

Dr. Howard Marans MD: 8 Facts about Patient Satisfaction Surveys



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Patient Satisfaction Matters

Knowing a doctor's professional qualifications is critical. But to truly understand what a visit to that doctor might be like—from the doctor's "bedside manner" to the friendliness of the office staff—it's helpful to learn what others have experienced under that doctor's care. Learn about how Health grades patient satisfaction scores can complement objective clinical information.

1. It's an Industry Standard

Patient satisfaction surveys are a standardized way of reporting about a healthcare experience. Public reporting increases healthcare quality transparency, provides incentives to providers to improve satisfaction, and allows the public to compare healthcare providers based on patients' experiences. In fact, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services use patient satisfaction as a basis for reimbursing hospitals. They have recently implemented a similar patient satisfaction survey for doctors and group practices.

2. Higher Satisfaction Can Mean Better Health

Studies show that when patients really connect with a doctor—when the doctor satisfies both their medical and emotional needs—they're more likely to follow the doctor's advice and have a successful

healthcare outcome. Look for a doctor that patients' trust, who takes the time to answer their questions, and that patient would recommend to their own families.

3. Know More, Worry Less

Knowing what others have experienced under a doctor's care can give you a good sense of what *you're* likely to experience. You'll know, for instance, that the doctor takes the time to help you understand your healthcare; that the staff is helpful and friendly; and that you won't likely sit forever in the waiting room. The more you know what to expect, the less you'll worry, and the more you can focus on preparing for that critical first appointment.

4. The Survey Rates Eight Facets of Care

Health grades patient satisfaction survey rates eight areas of care, from the doctor's communication style to the friendliness of the office staff. Patients also answer the key question, "Would you recommend this doctor to family and friends?" To ensure accuracy, we accept surveys only from patients or family members of patients, and require contact information for verification.

5. The Highest Indicator Is a Recommendation

Our patient satisfaction surveys can help you learn a lot about the doctors you're considering, such as whether they give clear instructions to their patients, and how likely patients are to trust those instructions. But the highest indicator of patient satisfaction is a recommendation to friends and family. Knowing patients feel good enough about a doctor to recommend him or her helps you make a more informed decision when choosing a doctor.

6. It's Not Just About the Doctor

Is the doctor's office clean and well lit? Is the staff friendly? Do you sit forever in the waiting room? Our patient satisfaction survey includes questions about the doctor's office and staff because these factors actually make a difference: The more pleasant your experience, the more likely you are to return for follow-up care and routine visits—which ultimately improves your health and wellness.

7. You Have Options If a Doctor Has Low Scores

What if you're interested in a doctor who has low patient satisfaction scores? First, consider the number of surveys. If the doctor has only a few surveys, the results may not be as meaningful. If other aspects of the doctor's background appeal to you, arrange a consultation, and form your own opinion. The doctor may not be right for everyone, but might satisfy your particular need.

8. Your Opinion Counts

How satisfied are you? Just as you benefit from what other patients think about their doctor, your opinion counts too. Complete a survey to help others choose the right doctor for them. Your insights can prove valuable to other patients—as well as to the doctor.