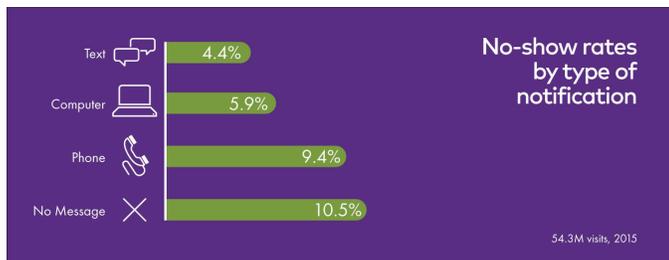


# Getting no-shows to show up

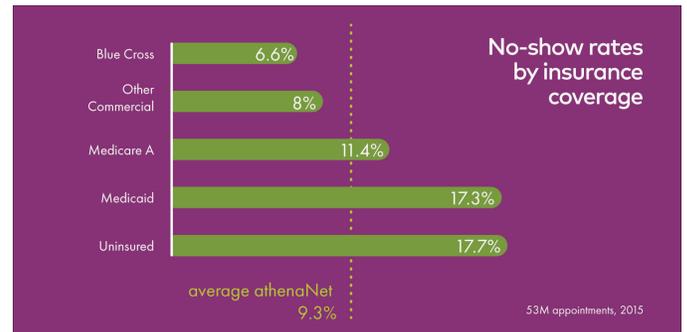
By Betsy Vereckey | June 1, 2016

No one likes being stood up – not for a date, not for a job interview, and certainly not for a doctor’s appointment. And at a medical office, a no-show can be costly. athenahealth researchers took a closer look at those empty waiting room chairs, examining 54.3 million patient visits in 2015 in terms of insurance, specialty, and more.

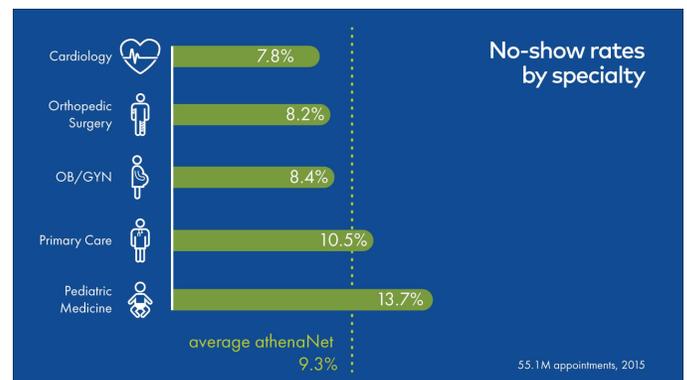
## Here are some of their findings.



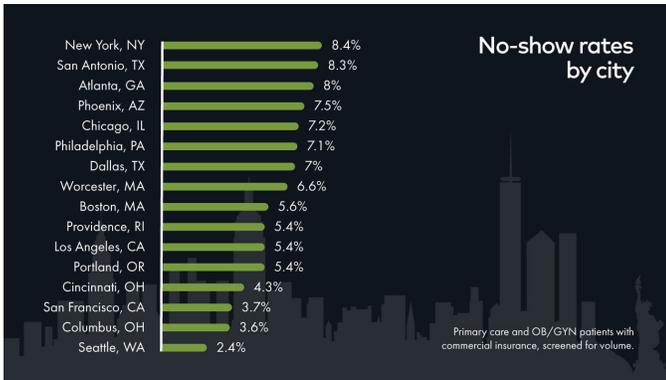
A reminder can go a long way toward reducing no-show rates, especially when it comes in the form of a text. Only 4.4 percent of patients who got a text from their provider didn’t show up for their appointments, compared to 10 percent of patients who didn’t get a notification. Using a landline didn’t help much: 9.4 percent of patients who got phone calls didn’t show up for their appointments.



When it comes to showing up for a doctor’s appointment, there’s a big difference between patients who are insured and those who aren’t. No-show rates are highest for uninsured patients who are footing the bill themselves, and lowest for members of Blue Cross and other commercial payers.



Big medical procedures like surgeries aren't really game-time decisions, so the more serious the matter, the less likely a provider will get stood up. Cardiology and orthopedic surgery see the lowest levels of no-shows, while primary care and pediatric medicine face the highest.



Around the country, providers are having a major problem with no-show patients, but especially so in the top three offending cities: New York, San Antonio, and Atlanta. What's likely to blame? Traffic delays, long wait times, an abundance of other medical providers to choose from, and the fact that patients simply have too much to do.

Image credit: Ceneri/Getty Images



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