# Digital Healthcare Navigation Faces Awareness and Accuracy Hurdles.

One in three healthcare provider directory users surveyed (33%) report they have encountered outdated or incorrect information.

## Topline Findings

**September 11, 2025** – A new LexisNexis® Risk Solutions survey, with data collection by Ipsos, reveals that many Americans report challenges with the accuracy and usability of healthcare provider directories. One in three healthcare provider directory users in this survey (33%) report they have encountered outdated or incorrect information when using a healthcare provider directory. The survey found that while most American adults (82%) have used a healthcare provider directory, a portion of the adult population remains unengaged, as nearly one in five Americans (18%) say they have never used one. Additionally, according to the findings when American adults are actively looking for a new healthcare provider, usage of digital tools such as hospital/health systems and health plan directories lag behind traditional methods of referrals and recommendations, highlighting barriers in digital healthcare navigation.

## Detailed Findings

1. **Data inaccuracy and user difficulties create pain points.** One in three healthcare provider directory users surveyed encounter incorrect information. One in five of these users find the platforms difficult to navigate.

   - One in three (33%) healthcare provider directory users indicate they have encountered outdated or incorrect information.

   - Beyond data quality, one in five users (21%) found their last experience using a healthcare provider directory to search for a doctor, specialist, or other healthcare provider to be *somewhat difficult* (17%) or *very difficult* (4%).

2. **Many report not using or being unfamiliar with healthcare provider directories.** While healthcare provider directories are common tools, one in five consumers have never used them, often because they don't know they exist or how to access them.
   - Almost one in five respondents (18%) say they have *never used a healthcare provider directory* to find a doctor, specialists, or other healthcare providers or healthcare facility.
   - Among those who have never used a healthcare provider directory, 10% say they are *unaware they had a healthcare provider directory* and 4% say they *don't know how to access a healthcare provider directory*.

3. **Consumers rely on healthcare provider directories for critical healthcare decisions.** Healthcare provider directory users say they leverage directories for tasks like finding specialists and confirming their insurance coverage.

   - The most common reasons for using a healthcare provider directory among users are *finding a specialist* (49%) and *confirming providers are in-network* (46%).

   - When finding a provider that meets consumers' needs, *network coverage/participation* (58%) and *ensuring the provider can deliver the specific type of care needed* (56%) are the two most important factors for users.

     - In fact, 30% of healthcare provider directory users select *network coverage/participation* as the single most important factor when finding a provider that meets their needs from a healthcare provider directory.

4. **Overall, usage of hospital/health system and health plan directories lags behind traditional referral methods.** When actively seeking a new doctor, specialist, or other healthcare provider…

   - The most common methods involve "personal connections", 52% of Americans seek a *referral from their current doctor* and/or 46% *ask friends or family* for recommendations.
   - Usage of directories is lower, with 31% indicating they use a *hospital/health system* and/or 30% use a *health plan directory* as one of their methods.

5. **Mobile Devices Dominate Access to Healthcare Provider Directories:** For those who utilize healthcare provider directories, mobile devices are the preferred method of access.

   - Over half (51%) of healthcare provider directory users say they access directories via mobile devices.

   - Desktop computers are the second most common type of access utilized (36%).

*These are findings of a LexisNexis survey, with data collection provided by Ipsos, conducted between June 12 – June 18, 2025.  For this survey, a nationally representative sample of 3,014 U.S. adults aged 18 and older were surveyed online in English. The results of this research have a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.0 percentage points for all respondents.*

**For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:**

### Full Annotated Questionnaire

The next questions have to do with healthcare and how one may go about making decisions.

1. When you are looking for a new doctor, specialist, or other healthcare provider (e.g., mental health, speech, or physical therapist, chiropractor, etc.), how do you go about finding one? (Select all that apply)

| (Asked of everyone) | Total (n=3,014) |
|---|---|
| *Referral from Current Doctor and/or Asking Friends/Family (NET)* | *71%* |
|   Referral from current doctor | 52% |
|   Asking friends/family | 46% |
| Search engines | 33% |
| *Hospital/Health System and/or Health Plan Directory (NET)* | *51%* |
|   Hospital/Health System | 31% |
|   Health Plan Directory | 30% |
| Healthcare review sites | 25% |
| Social media sites | 11% |
| Calling customer service | 9% |
| Telehealth Platforms | 8% |
| Other | 3% |
| Not sure | 5% |

1A. Of these you selected, which one is the primary way you find a new doctor, specialist, or other healthcare provider (e.g., mental health, speech, or physical therapist, chiropractor, etc.)? (Select one answer)

| (Asked if more than one response selected in Q1; otherwise Q1 response was auto-punched into Q1A) | Total (n=3,014) |
|---|---|
| *Referral from Current Doctor and/or Asking Friends/Family (NET)* | *48%* |
|   Referral from current doctor | 33% |
|   Asking friends/family | 15% |
| *Hospital/Health System and/or Health Plan Directory (NET)* | *23%* |
|   Health Plan Directory | 13% |
|   Hospital/Health System | 10% |
| Search engines | 10% |
| Healthcare review sites | 5% |
| Social media sites | 3% |
| Calling customer service | 2% |
| Telehealth Platforms | 1% |
| Other | 2% |
| Not sure | 6% |

2. When was the last time you used a healthcare provider directory, one offered by a health plan, hospital or health system, to **find a doctor, specialists, other healthcare providers (e.g., mental health, speech, physical therapist, chiropractor, etc.) or healthcare facility**? (Select one answer)

| (Asked of everyone) | Total (n=3,014) |
|---|---|
| Within the past 3 months or so (since March 1, 2025) | 23% |
| About 4 to 9 months ago (Between October 1, 2024 and February 28, 2025) | 21% |
| About 10 to 18 months ago (Between January 1, 2024 and September 30, 2024) | 14% |
| More than 18 months ago (Before January 1, 2024) | 23% |
| Never / Have not ever used a healthcare provider directory | 18% |

For the purposes of this survey, when we ask about a **healthcare provider directory,** we are referring to any directory that is offered by a health plan, hospital or health system.

3. What is the **main reason** you never used a healthcare provider directory to find a doctor, specialists, other healthcare providers (e.g., mental health, speech, physical therapist, chiropractor, etc.) or healthcare facility?  (Select one answer)

| (Asked if 'never / have not ever used a healthcare provider directory in Q2) | Total (n=644) |
|---|---|
| Prefer recommendations from my current doctor | 22% |
| Haven't needed a doctor / healthcare services | 19% |
| Never needed to find a new healthcare provider | 12% |
| Wasn't aware I had a healthcare provider directory | 10% |
| Prefer recommendations from family/friends | 9% |
| Don't know how to access healthcare provider directory | 4% |
| Contact my health insurance provider directly | 4% |
| Easier and faster to use a general search engine / rely on publicly available information | 3% |
| Use other online resources | 3% |
| Concerned about the accuracy of the information / not being up-to-date | 1% |
| Other | 2% |
| Not sure | 11% |

4. What type of device do you use most frequently to access your healthcare provider directory? (Select one answer)

| (Asked if ever used a healthcare provider directory in Q2) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Mobile | 51% |
| Desktop | 36% |
| Tablet | 6% |
| Some other way | 4% |
| Not sure | 2% |

5. Thinking of the last time you used a healthcare provider directory, how easy or difficult was it to **search for a doctor, specialist, or other healthcare provider (e.g., mental health, speech, physical therapist, chiropractor, etc.) that met your needs**?

| (Asked if ever used a healthcare provider directory in Q2) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Very difficult | 4% |
| Somewhat difficult | 17% |
| Neutral | 24% |
| Somewhat easy | 31% |
| Very easy | 22% |
| Not sure | 2% |

6. How confident are you in the **accuracy of information** provided by the healthcare provider directory you used last? (Select one answer)

| (Asked if ever used a healthcare provider directory in Q2) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Not confident at all | 3% |
| Not too confident | 10% |
| Somewhat confident | 47% |
| Very confident | 37% |
| Not sure | 3% |

7. Have you **ever** encountered outdated or incorrect information in a healthcare provider directory? (Select one answer)

| (Asked if ever used a healthcare provider directory in Q2) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Yes | 33% |
| No | 42% |
| Not sure / Don't recall | 24% |

8. Why do you typically use a healthcare provider directory?  (Select all that apply)

| (Asked if ever used a healthcare provider directory in Q2) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Finding a specialist | 49% |
| Confirming my provider(s) were in network in new plan year and/or when changing plans | 46% |
| Finding a new primary care doctor | 35% |
| Finding another type of provider (e.g., physical therapist, mental health provider, chiropractor, etc.) | 32% |
| Some other reason | 1% |
| Do not recall | 8% |
| Prefer not to answer | 1% |

8A. Of these you selected, which one is the main reason you **last used** a healthcare provider directory?  (Select one answer)

| (Asked if more than one response selected in Q8; otherwise Q8 response was auto-punched into Q8A) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Finding a specialist | 28% |
| Confirming my provider(s) were in network in new plan year and/or when changing plans | 26% |
| Finding a new primary care doctor | 21% |
| Finding another type of provider (e.g., physical therapist, mental health provider, chiropractor, etc.) | 13% |
| Some other reason | 1% |
| Do not recall | 9% |
| Prefer not to answer | 1% |

9. Which of the following pieces of information is important to you in finding a provider that meets your needs? (Select all that apply)

| (Asked if ever used a healthcare provider directory in Q2) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Network coverage / participation (provider is covered in health plan network) | 58% |
| Provider who can deliver the type of care I need (e.g., primary care, orthopedics, dermatology, etc.) | 56% |
| Currently accepting new patients | 53% |
| Geographical proximity (e.g., near my home or work, etc.) | 49% |
| Patient reviews / quality ratings | 43% |
| Years of experience | 40% |
| Education / Training | 30% |
| Affiliated with a specific hospital | 24% |
| Provider who speaks my preferred language | 21% |
| Gender | 17% |
| Provider who is educated on my cultural, religious, or other personal identities | 11% |
| Race / ethnic background | 8% |
| Some other reason | 1% |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 3% |

9A. Of these you selected, which **one** is the most important in finding a provider that meets your needs? (Select one answer)

| (Asked if more than one response selected in Q9; otherwise Q9 response was auto-punched into Q9A) | Total (n=2,370) |
|---|---|
| Network coverage / participation (provider is covered in health plan network) | 30% |
| Provider who can deliver the type of care I need (e.g., primary care, orthopedics, dermatology, etc.) | 20% |
| Patient reviews / quality ratings | 9% |
| Years of experience | 8% |
| Geographical proximity (e.g., near my home or work, etc.) | 7% |
| Currently accepting new patients | 6% |
| Education / Training | 5% |
| Affiliated with a specific hospital | 3% |
| Provider who speaks my preferred language | 2% |
| Gender | 2% |
| Provider who is educated on my cultural, religious, or other personal identities | 2% |
| Race / ethnic background | 1% |
| Some other reason | 1% |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 4% |

**About the Study:**

These are findings for research was conducted between June 12 and June 18, 2025, by Ipsos. For this survey, a nationally representative sample of 3,014 Americans aged 18 or older were interviewed online in English. Surveys were collected as part of a multi-client omnibus program, where questions on various topics are included in one interview and clients share demographic information collected.

The sample was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel, partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2021 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on age and gender. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on age, gender, region, and household income.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability surveys. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the survey has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.0 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following: n=3,014, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-3.5 percentage points.

**About Ipsos**

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"Game Changers" – our tagline – summarizes our ambition to help our 5,000 clients navigate with confidence our rapidly changing world.

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# PUBLIC RELEASE SURVEY FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

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[www.ipsos.com](www.ipsos.com)

35 rue du Val de Marne
75 628 Paris, Cedex 13 France
Tel. +33 1 41 98 90 00