



Proving Value With PROs

How a PatientIQ client uses
data in payer negotiations

Unlock new value from patient-reported outcomes (PROs) by using the data to drive compliance and realize significant clinical and financial benefits.

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Patient voices: the new value paradigm in healthcare

Patient-reported outcomes (PROs) are the most valuable currency in healthcare, offering a powerful tool to measure and improve the results of a provider's care. Yet until recently, much of that value has been indirect and difficult to quantify financially.

Now, that value is being redefined at the highest levels of government. CMS is now tying PROs to reimbursements for joint replacement surgery—solidifying the link between the patient's voice and the financial value of care. Under [the new CMS guidelines](#), hospitals accepting Medicare fee-for-service payments must submit PROs for patients undergoing elective hip or knee replacement surgeries to avoid steep financial penalties.

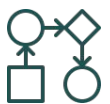
This measure is just the beginning of a broader shift in healthcare. As the industry moves toward value-based care, more such mandates will follow. Private payers are already taking notice, expecting more data-driven care from providers in their networks.

In order to lead within their markets, practices must embrace PRO collection and capitalize on their financial value. In fact, forward-thinking organizations are already doing this today.

The power of PROs

Patient-reported outcomes (PROs) are a patient's own assessment of their health status, quality of life, and well-being. Patients use tools such as questionnaires or surveys to track their experience in real time. PROs can capture a patient's symptoms, functional status, health-related quality of life, and any treatment side effects. Providers can also use PROs to assess patient satisfaction throughout their entire care experience.

The ongoing collection of PROs creates a feedback loop between patients and providers. With PROs, providers can better understand how a health condition or procedure affects patients from their perspective. For instance, if pain is not improving, the physician may opt to prescribe a different medication or suggest another treatment protocol. Incorporating PROs into clinical practice helps providers make informed decisions, tailor care, and improve patient satisfaction and outcomes.



PROs in Action: How One Practice Uses Data in Payer Negotiations

A large multispecialty practice in the PatientIQ network is capturing new value from PROs — leveraging the data within payer contract negotiations to win better reimbursement terms. Here are three ways they're achieving it.



1. Adopting a cultural mindset of care quality.

Getting the most out of PROs starts with an institutional commitment to improving the patient experience through fostering a mindset of providing quality patient care. This practice does exactly that—not only collecting, but also acting on, patient feedback across every aspect of care: from check-in, to interactions with physicians, to post-surgical outcomes. For example, by comparing post-op pain scores at different follow-up times, the surgeon can adjust the patient's pain medication to keep their pain under control.

By proving this commitment to quality, the practice shows its stakeholders, including payers, that it delivers a more valuable care experience.

PROs can span the entire care journey, painting a fuller picture of the patient experience and holding patients accountable to their progress. For instance, a patient may have well-controlled pain in the office after reporting a 10/10 pain score on the PRO a week earlier. The physician can ask about the discrepancy to better understand the patient's lived experience.

By collecting PROs, your practice can demonstrate that it's focused on care quality—but this commitment must come from the top of your organization.

2. Proving superior performance.

At the negotiating table, it's not enough to claim excellent performance. Payers want evidence. PatientIQ's client used regional and national benchmarking to discover areas of superior performance compared to its peers. Importantly, the practice was able to prove these advantages with outcomes data. With these findings, the practice leaders have created a strong narrative around excellent performance—and ultimately garnered better terms with payers.

A PRO platform can help benchmark your practice's performance against national averages and identify any areas for improvement.

3. Illustrating responsible practice.

PROs can help providers identify appropriate candidates for surgical intervention. By using PROs to demonstrate evidence-based clinical decision-making, this multispecialty practice gained significant leverage in its payer negotiations. First, it used PROs to quantify and benchmark pre-operative assessments. This data has given providers a baseline to determine whether an intervention is well-suited for specific patients.

Ultimately, PRO data can improve long-term outcomes by helping physicians identify the right candidates for surgery. For example, a patient who reports a low pain score may be more suited to physical therapy, while a patient with a high pain score and limited mobility is likely an ideal candidate to benefit from joint replacement.

PRO data can help physicians enhance their clinical decision-making by identifying appropriate candidates for surgical intervention

Connecting the dots to financial impact

Of course, payer reimbursement rates are only one aspect of value. In the value-based care era, the patient voice has taken center stage. Research shows that patient satisfaction directly correlates with financial value, defined as the relationship between treatment outcomes and costs. Amplifying the patient voice through PROs unlocks value by helping practices:

- **Improve outcomes.** PROs don't just measure outcomes, they help improve them. By having insight into the patient's perception of recovery, the clinician can provide interventions, such as pain management, that address the patient's overall well-being.
- **Encourage engagement.** When patients see their voice heard and acted on, they become engaged members of the care team. Increased patient engagement is proven to improve health outcomes.
- **Improve resource use.** By understanding patient outcomes, providers can determine which interventions are more or less effective, helping them choose the best treatments.
- **Secure quality incentives.** PROs support data reporting necessary for both public and private quality incentives.
- **Decrease readmission rates.** Monitoring PROs allows for early intervention, reducing costly hospital readmissions.
- **Create a competitive advantage.** Using PROs enhances patient satisfaction and outcomes — building a practice's reputation and attracting more patients.
- **Make a name through research.** PRO data can be used directly in research, helping providers investigate cutting-edge interventions and quantify their impact for publication.

Though it takes time to collect PRO data and realize these benefits, working with a PRO vendor can start to return value on day one. Contracting with a recognized PRO vendor is a significant step that shows your practice is committed to delivering and measuring the right outcomes.

PROs and private payers: a new value frontier

From a private payer perspective, data is critical for an accurate picture of cost utilization, expenses, and clinical value. And, in value-based care, outcomes matter along with dollars. Value in healthcare, described by Porter's framework, is health outcomes achieved per dollar spent.

Dollars are relatively simple to measure. Payers typically rely on a traditional pipeline of data based on claims and prior authorization requests. While these measures may not represent an a complete snapshot of a patient's health journey, they are often what payers use to determine utilization and cost.

But how do clinicians quantify outcomes when proving value? Clinical outcome measures may be buried within unstructured data in hundreds of typed progress notes: "Patient reports feeling better." "Patient able to play golf again." Interoperability barriers, manual workflows, and cumbersome systems can challenge providers to prove value in a quantifiable manner.

A PRO collection process powered by analytics can help providers show the value of their services. For example, a surgeon can compare PROs to postoperative costs, such as follow-up MRIs, X-rays, physical therapy visits, and extended office follow-up. One surgeon who uses the PatientIQ platform took this approach to demonstrate that charging more for specialty surgical equipment upfront actually decreased the overall cost of care over time.

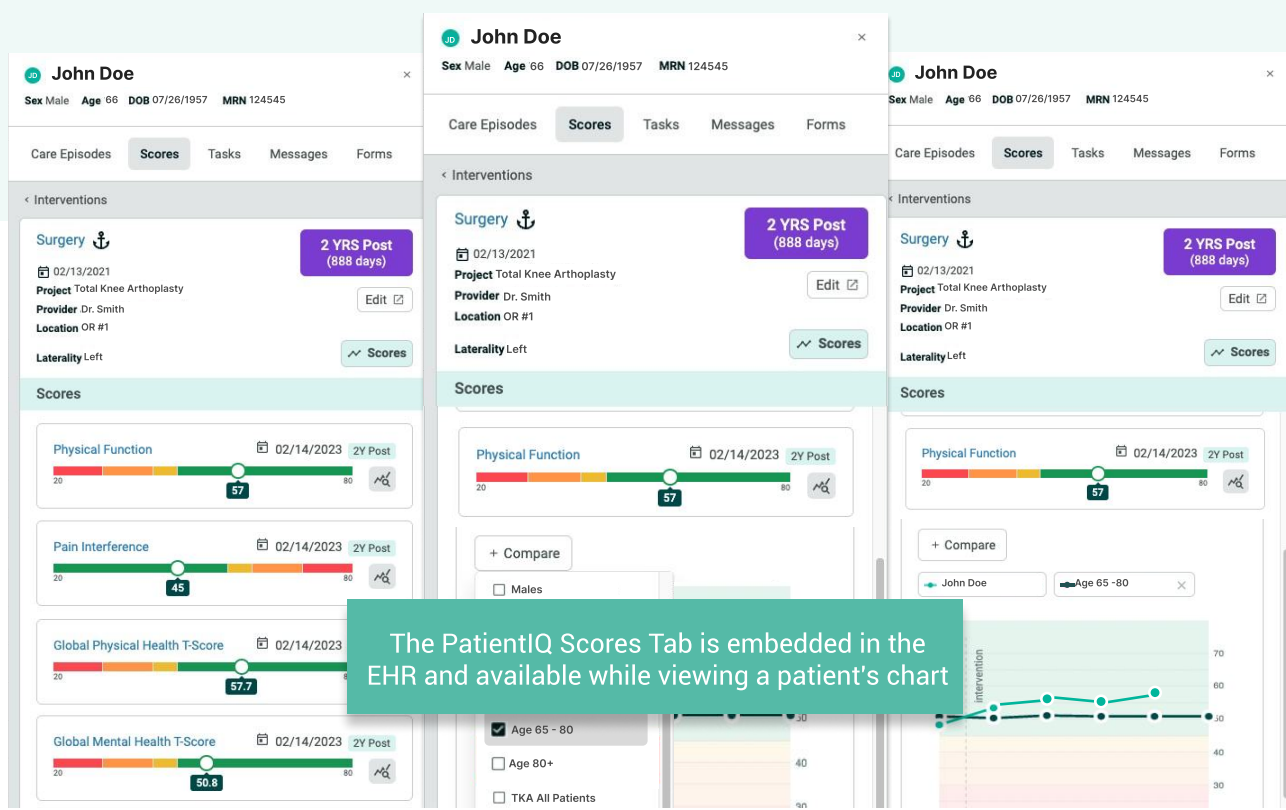
Making PROs work for your practice

While PROs offer tremendous promise, launching a program on your own can be complicated. Some of the challenges include manual implementation processes and patient non-compliance with answering surveys, according to [the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons](#).

But the industry is rapidly finding solutions. A [study of 35 hospitals](#) across the US examined PRO programs—highlighting what's working and what isn't. Some keys of successful programs included integration into existing workflows and a user-friendly platform. Clinician education that highlights the uses of PROs is essential to gain buy-in, as is showing patients their value by acting on the data.

To meet the new CMS requirements and find the maximum value in PRO collection, practices need solutions.

- Using a technology platform that allows for automation, easy access to usable data, and EHR integration can overcome these challenges.
- Automated collection with a user-friendly interface not only removes staff burden, it encourages patient compliance.
- Graphical reporting with both cohort comparison and national benchmarking makes data meaningful to use and easy for the clinician to see.



Prioritizing PROs: a health system's story

By prioritizing patient-reported outcomes, University of Missouri Health Care (MU Health Care) aims to ensure that patients receive the highest standard of care—guided by their own reported outcomes and experiences. With the support of PatientIQ and leadership of physicians like Dr. Brett Crist, MU Health Care has collected more than 1.5 million PROs.

Dr. Crist is recognized for his commitment to incorporating PROs into his daily practice. His commitment to patient compliance and engagement is evident in his impressive 98% compliance rate.



Brett Crist, MD
 Health Care

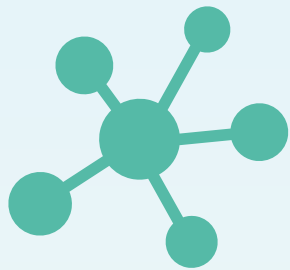
"PatientIQ allows me to communicate with patients and see how they're progressing through their history updates and PROMs. We can review how they're improving using graphical comparisons from previous visits."

[Read the full MU Health Care case study.](#)

Final thoughts

PROs are here to stay. As the healthcare industry continues moving toward value-based care, practices can expect to see PRO mandates emerge across specialties. With that in mind, industry leaders are already finding new ways to get the most value out of PROs.

Practices can get started by adopting technologies that simplify collection and remove barriers. By investing in robust PRO collection systems and fostering a culture that prioritizes the patient voice, practices can not only comply with the new requirements but also unlock significant clinical and financial benefits. This will allow them to remain competitive in the changing healthcare market, while providing the highest quality care.



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PatientIQ is the healthcare technology partner for deriving actionable insights from patient outcomes data. The cloud-based PatientIQ platform empowers health systems, specialty clinics, medical device and life science companies to systematically collect and analyze patient-reported outcomes data. With two EHR-integrated solutions, ClinicalPRO and ResearchPRO, PatientIQ empowers healthcare organizations with a proprietary analytics engine that translates patient-provided data into insights that support quality improvement, research, and regulatory reporting. PatientIQ also facilitates collaboration, bringing together data-driven healthcare professionals from across the country to accelerate research, participate in registries, and push medicine forward. For more, visit www.patientiq.io.

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