

Five key features telehealth patients want: Insights for healthcare developers

Post-pandemic telehealth has proven it has staying power – consumers are still choosing [telehealth and virtual care](#) to meet their access needs and care preferences. But in an increasingly crowded market, better understanding the mindsets of their users can help healthcare developers drive their product strategies forward.

The increasing expectations of telehealth consumers

As with most other services they consume, today's patients expect an experience that is personalized and convenient. [A 2022 MedCity News piece described](#) this “paradigm shift” being driven by patients that are “much better-informed customers of healthcare services, bringing increasingly higher expectations.” Meeting these expectations is increasingly make-or-break for today's custom telehealth businesses and telemedicine software providers.

At a time when many [expect investment in telehealth infrastructure](#) to decrease and several [high-profile digital health tech companies have filed for bankruptcy](#), many other telehealth app and software developers are looking for insights into how to grow and deliver a patient experience that will fulfill the needs of today's healthcare space and modern consumers.

Five essential features of future telehealth platforms

An abundance of research already exists to help point healthcare developers in the right direction toward creating and maintaining an engaging [virtual health platform](#). Here are five features consumers frequently report wanting developers to focus on and deliver in their platforms:

1. Convenience: The new standard in telehealth

In [a recent survey of pharmacy usage](#) conducted by Wolters Kluwer, some consumers – most notably younger generations – prioritize convenience over all else, even their provider's credentials. One of the true value drivers of telehealth is the ability to deliver both convenience and quality.

Emphasizing ease-of-use in telehealth technology

Within the milieu of telehealth, a truly convenient experience means seeing a provider where and how a patient wants, but also the ease of use of the technology. A 2021 Forbes article highlights how these

[same younger patients have “lower tolerance for inconsistent or bad technology experiences.”](#) So, while offering telehealth may seem an automatic box checked for convenience, developers need to think further and make sure their experience, from the first click, to provider follow-up, are seamless and easy.

2. Quality of care: A non-negotiable factor

Even though some patients think convenience is paramount, care quality is still critical. While many virtual care solutions are [currently researching overall outcomes](#), encouraging studies recently prove the power of telehealth in areas like [addiction management](#) and [mental health](#). However, to have staying power, developers need to ensure that their technology supports the quality of care across differing specialties.

Enhancing clinical effectiveness in virtual health services

One consideration in achieving this aim is to evaluate not only the functionality of telehealth platforms, but also the content within them. During a [podcast with HLTH Matters](#), Yaw Fellin, Vice President of Product and Solutions for Clinical Effectiveness at Wolters Kluwer Health, noted that, “there’s a tremendous need to amplify the quality and the experience for both clinicians and patients, and that fits right at the intersection of where and how we provide clinical and health education content.”

Providing content that supports the experience will not only help developers ensure the quality of care, but also may support another ask of consumers, which is easy access to helpful resources.

3. Resources: Empowering patients through education

Modern consumers are increasingly [demanding more information and control over their care](#), according to a 2022 MedCity news article. That includes a desire to understand the care being offered to them, as well as valuing information on preventative medicine. Wolter’s Kluwer research on patient expectation around educational resources echoes this, highlighting that more [than 80% of patients have questions](#) following a health care interaction.

Alleviating physician burnout with quality telehealth content

With [physician burnout](#) top of mind for much of the healthcare industry, telehealth platforms can seize on an opportunity to embed quality content and self-service resources that will allow patients the understanding they need without contributing more workload and questions to overloaded providers. In fact, the same Wolters Kluwer study indicated that more than [75% of patients say that receiving patient education](#) would make them more satisfied with their care, with nearly that many saying it would make them more likely to return to a provider.

4. Personalization: Using technology to personalize healthcare

Convenience, quality, and resources are all elements that support today’s patients desire for personalized care. They want care at a time that works for them, via the modality they chose, and with the option of self-serving education and follow-up information to enact their care plan.

Personalization isn’t a new topic in healthcare, but it is one of which developers need to be increasingly aware. [Patients have expectations for technology to improve tasks like scheduling](#), communication, and education. Telemedicine apps and software are no exceptions to those expectations.

When developers are [incorporating consumer health education content that allows for personalization](#), it needs to be integrated and deployed so consumers can also access the information when and how they want it.

5. Security: Building trust in telehealth platforms

One might think that HIPAA and a slew of new and forthcoming privacy rules might be enough to emphasize the need for security within telehealth, but [headlines have given consumers](#) reason to be wary. Health information is among the most sensitive categories of a consumer's information, and developers need to be aware. Showcasing efforts to secure a patient's information is going to go a long way in helping a solution stand out among the pack of telehealth providers.

Telehealth: A crucial component in today's healthcare journey

The American Telehealth Association spotlights the importance of virtual care in its third annual [Telehealth Awareness Week from September 17-25](#). The organization's mission statement that telehealth "[remains a lifeline for diverse patients and providers](#)" aligns with larger trends in the healthcare industry. While no technology solution is one size fits all, to remain relevant during a push for [more experience-driven healthcare encounters](#), telehealth developers and software solutions need to keep incorporating consumer feedback to understand and reflect what is truly important to today's patient, payer, and provider.

Learn more about solutions to support [digital health technology and telehealth](#).

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