



How to Adapt to Meet Patient Demands in the New Era of Urgent Care

eBook

EXPERITY™

Contents

Introduction

Urgent care has experienced a lot of changes in 2020. It took great agility to accommodate new safety protocols, adopt new coding rules, and—ultimately—respond to new patient demands.

COVID-19 continues to influence patient needs and expectations. It has created a new era in urgent care. And for those who look closely, opportunity for growth. In the coming pages we explore how patient expectations have evolved and what leaders in urgent care can do now to capitalize on this silver lining opportunity.

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Chapter One

Expectations of service



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Expectations of service

When it comes to a patient's perception of urgent care services, the bar is not set against other healthcare environments. Patients compare their experience at your urgent care with that of restaurants, retail, and any other service they pay for.

They expect convenience, affordability, and great service with minimal wait and hassle. Which means that urgent care facilities need to be champions of patient engagement at every level: digital, face-to-face, and the care itself.

Digital engagement

Consumers want digital conveniences in healthcare that they are accustomed to everywhere else. Be it through your website or some other online service, they expect to do these things online:

- View their place in line and expected wait time
- Access lab results
- Pay bills
- Fill a prescription
- And maybe even see a provider

The Public Health Emergency (PHE) has also made telehealth services much more popular. While usage has been congruent with the number of COVID-19 cases in a region, the number of new patients who've tried telemedicine will likely make it a go-to option for many in the future.

Personal engagement

While digital conveniences are a necessity, the in-person experience will make or break a patient's opinion of your urgent care. In an [Experity webinar](#) on emerging trends in urgent care, Claudio Varga, Director of Operations at Vital Urgent Care in Newport Beach, California, says that a positive urgent care experience depends on three P's: place, process, and people.

Place

Your physical location should be something you're proud of. Varga advises walking around to get a sense of what the patient sees, hears, and smells.

Process

Make it easy for people to do business with you. Your policies should be easy for staff and patients to understand. Provide up-front estimates and make transactions easy.

People

Everyone from the front desk to clinicians to billing should be great at their jobs, and great with other people. Varga says that this the most important thing to get right because great people can make up for shortcomings in the other two areas.

Quality care

Having good people will help ensure that you provide quality care, and that's nothing new. What's changed is that on average, a third of urgent care patients don't have a primary care provider. Even though episodic care generally doesn't factor into a patient's entire medical history, it's very common for undiagnosed underlying concerns to be apparent – like diabetes or hypertension. For these patients, urgent care providers can support total wellness by referring patients to a primary care provider. At a hybrid clinic, those services are conveniently offered under the same roof, but be sure to ask if the patient would like an outside referral as well.

Chapter Two

The need for accessibility

CHAPTER TWO

The need for accessibility

On-demand healthcare is already accessible by nature, but COVID-19 has created limitations for most populations. Accessibility to care is more critical than ever, and it also presents opportunities for your business.

An example of this is the \$10 billion relief package that the Biden Administration has designated for COVID-19 testing at K-12 schools. It's not the norm for school nurses to engage in this type of activity, and there are safety concerns in testing symptomatic students versus mass screening, so it might be beneficial to support school districts in your community with rapid testing.

The funds are administered by states, so how they manage testing programs will vary. However, a great starting point is to call school administrators. Ask what they're doing for testing and emphasize the convenience of your services.

Partnering with you takes the pressure off of administrators and can help reduce staff anxiety around the logistics of testing. If you're able to provide testing onsite, that eliminates limitations some students may have with things like transportation.

And even if onsite testing isn't an option, the relationships you build can still benefit school nurses who are in a position to refer parents of students "sent home sick" (and requiring a negative COVID-19 test to return, including any exposed siblings) to urgent care for treatment.



Offering onsite testing may be a great way to connect employers with your other OccMed services.

Some employers are required to test employees if there's a COVID-19 outbreak. Offering onsite testing may be a great way to connect employers with your other OccMed services.

You may also be able to offer COVID-19 testing services and more to employers when you build out Occupational Medicine (OccMed) services. OccMed covers a spectrum of services, of which you can do all or some. OccMed generally includes drug screening, physicals for compliance and duty, and workers compensation injury care.

Not all OccMed services can be conducted on-site, but your urgent care may still be a more accessible option than the alternatives. For local municipalities and small- to medium-sized businesses, you likely offer better service and closer proximity than large Occupational Health facilities. Every OccMed encounter provides an opportunity to make a good impression on the employees so they'll choose your clinic when they need other medical care.

Telemedicine also makes your services more accessible to patients, as does offering primary care through a hybrid clinic. We dive into greater detail on OccMed, telehealth, and primary care in our next eBook scheduled for July, 2021

Chapter Three

Online behaviors and expectations

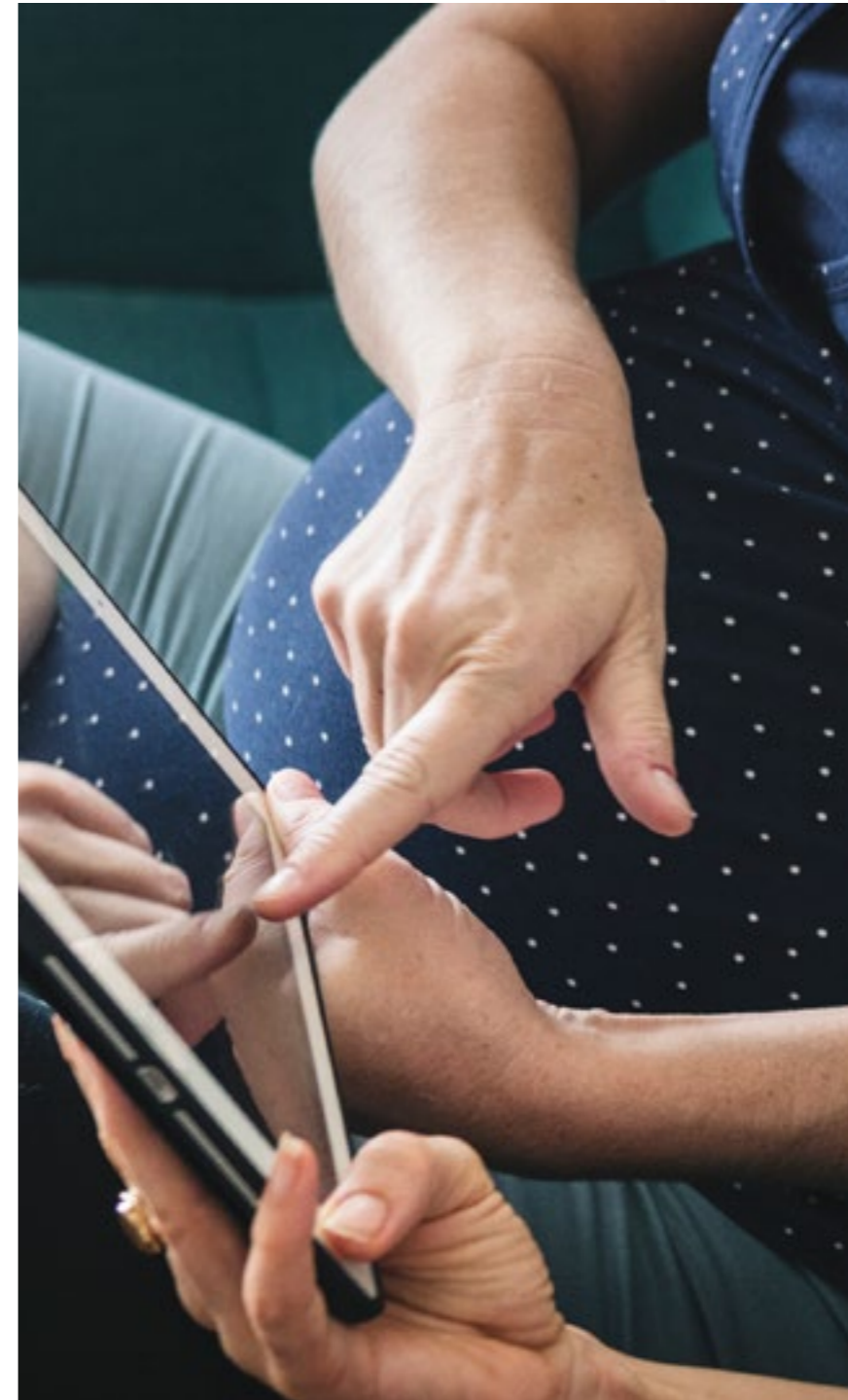
CHAPTER THREE

Online behaviors and expectations

While traditional marketing is not dead, it alone will not make you a player in this game. Today more than ever, it's critical to have a digital marketing strategy that aligns with modern online search behaviors.

Fortunately, the pandemic surge in new patient volume makes some of this easier and less expensive. According to Experity data, 50% more new patients visited urgent care clinics in 2020 than in previous years. If you're capturing email addresses and cell numbers in your patient records, you have the most critical component to turning these people into returning patients.

Email and text are only applicable once you get people through the door, though. Here are some of the key factors that influence your online presence.



Website

Ideally, you should invest in your website out of the gate. If you've had your website for a while, it isn't too late to optimize the customer journey, and boost your rank for search engine optimization (SEO.)

You don't have to do this all at once. Create a long-term program to add pages for SEO. This is both about adding functionality (access to patient queues, bill pay, explanation of services, etc.) and expansive keyword matches (through blogs.)

Paid ads

Supplement your organic traffic with paid ads like Google AdWords. You can be specific about who sees your ads, like those within a geographic range. Target keywords that you don't already rank on page one for organically. This will not only put you at the top of the page, but put you top of mind.

Local search

Anyone searching Google for an urgent care clinic will get a bundle of local listings. You need to make sure you show up here. Always have an updated, complete Google My Business page. That's your most important local listing. You should also check that you appear on other local platforms like Yelp and Apple Maps.

Reviews

These local listings, particularly Google My Business (GMB), are also where you accumulate reviews. Most consumers use reviews to make choices. Naturally, the greater quantity and positivity of your reviews, the better your Google ranking, and the more likely you are to get business. You can help build online reviews with post-visit surveys. (Here is where those email addresses and cell numbers come in handy.) Include a link to your GMB listing at the end of the survey, and simply ask for a review.

Chapter Four

A new relationship with vendors

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A new relationship with vendors



Technology is a must, but the relationship you have with your vendors shouldn't stop when the check clears.

The service providers you use to manage your workflows, patient engagement, and even billing should act as partners and trusted advisors to you and your business.

Partners who understand your urgent-care-specific needs can help you optimize your revenue, innovate to meet evolving patient demands, and reach your business goals.

This will best help you navigate coding changes, evolving patient expectations, and other challenges to come. This is exactly what we saw with COVID-19-related changes.

Experity found that urgent cares with turnkey technology solutions incorporating industry best practices, and a committed partner were better equipped to face business fluctuations in 2020.

Additionally, clinics that use Experity realized \$14 more revenue per visit, making them both better able to handle industry challenges, and more profitable.

All urgent care. All the time.



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Experity is a dynamic HIT company that provides integrated technology solutions to more than 4,000 on-demand healthcare practices, primary care clinics, diagnostic testing centers, and health systems nationwide.

With a mission to power patient-centered care, the company's complete suite of software and services includes EMR and PM, patient engagement, teleradiology, business intelligence, consulting, and billing solutions.

The company was formed through the merger of the leaders in urgent care technology. A Warburg Pincus portfolio company, Experity is a fast-paced, high-growth company committed to improving on-demand healthcare for everyone.