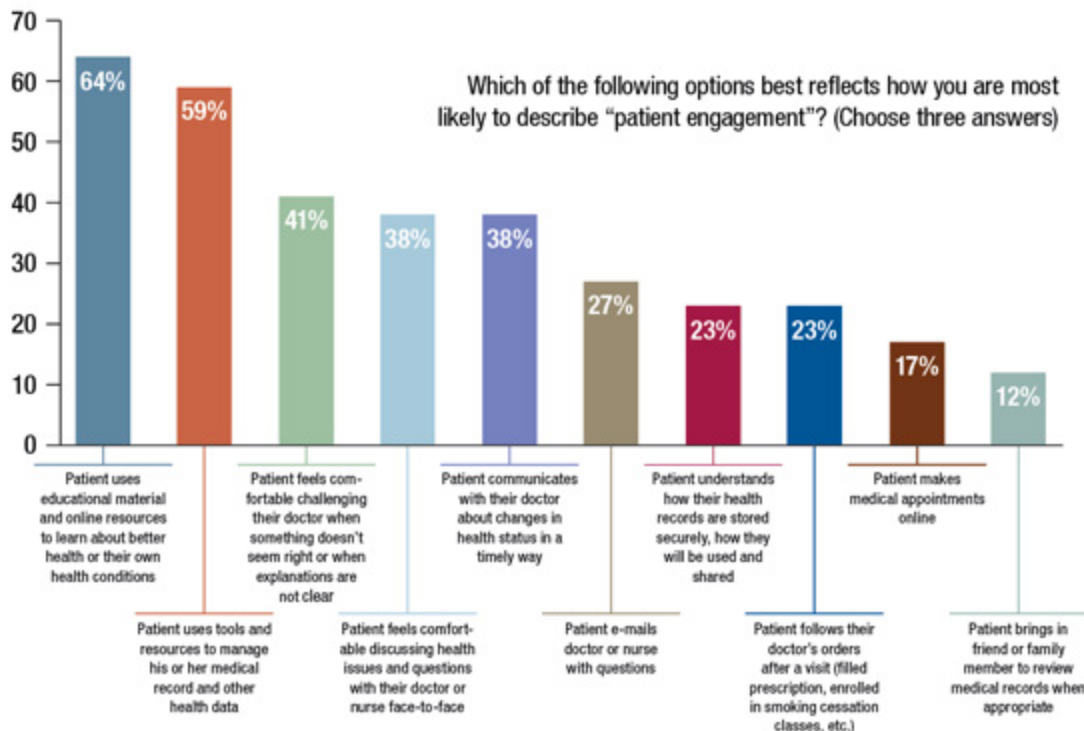


# Patient Engagement Important, but Definitions Vary

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Healthcare stakeholders agree that patient engagement is a necessary part of transforming the US healthcare system. But what they don't agree on is just how patient engagement should be defined, according to the National eHealth Collaborative's 2012 NeHC Stakeholder Survey. The online survey was conducted in February to find out how NeHC stakeholders felt about a variety of healthcare topics-including patient engagement.

A vast majority of those surveyed, 94 percent, said that patient engagement is either "very important" or "important" for transforming healthcare. But when given a list of definitions and asked which option best describes "patient engagement," answers widely varied. While some felt the term referred to patients taking a more active role in healthcare planning, others felt the term referred to providers making health information and education easier for patients to access.

Patient engagement has been nudged into the spotlight thanks to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' "meaningful use" EHR Incentive Program. Stage 2 of the meaningful use program includes a variety of patient-centric initiatives designed to better engage patients, including improved online access to health records, electronic messaging with physicians, and more exposure to personalized health education.

The NeHC survey was answered by 185 NeHC members and interested stakeholders, and also addressed health IT challenges and interests. Full survey results can be viewed at [www.nationalehealth.org](http://www.nationalehealth.org).

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