Your Role in the eSurvey Process

Robust feedback is a vital part of ensuring that future patients have an excellent experience at your facility. Utilizing Press Ganey’s esurvey enables your organization to collect more patient feedback than ever before; however, it is important to note that the success of your online survey process is dependent on your ability to consistently ask patients for their email address. Let’s examine some of the important considerations below.

Importance of Patient Email Addresses

To get started, first ask yourself and your colleagues, “How does our organization use patient email addresses today?” In today’s healthcare environment, organizations use patient email addresses for many reasons and in fact, the email address should be considered an essential part of the patient’s records. However, we often don’t think of the email address as essential. We need to change this mindset because patients will be more likely to provide their email address if the request seems reasonable. So, as you read through this document, keep the above question in mind.

Opportunities and Ways to Request Patient Email Addresses

There are many opportunities to request email addresses from patients. Below we will cover three of the most popular times and two helpful approaches to making the request. For organizations that collect email addresses for many purposes, we recommend the General approach. For organizations that collect email addresses only for survey purposes, we suggest the Patient Satisfaction approach:

- **Scheduling or Pre-Registration:**
  - **General:** “As part of the registration process, I need to collect all of your contact information. I see that your email address is not already listed in your records. May I have your preferred email address?”
  - **Patient Satisfaction:** “We would like to send you a patient satisfaction survey after your experience. Your feedback is vital to improving patient care and services. May I have your preferred email address so we may send you a satisfaction survey?”

- **Check-in:**
  - **General:** “Would you review the Patient Registration Form to make sure it is complete? I see that your preferred email address is not on here. Would you add it, as we want to make sure we have it as part of your contact information?”
  - **Patient Satisfaction:** “Would you review the Patient Registration Form to make sure it is complete? We would like to send you a patient satisfaction survey after your visit. Would you also note your preferred email address so we may send you a satisfaction survey?”

- **Check-out or Discharge**
  - **General:** “I hope you had a positive experience here. I see that we are missing some pieces of your contact information. May I have your preferred email address to add to your file?”
  - **Patient Satisfaction:** “I hope you had a positive experience here. We would like to send you a patient satisfaction survey. It only takes a few minutes to complete. May I have your preferred email address so we may send you a satisfaction survey?”
Optimizing Survey Participation

Whether your organization opts to use the patient satisfaction or general approach to collecting patient email addresses, it is always important to inform your patients that they may receive a survey. Press Ganey recommends reminding the patient that the survey is Q.U.I.C.K.!

Q is for Quick.
  - "The survey should only take 5-10 minutes to complete. It’s quick!"

U is for Unique.
  - "Your unique experience and feedback matters to us. Every voice counts."

I is for Improvement.
  - "Your feedback will be used to improve the care you receive from us in the future."

C is for Confidential.
  - "We keep your personal information and feedback confidential!"

K is for Knowledge.
  - "Help us understand. We can’t change what we don’t know."

Here’s an example of how you can create your own request using the Q.U.I.C.K. principles:
"You may receive an electronic survey from our patient satisfaction partners at Press Ganey Associates. Please take the time to complete this short survey. Your results are confidential and we will use your feedback to make the care here even better!"

When Patients Refuse or Don’t Have Email Addresses

In order to get the most accurate count of patient email addresses collected at your organization, there are several best practices to consider.

- Do not leave the email address field blank unless you…
  - Have a blank field in your IT system that allows your staff to enter in why the patient did not provide this information. This will give additional insight in the future for your staff to ask for this information again or update it (Best Practice).

- Enter code words in the email address field
  - If your IT system does not have an additional field where you can include why a patient does not have an email address, consider entering code words in the email address field. Examples include:
    - "Refused" - These patients should never be asked for email addresses during subsequent visits.
    - "No Email Address" - These patients should be asked for email addresses during subsequent visits.

- Do not enter fake email addresses in the system:
  - If your IT system requires you to enter an email address rather than including code words, use:
    - refused@(yourorganizationdomain).org
    - noemail@(yourorganizationdomain).org
Email Formatting Considerations

When entering email addresses, make sure registration and front-desk staff are aware of common entry errors.

- When the email address is entered in the system, ensure that it is in an email format including an @ symbol and .com, .net, .edu, .org, etc. If the email is not in an appropriate email format, we will not be able to deliver it.
- Ensure that the domain is spelled correctly. Emails with misspelled or incorrect/incomplete email domains will not be delivered (i.e. gmail.com instead of gmal.com or gmail.cm).
- Ensure that the email address does not include non-alpha/numeric characters. Few email systems allow special characters in email addresses (i.e. ! / * % #).
- Ensure the patient gives an email address that they can receive emails to. We recommend making sure it is an active personal email rather than a work-related email address.

Answering Frequently Asked Questions

Will you share or sell my email address?

“We take your privacy very seriously. We only use your email address to contact you about your care and things happening at our organization, and/or to send you a satisfaction survey. We do use a third party for the survey, but Press Ganey Associates is HIPAA compliant. You would receive no more than two emails from them.”

Why do you need my email address?

“Your email address is an important part of your records, like your home address and phone number. Our goal is to make sure we always have all of your contact information up to date.”

How long is the survey?

“The survey should take less than five minutes to complete.”

When will I receive the survey?

“You should expect to receive a survey in the next several days.” (This depends on when the patient record is uploaded to Press Ganey).

What if the patient is a minor?

Please check with your state’s privacy laws pertaining to adolescents. Some states treat minors uniformly, while other states separate minors and adolescents in terms of privacy rights from parents or guardians. If you state provides adolescents with individual privacy rights, make sure to collect the patient’s email address rather than the parent or guardian’s.