

Indian Health Service

Customer Service- The Impact of Consumer Choice in HealthCare

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Today we provide you with an opportunity to explore the changing environment within the United States healthcare system.

Patients are now consumers with the ability to choose their healthcare needs.

Indian Health Service must compete to ensure we provide the absolute best service to ensure sustainability.

Background information:

The cost and quality of the U.S. healthcare system is one of the most prominent issues facing everyday Americans. It is a top policy concern for voters, a key indicator of economic efficiency, and a significant driver of the national debt (Peter G Peterson Foundation, July 2023).

The USA spends over 17% of its GDP on health.

In 2022, the United States spent an estimated \$12,555 per person on healthcare — the highest healthcare costs per capita across the OECD countries.

What does OECD stand for in?

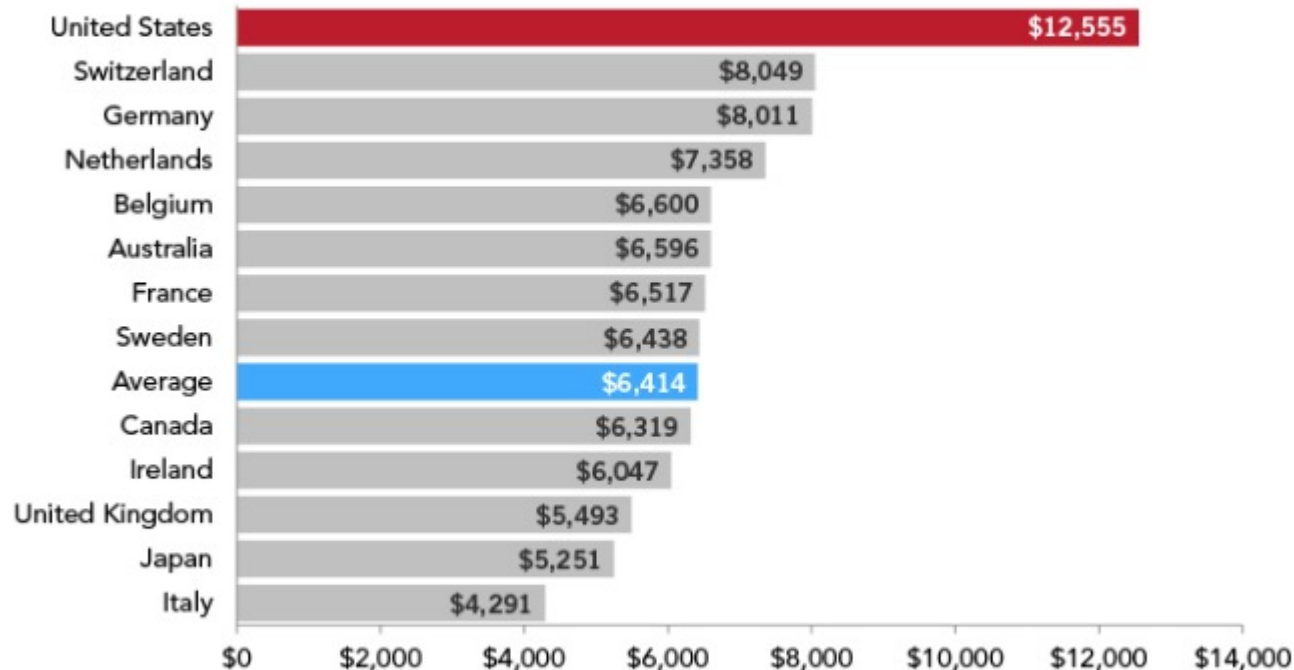
The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organization in which governments work together to find solutions to common challenges, develop global standards, share experiences and identify best practices to promote better policies for better lives.

For comparison, Switzerland was the **second** highest-spending country with about \$8,049 in healthcare costs per capita, while the average for wealthy OECD countries, excluding the United States, was only \$6,414 per person. Such comparisons indicate that the United States spends a disproportionate amount on healthcare (Peter G Peterson Foundation, July 2023).

The United States spends far more money on healthcare than any other country, both on an absolute and a per capita basis. In 2017 total spending grew to \$3.5 trillion (Martin et al., 2018).

 **PETER G. PETERSON FOUNDATION** U.S. per capita healthcare spending is over twice the average of other wealthy countries

Healthcare Costs per Capita (Dollars)



SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Health Statistics 2023*, July 2023.

NOTES: Data are from 2022 and include provisional values from some countries. Average does not include the United States. The five countries with the largest economies and those with both an above median GDP and GDP per capita, relative to all OECD countries, were included. Chart uses purchasing power parities to convert data into U.S. dollars.

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The average length of stay has steadily decreased over time due to changes in medical guidelines and practices, improved technology, and shifts in hospital reimbursement and financial constraints. The U.S. and most comparable countries have seen hospitals visits shorten at a similar pace since 1994. (Peterson-KFF, 2023).

Average hospital cost per day, 2014



Note: Data for United States represents average cost in employer-sponsored plans. Data from Australia and Switzerland represent average private sector costs.

Source: International Federation of Health Plans (2015), "2015 Comparative Price Report, Variation in Medical and Hospital Prices by Country" (Accessed on January 30, 2018).
[Get the data](#) • [PNG](#)

Peterson-KFF
Health System Tracker

Hospital spending represents 32% of total health spending in the U.S. Average prices for select health services in the U.S. (based on employer-based insurance claims and patient cost-sharing) and a few comparable countries are available from the International Federation of Health Plans. Although hospital stays are shorter on average in the U.S., the average price of a night in the hospital is far higher in the U.S. than in Australia, and slightly higher than in Switzerland (Peterson-KFF, 2023).

The U.S. has higher prices for most health care services and prescription drugs, according to available internationally comparable data. Meanwhile, utilization of several services, including physician consultations and hospital stays, is lower than in many comparable countries. (Cox & Kamal, May 2018)

Healthcare spending is driven by utilization (the number of services used) and price (the amount charged per service). An increase in either of those factors can result in higher healthcare costs.

Despite spending nearly twice as much on healthcare per capita, utilization rates in the United States do not differ significantly from other wealthy OECD countries. (Peterson-KFF, 2023).

<https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/how-do-healthcare-prices-and-use-in-the-u-s-compare-to-other-countries/#item-start>

There is not a single U.S. health care system, but several systems that serve different segments of the population. Most Americans receive their coverage from private health insurance while two major federal government health insurance programs, Medicare and Medicaid, offer coverage for seniors and some of the disabled, and healthcare services for some of the poor and near-poor, respectively.

Nevertheless, and unusually for high-income countries, almost 10% of the population remains uninsured; although this is a large improvement from the 17% figure prior to the implementation of the major provisions of the Affordable Care Act in 2014.

Changes are occurring across the nation's healthcare system. Healthcare organizations are going to evolve current business practices by integrating healthcare into a market based approach to reflect their patient demographics (Johnson, & Borgos, 2012).

Expected healthcare reforms within the U.S. are focusing on highly evolved and integrated delivery models that improve patient satisfaction (Johnson, & Borgos, 2012).

Current expectations are that these factors will increase demands on the U.S. healthcare system, already under legislative overhaul with the Affordable Care Act (ACA) (LeRouge et al. 2014).

With these changes in the United States occurring, companies are struggling to control the costs of conducting day-to-day business to meet this increased demand on healthcare (Porter & Lee, 2013).

Businesses that prioritize customer experience can boost revenue. Investing in customer experience (CX) strategies can improve customer satisfaction, raise employee retention and save companies money in the long term. Private practices that do not maintain digital prowess will have unhappy patients and unhappy employees (Vigario, 2023)

Customer experience is not a trend, it is a **DEMAND**.

Today's consumers are becoming increasingly accustomed to companies prioritizing their convenience and experience, which leads them to have increasingly high expectations for their health care providers.

According to Hubspot, more than 90% of customer service teams say customers have higher expectations than ever before, and a medical practitioner's digital prowess is now also a reflection of their medical expertise and business awareness. (Vigario, 2023)

Patient contentment is a strategic element to any healthcare model.

In a healthcare environment, **patient satisfaction** is a reflection of **customer satisfaction** and is an instrumental part of the businesses success (Otani, Waterman, & Dunagan, 2012).

In addition, patients equate their **medical visits**, **environmental experiences**, and **individual needs** to patient satisfaction.

Related research on this topic reveals that the patient's perception on satisfaction has an impact on the reputation of the hospital (Guarisca & Bavin, 2008).

According to Aragon (2003) the Primary Provider Theory states , “. . . patient satisfaction occurs at the nexus of provider power and patient expectations” (p. 225).

More specifically, patient satisfaction can predict the overall healthcare experience between the patient and the healthcare facility and staffs (Hawkins, Swanson, Kremer, and Fogg, 2014). This theory restricts its applicability to the patient exclusively

ONLY patients judge the quality of service

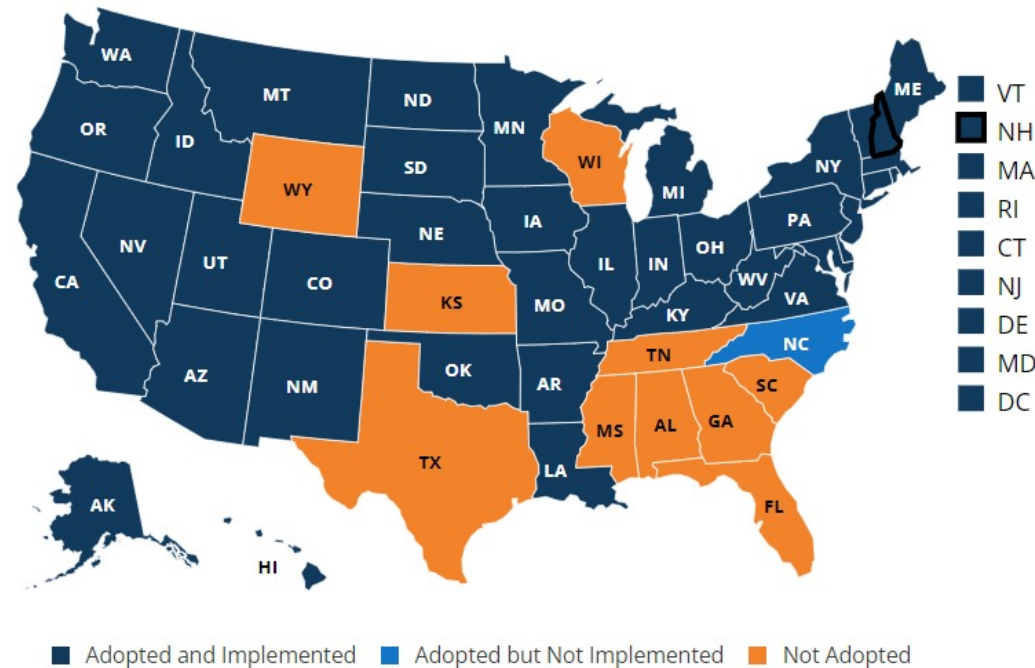
The patient inter-relates this satisfaction construct to a hierarchy consisting of the primary provider, clinic wait times, and clinic support staff (Aragon & Gesell, 2003).

Developing research suggests that the healthcare system should change the view of a patient - (Senić & Marinković, 2013).

As such, the quality of care is an essential element of the healthcare visit to influence the patient's overall satisfaction (Senić & Marinković, 2013).

**‘Patients are
CONSUMERS’**

Medicaid Expansion – The Choice – Patients are Consumers



A central goal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is to significantly reduce the number of uninsured by providing a continuum of affordable coverage options through Medicaid and the Health Insurance Marketplaces.

The Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Medicaid expansion expanded Medicaid coverage to nearly all adults with incomes up to **138%** of the Federal Poverty Level (**\$20,120 for an individual in 2023**) and provided states with an enhanced federal matching rate (FMAP) for their expansion populations.

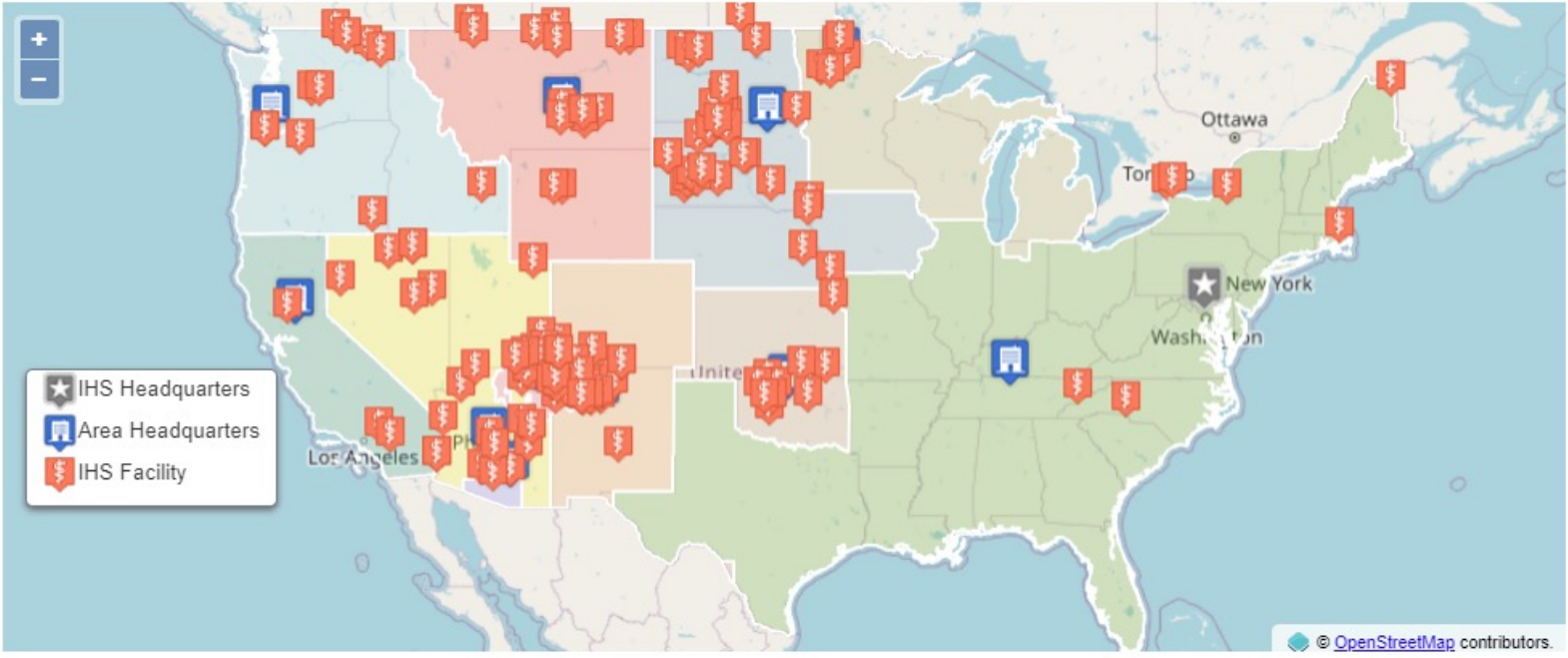
To date, **41** states (including DC) have adopted the Medicaid expansion and **10** states have not adopted the expansion.

Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) -
The FMAP is based on a formula that provides higher reimbursement to states with lower per capita incomes relative to the national average. The formula is intended to reflect states' differing abilities to fund Medicaid from their own revenues.

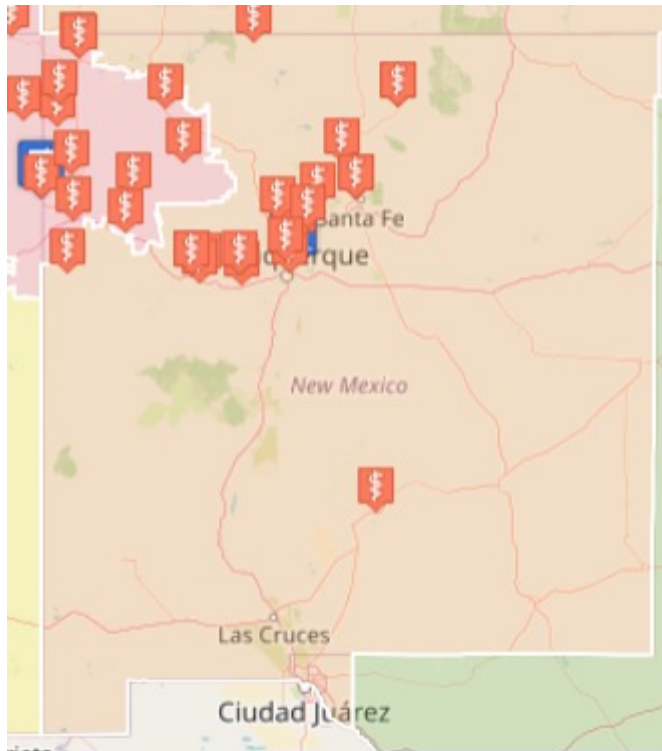
Kaiser Family Foundation - Timeframe: as of July, 2023

The Indian Health Service is divided into **twelve** physical areas of the United States: Alaska, Albuquerque, Bemidji, Billings, California, Great Plains, Nashville, Navajo, Oklahoma, Phoenix, Portland and Tucson.

Each of these areas has a unique group of Tribes that they work with on a day to day basis.



Lets take a look at New Mexico Area:



IHS Facility

Centennial Care began on January 1, 2014 with services provided by three managed care organizations (MCOs). These services include physical health, behavioral health, long-term care and community benefits. Eligibility for all Medicaid programs requires that individuals meet certain federal guidelines.



**BlueCross BlueShield
of New Mexico**

A Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company,
an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



We are competing to keep our patients to received care at our federal/tribal facilities

What can we do?

- Focus on impactful patient relationships
- Don't Keep customers waiting
- Be forward thinking, don't resonate on the past
- Personalize the customers experience
- Active Listening
- Smile

Happy Customers, better business!!

The ART of Customer Service

Attention

Respect

Time

Go the Distance – Start strong, Stay consistent – It's not enough to go the extra distance if you have already lost the race.

Customer Service Counts

Customer – People just like you!

Greet

Be friendly

Connect

Respect needs, priorities, and
PRIVACY!

Customer Service Counts

Service – Meet your customer's needs and expectations!

Skills – Listen and Evaluate

Knowledge – Know your business

Training – Understand your role within the organization

Think of a time when you
were a customer and you
wanted to make a
complaint about a product
or service.

NOW.....

Have you ever experienced unexpected service?
Have you ever offered it? Tell a story?



Telephone Skills - Answer and Transfer

- Answer by the second ring
- Use a cheerful tone of voice
- Identify yourself/your company
- Listen carefully
- Be prompt but not hurried
- Provide information
- Handle calls in order
- Ask permission to put on hold
- Provide information about the caller
- Apologize to first caller for wait time
- Transfer to a person not a department
- Develop a script

Thank the customer for calling

Answering the phone continued

The greeting, “**warm and welcoming**” – Pleasant and up-beat – “Thank you for calling the Organization, my name is _____, how may I help you?”

Attitude is everything - **Smile** the customer will know you are smiling through the phone.

Listening Skills – “**Open-ended**” and “**Closed-ended**” questions....

Open-ended – Questions that help you dig for more information. These are questions that start with words that probe for details. Examples of probing words are “Which? What? Where? Why? When?”

Example – “Where does it hurt”; “When did you first notice the symptoms?”

Closed-ended – Questions that focus the conversation or draw it to a close, simple choices, “Yes” or “No”

Irate Irrational Customer

Greet the customer....

Connect in some way.....

Listen with your full attention.....

Use positive language.....

Follow-up if a required action is agreed upon.....

Listening – 3 Types

1. Attentive Listening – You are engaging and the client truly believes that they have your attention to discuss their concerns.

2. Active Listening – Repeating back what you hear the other person say – asking questions to clarify any misunderstandings during the conversation:

- a) Real effort to understand the message
- b) Restate the message
- c) Ask questions to confirm the understanding

3. Objective Listening – Give the customer the benefit of the doubt. Separate your emotions from the current concerns. Listen to the whole story. Delay making any judgments:

- a) Keep an open mind
- b) Don't jump to conclusions
- c) Avoid threatening questions
- d) Evaluate objectively to what the customer is telling you

There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else ~ Sam Walton

Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning. ~ Bill Gates

**Spend a lot of time talking to customers face to face. You'd be amazed how many companies don't listen to their customers.
~Ross Perot**

**Exceed your customer's expectations. If you do, they'll come back over and over. Give them what they want - and a little more ~
Sam Walton**

“If you do build a great experience, customers tell each other about that. Word of mouth is very powerful.” ~ Jeff Bezos, CEO, Amazon.com

The goal as a company is to have customer service that is not just the best but legendary. ~ Sam Walton

Do what you do so well that they will want to see it again and bring their friends.” ~ Walt Disney

“People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care”
~ Theodore Roosevelt

It is not the employer who pays the wages. Employers only handle the money. It is the customer who pays the wages ~ Henry Ford

YOU NEVER GET A
SECOND CHANCE
TO MAKE A FIRST
IMPRESSION

