

Patient's Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction

The Patient Satisfaction Survey is a short, easily administered questionnaire that provides health centers with information and insight on their patients' view of the services they provide. Health centers can use survey results to design and track quality improvement over time, as well as compare themselves to other health centers.

History of the Patient Satisfaction Survey

Federally-funded health centers are expected to assess patient satisfaction and did so individually until 1999. More than 300 survey tools were submitted and health centers said they supported a more standardized approach.

Factors influence health care cost

1- Hospital cost increases

The newly formed Health Care Cost Institute has found that rising prices for care were the chief driver of health care costs for privately insured Americans in 2011. Spending on health care services climbed 4.6 percent in 2011, well above the 3.8 percent growth rate found for 2010 and higher than expected for 2011.

Hospital cost categories of health care:-

- Hospital stays
- Surgical procedures
- Outpatient care
- Consolidation of the hospital industry

2- Provider prices

The prices that health care providers charge are much higher in the U.S. than in Europe. Data show that after hospital spending the next biggest contributor to overall spending growth between 2005 and 2009 was the increase in physician and clinical service costs. These costs accounted for 18 % of total growth or \$229 / person over the five-year period.

3- Medical technology

The increasing cost of medical technology is a significant contributor to higher health care spending. The implementation of new medical technology accounts for between 38 percent and 65 percent of health care spending increases. New technology expands the range of treatment options available to patients, but it does by replacing lower-cost options with higher-cost services.

4- Waste

Wasteful spending likely accounts for between one-third and one-half of all U.S. health care spending. PricewaterhouseCoopers calculates that up to \$1.2 trillion, or half of all

health care spending, is the result of waste. An Institute of Medicine (IOM) report estimated unnecessary health spending totaled \$750 billion in 2009 alone. The biggest area of excess is defensive medicine, including redundant, inappropriate or unnecessary tests and procedures. Other factors that contribute to wasteful spending include non-adherence to medical advice and prescriptions, alcohol abuse, smoking and obesity.

5 -Unhealthy lifestyles

The growing burden of chronic diseases adds significantly to escalating health care costs. Researchers predict a 42 percent increase in chronic disease cases by 2023, adding \$4.2 trillion in treatment costs and lost economic output.¹⁸ Much of this cost is preventable, since many chronic conditions are linked to unhealthy lifestyles. For example, obesity accounts for an estimated 12 percent of the health spending growth in recent years.

6-Aging population

Life expectancy in the U.S. reached 77.9 years in 2007, up significantly from 62.9 years in 1940. Individuals who are age 65 or older, who spend much more on health care services than younger people, will comprise nearly one-fifth of the population by 2050

7- Taxes

For 2011, Aetna's income taxes equaled more than 3 percent of total Aetna revenue, more than half of what Aetna recognized as profit/net income. This does not include significant new taxes that will be levied on insurers under the Affordable Care Act in the next several years. Aetna estimates that the combination of the new Health Insurer Fee and Reinsurance Contribution will add approximately 3.5 to 4.5 percent to the cost of health insurance coverage. The new taxes have been estimated to increase the cost of health coverage by nearly \$5,000 per family over the next decade.

8-Improving health care system transparency: We led the way in the past decade to greater transparency for consumers in health care quality and pricing. For example, the Member Payment Estimator tool provides real time, out-of-pocket cost estimates and cost comparisons for more than 550 commonly used, non-emergency in-network health care services, as well as many common out-of-network physician services.

This level of detail gives members a more complete and personalized cost picture to better plan for health care services. Aetna research has shown that the tool may save as much as \$170 on out-of-pocket costs for more than 30 commonly selected health care services.

Patient Dissatisfaction Increases:

- 1. Delays**
- 2. Short Visits**

The survey found that patients routinely face long delays when making an appointment with a specialist. Half of primary care patients waited 2 or fewer days for an appointment, but 58% of specialists' patients waited more than 6 days (40% waited between 6 days and 1 month; 18% waited more than 1 month).

Patients who saw their primary care physician within 2 days of calling were more likely to be satisfied with their physician than those made to wait 3 to 5 days.

Patient Satisfaction Linked To Several Factors

According to results from a study conducted by Joshua J. Fenton, M.D., M.P.H., of the University of California-Davis Sacramento, and his team, higher patient satisfaction seems to be linked to:

- 1 - Higher mortality risk**
- 2 - Greater health care and prescription costs**
- 3 - Higher odds of inpatient hospitalization**
- 4 - Lower odds of emergency department use.**
- 5 - Nonelective urgent hospital admissions often begin with emergency department visits.**

It is also possible that patients who are least satisfied with their physicians may be more likely to seek health care at emergency departments rather than at outpatient clinics."

Even though this study found that patients with higher satisfaction

had better physical and mental health status, and were more likely to rate their health

as excellent, than patients who were less satisfied, the researchers suggest that patient satisfaction could be an indicator for illness and identify individuals who rely more on their physicians.