healthPRIME

Reduce your No-Show Rate & Increase Collections in your Medical Practice

AT A GLANCE

# Impact of No-Show Appointments on the Healthcare System

Patients not showing up for scheduled appointments is a long-standing issue that negatively impacts healthcare providers by reducing resource utilization, revenue potential, and overall quality of healthcare services.

According to *research*, **patient no-show rates can reach as high as 80% in problematic areas** where multiple factors that drive patients to miss appointments are present. Based on this research, **no-shows alone can cost the U.S. healthcare system more than $150 billion a year. This research also estimated that a physician loses about $200 per no-show.**

Though there can be multiple reasons behind patient no-shows to medical appointments, data from a *research article* showed that **37.6% of the patients forgetting the appointment or not being sure they had one was the most common reason for missing an appointment.**

Other reasons were related to problems with transportation, insurance, and personal or work situations the patient was facing.

Taking a proactive approach to reduce no-shows, manage your cancellations, and fill empty appointment slots protects your practice's revenue and operational efficiency.
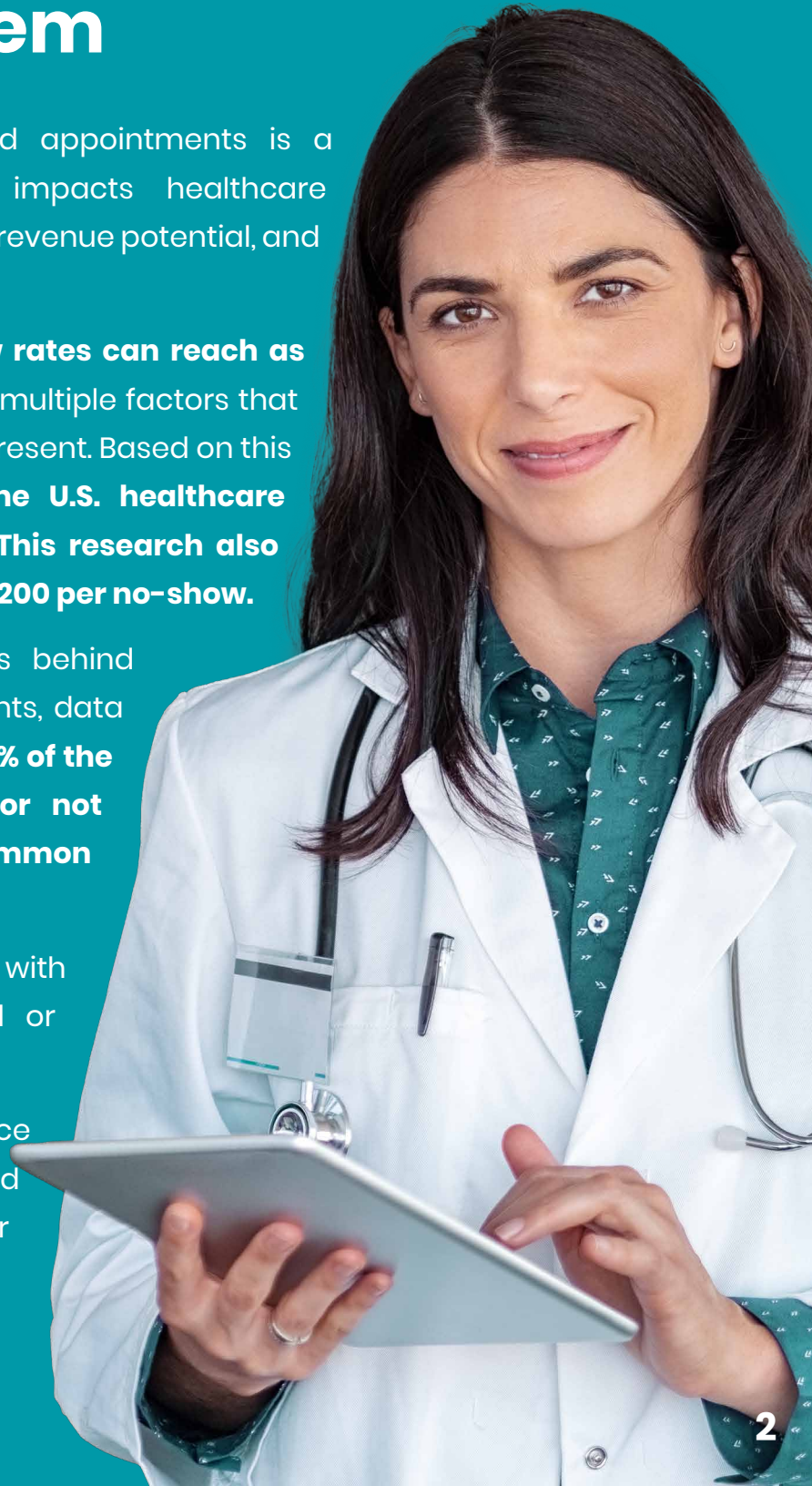
Strategies to Reduce Practice's No-Show Rate

1. Analyze your No-Show Data

If you can't measure it, you can't improve it. Review your no-show rate to identify trends within your medical practice. Identify if there's a particular provider, certain days, or specific seasons where your practice has the most no-shows. By monitoring this metric, you will be able to identify areas of improvement and put action plans in place to reduce your no-show rate.

> "Monitoring your no-show rate is essential for your medical practice. If a practice is experiencing an unusually high number of no-shows, it gives them the chance to ask - what is going on in their processes and how can they streamline them to reduce no-shows? It's essential to track and reduce this metric to improve cashflow and ensure patient satisfaction.
>
> **Nicholas Lambrecht, Manager Client Success.**

It is important to understand the story behind your no-show data, understand the cause, and address the problems one by one. Don't try to tackle every issue at once. While it's tempting to try to fix all the issues, it might be too much to manage, reducing the effectiveness of your efforts.

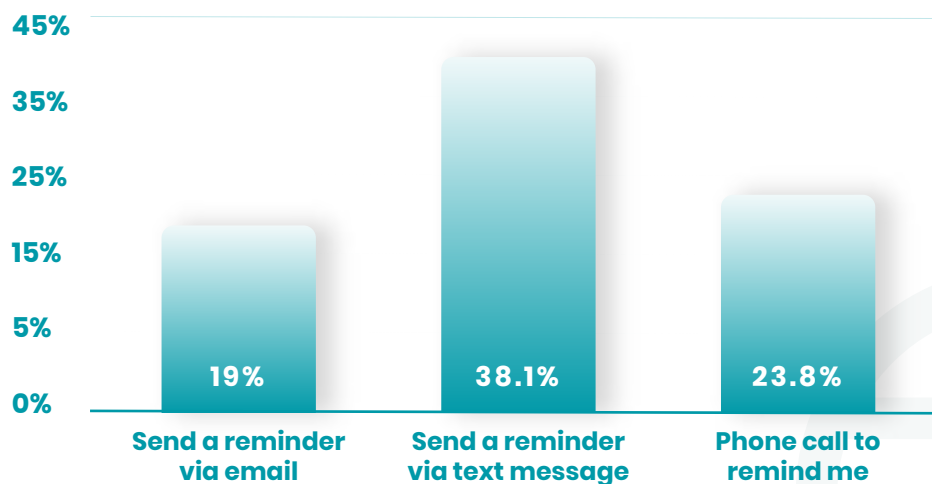Read more about the importance of tracking your no-show rate on our blog:
Three Key Performance Indicators to Track Weekly - Health Prime (hpiinc.com)

2. Implement Appointment Reminders

According to a **_2019 MGMA Stat Poll,_** automated appointment reminders lead to fewer no-shows. The data showed that 88% of the healthcare leaders surveyed use these reminders in their organizations. They stated that using these reminders results in: a lower no-show rate, higher revenue, fewer unfilled appointments, and the ability to see more patients.

Appointment reminders can help you reduce no-shows and save staff time spent confirming appointments, which improves your practice's efficiency and productivity. Phone, email, or text reminders are ideal for those forgetful patients.

The MGMA Maximizing Patient Access and Scheduling Report stated that, according to patients, some ways their practice could have helped them keep their appointments were sending reminders using these three methods.

45%	
35%	
25%	
15%	
5%	
0%	19% 38.1% 23.8%

Send a reminder via email | Send a reminder via text message | Phone call to remind me

The MGMA recommends considering scheduled and staggered reminders if you opt for multiple communication methods. For example, send an email reminder five days prior to an appointment, followed by a phone call three days in advance, and then a text message a day before, or the morning of, the appointment. Multiple reminder options may not be suitable for every practice so determine what works best for your practice needs and then start tracking it. You can then analyze your no-show data to determine the most suitable reminder method for your business.

Also, remember to keep contact information up to date and double check it when scheduling appointments. You will not be able to remind patients of their appointments if you don't have the right contact information. As in any of your practice's processes, accuracy is key in confirming appointments.

3. Create and Enforce your No-Show and Cancellation Policy

Having a cancellation policy in writing helps patients understand the consequences of a no-show or last-minute cancellation to their health outcomes, other patients, and your bottom line. These rules, guidelines and potential penalties will help discourage your patients from missing their appointments and could potentially help reduce the adverse impact of no-shows on your medical practice.

Every medical practice has its own particular needs, so define your no-show and cancellation policy based on it. Here are some best practices you have to keep in mind when creating or reinforcing your no-show policy:

Have a cancellation window

Establish a prudent timeframe for patients to cancel or reschedule their appointments without getting penalized. This will show patients that your practice is understanding and caring. Many practices have a long wait list, therefore, getting a cancellation notice in advance, allows enough time for the staff to fill the slot with another appointment.

Establish your fees

You might need to start charging for no-shows. It may be difficult to discuss these charges with patients; however, it's important to explain before they book an appointment that last minute cancellations and rescheduling fees may apply. Also, establish a reward system such as gift cards, discounts, or other incentives to encourage them to be on time for their appointments.

Communicate your policy

Make sure your patients are aware of the consequences of missing appointments. You can do this through your online booking portal, on your website, via email, when your patients set appointments over the phone or even when your patient shows up to the appointment.

> If a practice is struggling with no-shows, it gives them the chance to ask themselves if they have a no-show policy in place or if they are charging patients for cancelling or not showing to their appointments. In a lot of cases, once they institute this, they really start seeing the no-show rate go down. For doctors, time is money. You can't afford having patients not showing up to their appointments.
>
> **Nicholas Lambrecht, Manager Client Success.**

4. Reschedule your No-Shows as Soon as Possible

Don't wait to reschedule your no-shows. While this strategy will not prevent no-shows, it will show your patients that you are concerned and caring. Establishing a personal connection will make them less likely to no-show next time.

Keep in mind that it's important to reach out no earlier than 10-15 minutes past the appointment time, and not immediately. Remember to use a kind and non-accusatory tone, rather than reprimanding your patient for missing the appointment or mentioning no-show fees. The goal is to get that patient back in the door. If your office does charge a no-show fee, wait to discuss the fee until the next appointment when the patient is right there with you at check in.

Services that can Help your Practice Reduce No-Shows

Even if patient no-shows are unavoidable, you can establish strategies to prevent them and reduce your no-show rate significantly. If you need more assistance with reducing no-shows, *Health Prime* can help.

HEALTH PRIME'S BENCHMARK FOR NO SHOW RATE IS BELOW 6%

Health Prime Datalytics

Our business intelligence platform (BI) offers timely and actionable insights and full visibility into your Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), including your no-show rate.

Datalytics offers a breakdown by appointment type to help you get a better understanding of where no-shows are coming from. It will also give you access to a trending graph that provides the percent and dollar amount for no-show appointments.

Get a Shopper

A good way to reduce your no-shows is having a great scheduling process in place. Health Prime can assess your practice's scheduling process by using a 'shopper' – someone who pretends to be a potential customer to gather data. Our shopper will call your practice 2-3 times a month to see if they can make appointments.

Using the data from the shopper, we can then recommend scheduling process improvements. If your patients can make their own appointments online, we can also assess online scheduling.

For current Health Prime clients, there's no extra charge for this once-per-quarter service.

Appointment Scheduling & Confirmations

Calling your patients to schedule or reschedule appointments may seem like a tedious task. Let Health Prime do it for you. We can schedule regular appointments or appointments for preventative care to fill no-show appointments.

If you want to manage the calling, we can assist you with the list of patients to call or our team can call your patients and confirm appointments on your behalf.

Learn more about our solutions and how we can help you reduce no-shows and maximize revenue on our website _SOLUTIONS – Health Prime_ (hpiinc.com)

Summary

Patient no-shows is a long-standing issue that negatively impacts healthcare providers by reducing resource utilization, revenue potential, and overall quality of healthcare services. Taking a proactive approach to reduce no-shows, manage cancellations, and fill empty appointment slots protects your practice's revenue and operational efficiency.

Some strategies to reduce no-shows are:

1) Analyze your no-show rate to determine the source of the issue.
2) Implement patient reminders to confirm appointments.
3) Create and enforce no-show and cancellation policies.
4) Reschedule any no-shows as soon as possible.

For more information on how to reduce no-show rates to increase cash flow and optimize your practice, contact our team of billing experts at **Health Prime (*hpiinc.com*)** or email us at *sales@hpiinc.com*. Our team will schedule a meeting to discuss how Health Prime can maximize your cash flow by cutting costs and saving you time!

Subscribe to our *Health Prime blog* and our *Health Prime newsletter* for all the latest updates on running your medical practice more efficiently, so that you can focus on what matters most: your patients.