



FEARS OF HEALTH FACILITIES DURING COVID CAUSING DANGEROUS DELAYS IN VITAL SCREENING

* * *

Survey Shows Environment is Priority in Scheduling Doctor Visits for Preventative Healthcare

October 7, 2020 – A new national survey reveals that fears about the safety of environments within medical facilities – especially waiting rooms – is causing dangerous disruption in the delivery of healthcare services to healthy and chronic patients alike. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many non-essential visits to hospitals and clinics have been delayed or shifted to remote (telemedicine) settings. But patients report they are continuing to delay or cancel in person appointments for screenings (like mammograms and colonoscopies), specialists and diagnostic testing, out of concern for the policies and conditions of the healthcare environments.

The survey, performed by a coalition of cancer advocacy groups, a healthcare service organization and smart building company [View](#), showed that half of all patients had delayed at least one medical appointment due to lasting impact of COVID-19. Both healthy respondents and those with chronic conditions reported cancelling or postponing appointments: healthy patients delayed primary care visits while chronic patients primarily cancelled or postponed diagnostic imaging and lab appointments. Importantly, one third of healthy respondents and 15% of chronic patients surveyed said they had postponed or cancelled appointments for mammograms, colonoscopies or other screenings.

Of the 550+ respondents, 77% expressed concerns about contracting or transmitting COVID-19 at the care site as one of their primary reasons for delaying care. While half worry about the adherence to guidelines by staff and other patients (wearing masks, etc.), the other half expressed fears about the physical environment with overwhelming concern about the safety of waiting rooms.

“We are very worried about the long-term consequences of COVID and delayed appointments,” said Andrea Goodman, Vice President of Patient & Family Support at the Colorectal Cancer Alliance, the largest nonprofit colorectal cancer organization and one of the survey’s five sponsors. “When routine colonoscopies and visits are postponed, there is a tremendous risk of missing that window for early detection and successful treatment. It is critical that we address fears with safe protocols in place to give patients the peace of mind they need to schedule and keep their medical appointments.”

“People living with the terminal disease, metastatic breast cancer don’t have the option of postponing treatments and evaluations during the pandemic,” said Kelly Shanahan, board member of METAvivor, a non-profit that funds research to support people with Stage IV metastatic breast cancer and sponsor of the survey. “Telehealth has afforded new options for some patient appointments, but for those patients who do not have access to technology to participate in telehealth, the health care systems should help find resources for patients to make telehealth available and as safe as possible. The lesson we have learned during the pandemic is that our care, including how and where we see our doctors, must be targeted to the individual and their needs.”

The survey found that it will take both operational strategies (enforced mask wearing, monitored social distancing, temperature scanning, contact tracing, etc.) and environmental strategies (touchless technologies, disinfection protocols and real-time display of environmental conditions) to ease patients’ worries about in-person visits. In fact, restoring patient confidence in the hospital or medical center is critical to having patients return to regular care six months earlier than they might if these fears are not addressed.

Hospitals are increasingly focused on the quality of the healthcare environment to contribute to better health outcomes. View, one of the creators of the survey, manufactures smart windows that have been installed in multiple healthcare facilities nationwide. View smart windows are designed to maximize daylight with unobstructed views while blocking heat and controlling glare, enhancing both patient and staff comfort. Studies have shown that exposure to natural light accelerates healing and contributes to shorter stays for depression, reduced hospitalization times and reduced pain medication for patients. It also leads to higher job satisfaction and improves diagnostic ability for physicians and nurses.

About View

View is a technology company creating smart and connected buildings to improve people’s health and wellness, while simultaneously reducing energy consumption. View is also the market leader in smart windows that let in natural light and views and enhance mental and physical well-being by significantly reducing headaches, eyestrain and drowsiness. Every View installation includes a 'smart building platform' that consists of power, network and communication infrastructure. The recently released Smart Protect, is the first of several IoT applications on this platform designed to make building spaces healthier, smarter, and more productive. For more information, please visit: www.view.com