

clearstep

SMART CARE ROUTING™

# Patient Triage Index

## 2021 Annual Report



# Executive Summary

**76% of patients go online to learn about their health and care.** But what happens next? Research has emerged that patients don't know what they need when searching for medical care. This is due in part to poor healthcare literacy, which is defined by the CDC as "the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others." The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 88% of patients do not have proficient literacy to navigate the care system.

**Clearstep developed the Patient Triage Index, a set of metrics to measure what this means for health systems.**

The Annual PTI Report found that **only 26% of patients correctly selected the care they needed, while nearly three quarters got it wrong or didn't know.** These findings underscore the importance of online solutions to route patients to the right care. Without this guidance, patients are at risk of seeking care elsewhere - especially in a world where **40% are not loyal to a hospital or health system.**

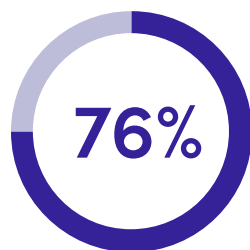
## This report discusses

- The background and definition of the Patient Triage Index
- Average breakdown of the Patient Triage Index
- Online behavior based on the Patient Triage Index
- Variance of the Patient Triage Index by health systems
- Implications for health systems

Source: AHRQ, Rock Health



# Examining the Patient Triage Index



of patients go online to learn about their health and care

Now more than ever, patients are coming to the website or mobile apps of their health system to research symptoms and book appointments. Low PTI tells us that patients need a lot of help getting to the right care. Trusted healthy systems are in the best position to deliver what patients actually need, especially when what they think they need is so often wrong.

## WHAT IS THE PATIENT TRIAGE INDEX?

Clearstep defines this metric as the patient's ability to select the appropriate type of care based on their symptoms.

We classified the Patient Triage Index into 3 categories: **correct**, **incorrect**, or **uncertain**.



### Correct

Patient intends to seek the **most appropriate type of care** for their symptoms.



### Uncertain

Patient **does not know what type of care to seek** based on their symptoms.



### Incorrect

Patient intends to **seek care that either over or under utilizes resources** relative to the needs of their symptoms.

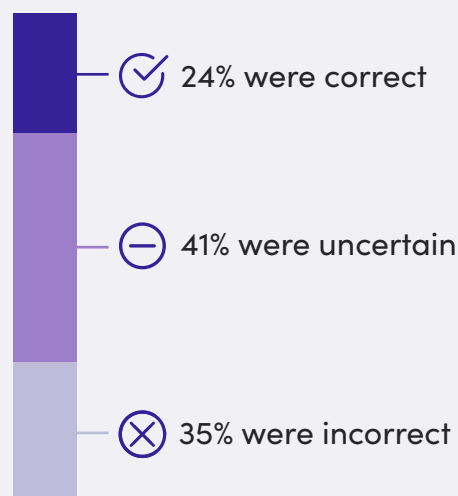


## AVERAGE PATIENT TRIAGE INDEX OF A HEALTH SYSTEM

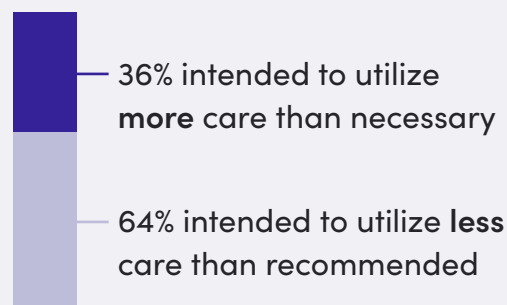
Clearstep measured the Patient Triage Index across 7 health systems that deploy Smart Care Routing™ Virtual Triage. (Data collected from July to Sept 2021)

14,047

Patient sample size



## Of patients who were incorrect:





## HOW DO PATIENTS INTERACT WITH VIRTUAL TRIAGE BASED ON THE PATIENT TRIAGE INDEX?

32%

On average, 32% of patients who were “correct” or “uncertain” on the Patient Triage Index engaged to book care instantly through Virtual Triage. This underscores the importance of providing patients with an alternative to Googling for their symptoms.

16%

Of patients who had “incorrect” intent, 16% engaged to book the appropriate care suggested by Clearstep. In contrast with the 32% above, patients who are re-routed from what they intended to do are less likely to engage than patients who had “correct” or “uncertain” intent. Notwithstanding that difference, this data highlights opportunities to successfully re-route patients to the right care, creating important efficiencies for the system.

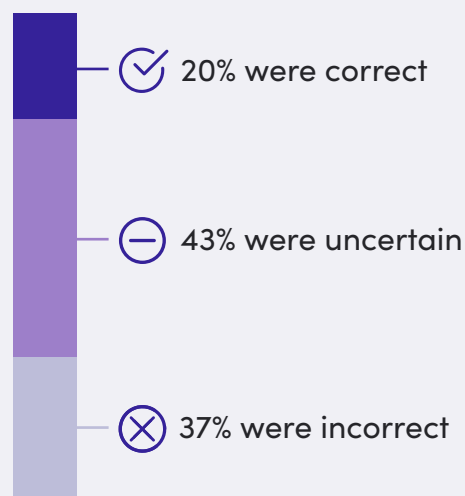
## VARIANCE BY HEALTH SYSTEM

The Patient Triage Index varies widely by health system.

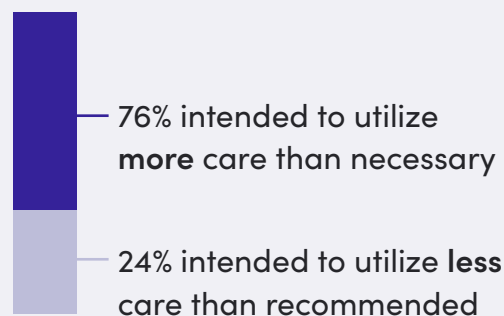
Anonymized results of a health system in the southeast United States:

3,116

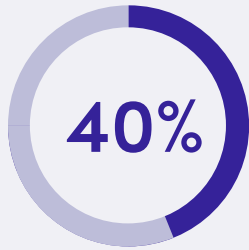
Patient sample size



Of patients who were incorrect:



# Implications for Health Systems



of patients are not loyal to a local hospital or health system



2/3

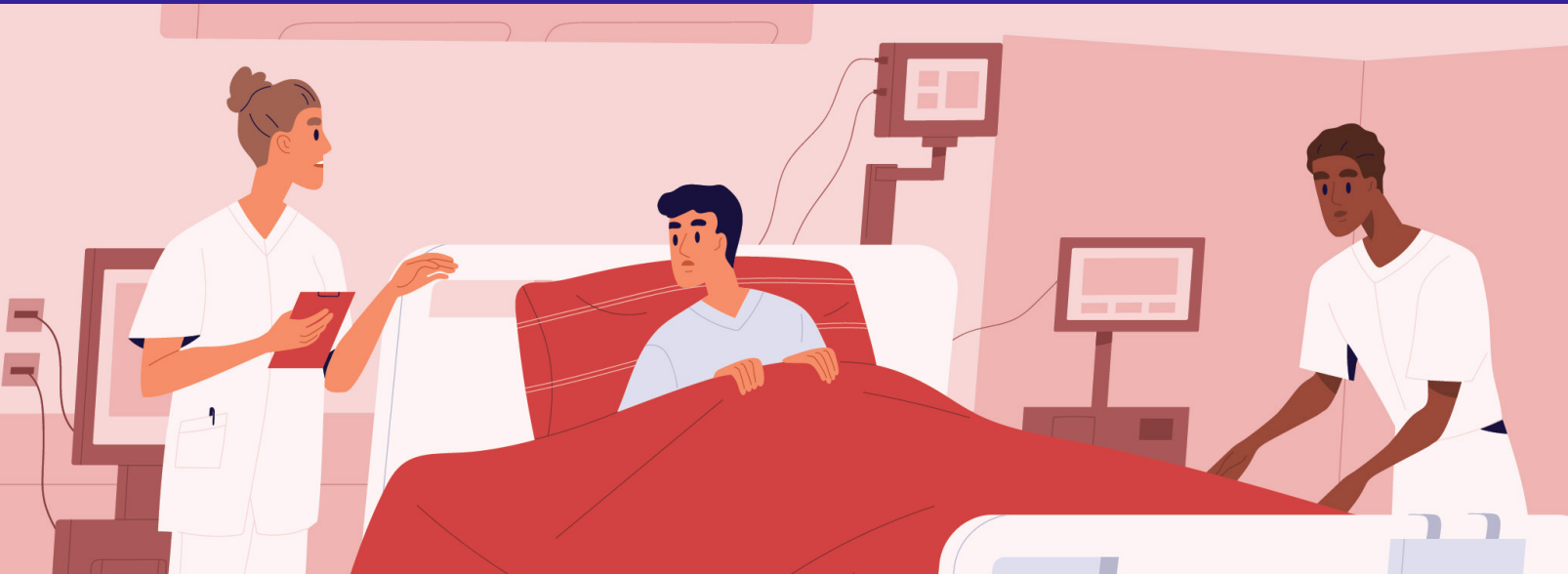
Patients that said they would switch providers if they could get an appointment they needed more quickly

As health systems face staffing shortages in the multi-year COVID-19 pandemic, it has become imperative to route patients to the appropriate care. Patients loyalty is declining: 40% are not loyal to a local hospital or health system and 2/3 said they would switch providers if they could get an appointment they needed more quickly. Giving patients more transparency into appropriate and available resources ensures new patient acquisition and patient retention.

Source: NRC

## Virtual triage solutions give the digital experience patients expect and enable health systems to route patients to the right care.

Want to measure the Patient Triage Index of your patient population?  
Talk to us at [info@clearstep.health](mailto:info@clearstep.health)





Clearstep is a healthcare technology company headquartered in Chicago. Clearstep builds technology to make it easy for people to access the most useful, clear next steps for health and care.

## About Smart Care Routing™ Virtual Triage

Clearstep's Smart Care Routing™ guides patients through their provider network using AI chat technology.

Smart Care Routing™ powers Virtual Triage, which allows patients to check symptoms and book care online. Virtual Triage is built from algorithms that leverage Schmitt Clinical Content. Currently, Virtual Triage is deployed at health systems across the country.

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