

WHITE PAPER

7 Reasons Why Your Healthcare Organization Should Adopt a Mobile-First Patient Intake Strategy



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Introduction

Whether texting a friend, responding to work emails, booking a flight or buying a new product, today's consumers use cell phones for countless everyday tasks—to communicate, work, travel, shop, manage their finances and more. Perhaps that's because nearly everyone in the U.S. has one. Most Americans—97%—now own a cell phone of some kind, including 85% of Americans who own a smartphone.⁵ As mobile technology continues to play an increasingly important role in daily life, the demand for mobile options in healthcare also is rising.

- ✓ **97%** of Americans own a cell phone¹
- ✓ **84%** of patients used mobile devices to check in for doctors' appointments over the past 12 months²
- ✓ **55%** of patients prefer communicating with their healthcare provider via text message³
- ✓ **142%** increase in smartphone ownership by Americans since 2011⁴



Consumerism continues to reshape the healthcare landscape, and patients today are looking for the same convenience and service-oriented features in healthcare they're used to experiencing in other industries, such as retail and banking. The COVID-19 pandemic additionally forced healthcare organizations to quickly embrace and vastly expand their use of mobile technology, chiefly to reduce virus exposure and keep patients and staff safe. That shift increased both patients' and providers' reliance on mobile devices to complete important care-related tasks.

There are numerous ways that mobile technology can improve the patient experience, from streamlining the check-in process and facilitating payments to supporting more efficient patient-provider communication. At the same time, mobile helps healthcare organizations save time, improve operations, engage patients in their care and boost patient satisfaction and retention. For patients and providers alike, a "mobile-first" intake strategy is not only better, it's essential.

This white paper highlights seven ways that mobile technology improves the intake experience for patients, providers and staff, and demonstrates why healthcare organizations that employ a mobile-first intake strategy are well-positioned to succeed in an increasingly digitally focused healthcare system.



- 1 Mobile is convenient
- 2 Mobile aligns with patient preferences
- 3 Mobile appeals to patients of all ages
- 4 Mobile improves patient engagement
- 5 Mobile is faster and more efficient for staff
- 6 Mobile meets patients where they are
- 7 Mobile reduces reliance on hardware

1 Mobile is convenient

As consumerism redefines the healthcare industry, a growing number of healthcare providers recognize the importance of aligning their processes with patient preferences for convenience. Mobile intake offers patients the convenient, service-oriented features they're used to finding in other industries, such as retail, travel and banking. At the same time, mobile gives patients the flexibility to check in for their appointments at home or on the go or from their own device in the waiting room, while offering a more private, secure registration experience.

There's no question about where patients stand on the subject: According to a 2021 study, 80% of patients prefer to use digital communication to interact with their healthcare provider.⁶ And as out-of-pocket costs continue to rise, patients are looking for the same convenient options for paying their medical bills that they have for other purchases. The benefits are twofold: Mobile gives patients a convenient way to pay copays and balances ahead of time via automated options like card on file and payment plans, and mobile streamlines the collections process to ensure healthcare organizations get paid.

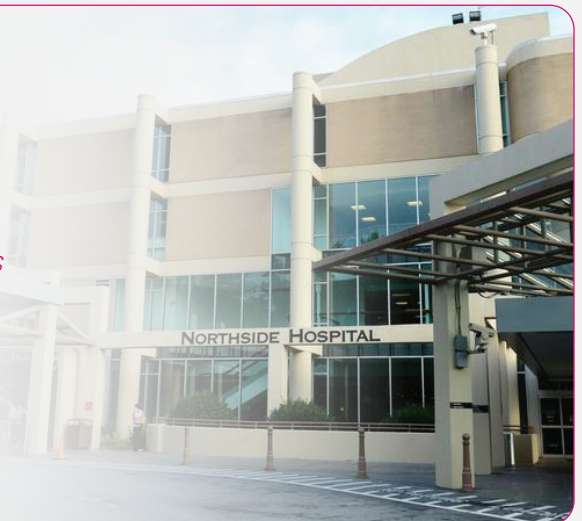
CLIENT SPOTLIGHT: Northside Hospital

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Northside Hospital moved quickly to implement Phreesia Mobile at hundreds of locations in a matter of weeks. With Phreesia, Northside Hospital provided its patients and staff a zero-contact intake process. Although Phreesia was initially implemented to address urgent COVID-19-related intake concerns, both staff and patients loved the mobile experience and have embraced it for the long term. Phreesia helped Northside standardize key intake content across all of its specialties, including consent to treat, financial acknowledgment and clinical intake forms, while also providing specialty-specific customizations where needed.

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Both patients and staff love the fact that they're able to get a lot done ahead of time, before the patient ever walks in the door.”

- Kevin Clauss, Special Project Manager, Northside Hospital



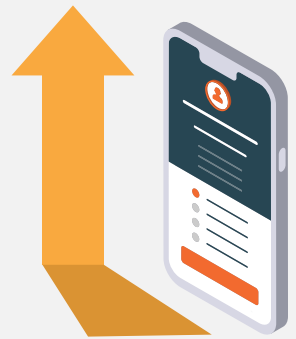
2 Mobile aligns with patient preferences

Given how many Americans own a smartphone, it's no surprise that patients typically use their mobile devices to communicate with their healthcare providers. In a survey of more than 4,100 patients across the Phreesia network, 65% said they prefer calling their doctor's office, while 55% said they prefer communicating via text message.⁷

Overall, 88% of patients said they enjoy using digital messaging, including emails, text messages and online portals, to communicate with their providers. In fact, 41% of patients said the ability to do so is a "must-have." Clearly, meeting these mobile communication expectations offers healthcare organizations a valuable opportunity to improve patients' overall satisfaction.

MOBILE CHECK-IN IS ON THE RISE:

When Phreesia surveyed more than 4,100 patients across its provider network about their use of technology, 84% of patients said they used a mobile device to check in for a doctor's appointment over the past 12 months, compared to only 24% who checked in via a desktop computer.⁸



3 Mobile appeals to patients of all ages

While millennials often stand out for their technology use, mobile intake resonates with patients across a broad age range. Contrary to the common perception that older patients are reluctant to embrace new technology, research shows that's far from the truth. The Pew Research Center found that 92% of adults age 65 and older own a cell phone and 61% have a smartphone. Additionally, more than 90% of smartphone owners over age 50 text weekly, according to data from the annual Simmons' National Consumer Study.⁹

Phreesia research data further demonstrates that it's simply a myth that only young people use technology to manage their healthcare. In an analysis of nearly 4 million patients across the Phreesia network, 33% of patients age 66 and older who were sent an appointment prompt via text message or email completed their check-in on their mobile device.

Across age groups, Phreesia users prefer to receive appointment reminders through their mobile devices.

When Phreesia surveyed its network on how its users like to be reminded about their appointments, 86% of patients said they prefer text messages and 45% said they prefer email reminders.

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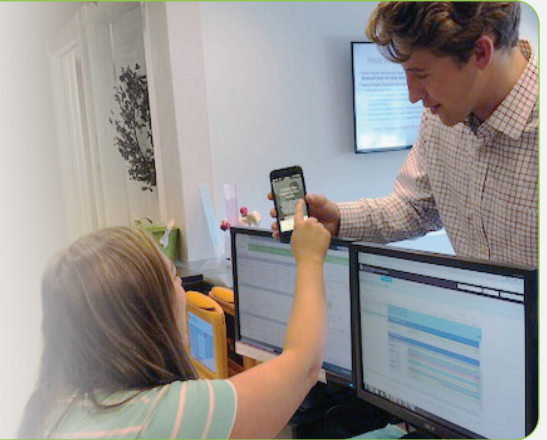
CLIENT SPOTLIGHT: **Revere Health Orem Family Medicine**

When Orem Family Medicine, a four-provider clinic in northern Utah, started using Phreesia Mobile, they wanted to help save patients and staff time, improve office visits and offer a more consumer-friendly intake experience. Instead of just giving patients the option to check in on their own device, the practice decided to make it their default workflow. Patients have embraced the mobile workflow because it takes less time and because they like using their own devices. Staff like the new workflow, too, because it's more efficient and gives them more time to engage with patients.

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Our staff know many of our patients' first names and they can take the time to connect with them because they're not drowning in paperwork. That really makes a difference.”

- Michele Kimmel, Department Manager, Orem Family Medicine



4 Mobile improves patient engagement

The versatile and immediate text-based features of mobile intake make it ideal for improving patient-provider communication, as well as boosting patient engagement and loyalty. It also can improve health outcomes. Studies show that mobile approaches to patient engagement, such as text message-based interventions, support care coordination and help ensure that patients stick with follow-up care, including medication adherence.

A study in the Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association (JAMIA) examined how mobile patient engagement tools helped improve medication adherence in a group of diabetic patients.¹⁰ When researchers sent the patient group a series of text reminders to take their medication and follow their care plans, 80% responded and engaged with the messages. In a separate study from JAMA Open Network, researchers who analyzed text-based interventions for women with sexually transmitted infections found that patients who received text-message reminders were more likely to see their primary care doctors, take their medications and follow preventive care recommendations.¹¹

In today's value-based care healthcare environment, organizations that take advantage of opportunities to align with patients' technology preferences, including mobile communications, will be more successful and better-equipped to engage them in their care.

5 Mobile is faster and more efficient for staff

From online scheduling to automated appointment reminders, a mobile-first patient intake strategy is one of the most effective ways to streamline operations and boost staff efficiency. Mobile intake provides efficient options for sending patients automated appointment confirmations and consents, reducing call volumes and freeing up staff to focus on providing the care patients want and need.

Mobile intake also gives patients the opportunity to update their medical and demographic information before their appointments, improving wait times and saving staff the headache of dealing with paper forms. In addition, mobile intake reduces the potential for data entry errors, since patients have more options save patients the hassle of having to remember to bring a credit card or checkbook to their appointment, helping to boost time-of-service collections. Finally, healthcare organizations can use mobile to send patients post-visit satisfaction surveys and collect real-time feedback that helps them track their Net Promoter Score and comply with programs like the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS).

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT: **Baldwin Pediatrics**

Baldwin Pediatrics relied heavily on a paper-based patient intake process for more than a decade but was frustrated by its inefficiency. So, the practice implemented Phreesia Mobile to automate all necessary intake tasks for both patients and staff. Patients and their caregivers can complete their registration—entirely on their mobile devices—before they enter the office. Demographics, insurance information and consents are all captured in Phreesia's intake platform, reducing administrative burden and saving staff more than five minutes per patient check-in. In fact, the practice now collects digitally more than 4,000 consents per month.

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Phreesia made the transition to digital intake so seamless and easy. It's saving our patients a lot of time at the office, which helps our staff be more efficient.”

**- Amanda Ferraro, Office Manager
Baldwin Pediatrics**



6 Mobile meets patients where they are

Meeting patients where they are is one of the easiest ways to improve the patient experience—and now, more than ever, that's online. In 2021, mobile use accounted for more than half of global website traffic, according to data analysis firm, Statista.¹²

Providers who leverage mobile technology for registration, clinical workflows, payments and satisfaction surveys can engage patients before, during and after their visit on a platform that's sure to reach them—and improve their organization's bottom line in the process. As examples, automated text messages can remind patients about their upcoming visits and help reduce no-shows, which cost healthcare providers hundreds of dollars every day. And mobile payment options can save patients the hassle of having to remember to bring a credit card or checkbook to their appointment, helping to boost time-of-service collections. Text-message-based schedule-management tools also can automatically offer patients an earlier appointment when a slot unexpectedly opens on their provider's schedule—and all of this can be done from their mobile device.

Finally, healthcare organizations can use mobile to send patients post-visit satisfaction surveys, collecting real-time feedback that helps them track their Net Promoter Score and be successful in programs like the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS).



7 Mobile reduces reliance on hardware

When healthcare organizations incorporate mobile into their intake strategy, they reduce their need for buying, maintaining and troubleshooting intake hardware. A single hardware malfunction can take hours to repair, adding to patient wait times, creating front-desk bottlenecks and diverting staff from more important clinical tasks. Mobile intake helps lessen the impact of these incidents by offering an alternative check-in option for patients while reducing the labor burden on staff.

At the same time, it allows healthcare organizations to cut back on cleaning, repairing and replacing hardware, helping them boost their bottom line and improve overall office workflow. Healthcare organizations that aren't ready for a full transition to mobile intake can leverage it alongside hardware options in a hybrid approach, allowing patients to choose their preferred intake tool for managing their care.

About Phreesia

Phreesia's software gives healthcare organizations a suite of applications to manage the patient intake process. Our innovative platform engages patients in their care and provides a modern, convenient experience, while enabling our clients to maximize profitability, optimize their staffing and enhance clinical care. To find out how Phreesia can give your organization the capacity for more, [visit phreesia.com](https://phreesia.com).

End notes

- 1 [“Mobile Fact Sheet.”](#)
Pew Research Center, April 2021
- 2 [“Healthcare’s Digital Transformation: How consumerism is reshaping the healthcare landscape—and how provider organizations should respond.”](#)
Phreesia, June 2022
- 3 [“Healthcare’s Digital Transformation: How consumerism is reshaping the healthcare landscape—and how provider organizations should respond.”](#)
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- 4 [“Mobile Fact Sheet.”](#)
Pew Research Center, April 2021
- 5 [“Mobile Fact Sheet.”](#)
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- 6 [“Healthcare Consumers Weigh In: Personalized Experiences are a Must.”](#)
RedPoint Global, December 2021
- 7 [“Healthcare’s Digital Transformation: How consumerism is reshaping the healthcare landscape—and how provider organizations should respond.”](#)
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- 8 [“Healthcare’s Digital Transformation: How consumerism is reshaping the healthcare landscape—and how provider organizations should respond.”](#)
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- 9 [“Mobile Fact Sheet.”](#)
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- 10 [“Disparities in the use of a mHealth medication adherence promotion intervention for low-income adults with type 2 diabetes.”](#)
Oxford Academic, July 2015
- 11 [“Patient outreach tech can support care coordination, transitions.”](#)
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- 12 [“Percentage of mobile device website traffic worldwide from 1st quarter 2015 to 4th quarter 2021.”](#)
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