenger hunt to encourage staff to familiarize themselves with the portal. Valley leaders designed a 15-question portal quiz for staff, with registrars receiving the highest scores entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card. The questions required staff to have more than a passing knowledge of the portal.

55%
Portal
Adoption

STEP 5

Craft a compelling portal marketing message

Marketing is essential to encouraging adoption and use of a portal.

Practices should tailor the marketing message to the patient population. Practice administrators and physician leaders should identify the most compelling benefits for their patients and tailor their portal marketing appropriately. For younger, healthier patients, easier scheduling and access to physicians might be essential. A practice that primarily sees older patients may focus on availability of past lab results, since their patient population requires more testing than most and would benefit from monitoring results over time.

Use benefits-driven portal marketing collateral. Ask your portal vendor about available pre-made marketing materials.

Posters

Handouts

Appointment Cards



A Patient Portal Checklist

As you work to integrate the patient portal more deeply into your practice, use this checklist to mark your progress.

Establish a portal-adoption policy.

-  Clearly communicate the policy with staff.
-  **Pioneer status:** Decline to see patients until they register for the portal (unless their circumstances prevent it).

Give patients a reason to use the portal.

-  Deliver clinical information and test results online.
-  Offer secure messaging with timely provider responses.
-  Push patient care summaries and health histories to the portal.
-  Provide general support for portal questions or requests.
-  **Pioneer status:** Offer online scheduling.

✓ Train staff to use and promote the portal.

- ✓ Monthly “state-of-the-portal” staff meetings to share data by provider and practice site.
 - ✓ Registration scripts for front desk.
 - ✓ Coaching and remediation strategy for lagging staff members.
 - ✓ Designated staff portal expert.
-

✓ Craft a portal marketing message.

- ✓ Download, review, and distribute marketing collateral.
 - ✓ Tailor the message to the patient population.
 - ✓ Distribute marketing collateral that conveys the benefits of the portal.
-

✓ Support in-office registration.

- ✓ Computers and tablets.
- ✓ Smart-phone registration.
- ✓ In-office registration kiosks.
- ★ **Pioneer status:** Dedicated portal support staff at the front office.

“Communicating with patients through the portal is faster than a phone call and cheaper than mail. It’s a win-win for both parties.”

KLAS

Patient Portals 2015, Adoption Beyond Meaningful Use
Performance Report, March 2015

athenainsight.com

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