

Article Three in a Five-Part Series

# How Consumers Do Additional Research on Treatments, Products & Providers

By ROB Editors

Patients, who also are consumers who make buying decision for themselves and their families, pass through six steps in making a purchasing decision. In health care, this is commonly called the “path to purchase.”

This is the third in a five-part series of articles that examines each of these six steps. Examined here: how consumers do additional research on treatment, products and providers.

Once ECPs and practice staff understand consumer preferences and behavior in this path to purchase, they can construct a plan to engineer an enhanced patient experience and implement strategies that can provide clinical excellence and can help ensure financial success for the practice.



## The Patient Path to Purchase

Source: CareCredit  
Path to Purchase Research, 2018.  
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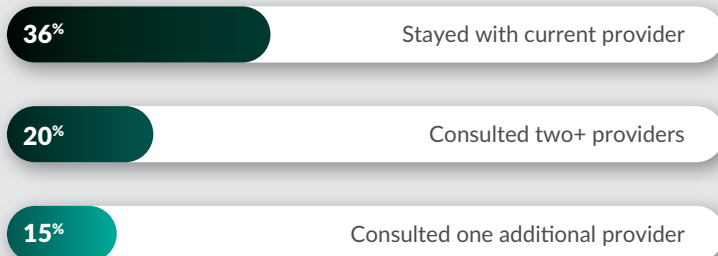
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## How consumers do additional research on treatments, products and providers

### *The Survey Finds:*

When choosing a provider for optometry/optical purchases, consumers are often inclined to stay with a current provider rather than looking for new options. Even when consumers consider additional options, they seldom need more than one office visit to choose a provider.

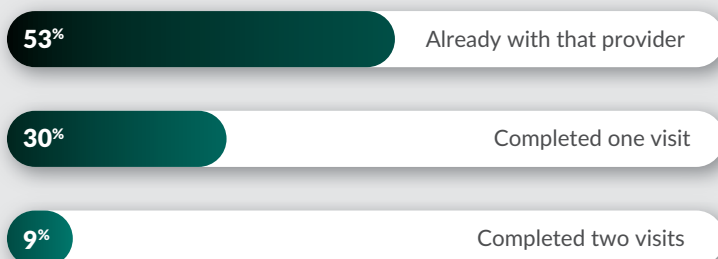
#### How many providers are considered before choice



Source: CareCredit Path to Purchase Research, 2018

When choosing a provider for optometry/optical purchases, consumers display a strong preference to remain with an existing provider, whether it is a provider they have seen long-term or short-term.

#### How many times visited before choice



Source: CareCredit Path to Purchase Research, 2018



# Patient Path to Purchase *Factor:*

Consumers use both online and offline resources to find an ECP—but the influencers of their decisions differ.

## Sources of Offline Research

40%

Family & friends

13%

Optometrist/ophthalmologist

Source: CareCredit Path to Purchase Research, 2018

## Sources of Research, Non-Healthcare Professional

35%

Spouse

7%

Other family member or friend

51%

No one else

Source: CareCredit Path to Purchase Research, 2018



## Putting Knowledge to Work

# Overcome Payment Barriers with Patient Financing



**Steven Turpin, OD, MS**  
Cascadia Eye  
Washington State

Steven Turpin, OD, MS, is one of five ODs that work alongside five ophthalmologists at Cascadia Eye, a medically based practice with six locations serving three counties in northern Wash. In total, the practice conducts over 20,000 patient visits a year, and Dr. Turpin personally conducts 3,500 exams a year.

Dr. Turpin specializes in cornea and contact lens services, with a concentration in Ortho-K, a niche within the overall practice but one that is growing rapidly.

Achieving success in Ortho-K and myopia management requires a clinician to be fully trained and proficient in clinical techniques. Further, they must be able to communicate the process and set expectations for patients and families. A third factor in success is offering patient financing to enable patients to readily obtain the full range of services you prescribe.

Being an MD/OD practice, cataract surgery is a mainstay of both patient services and revenues, and Cascadia Eye has long offered CareCredit as a payment option for cataracts. In recent years, they expanded the use of CareCredit to include all eyecare services. Dr. Turpin personally sees about 30 patients a day, for a

variety of needs and services. The practice also has an optical dispensary, and the practice leadership recognizes that families often encounter difficulty in being able to pay for the eyecare needs of their entire family.

"We sat down and discussed that being able to pay for some refractive services and specialty contact lenses was becoming a barrier," says Dr. Turpin. "People were not able to get over the upfront costs." He adds that he and his colleagues saw the issue as a moral and ethical one. "Even if expanding patient financing makes more work for us, we owe it to our patients so they are able to get the services they need."

Dr. Turpin says that he and other doctors mention patient financing to patients, but the overall presentation falls largely to staff. Training staff in presenting financing is an ongoing process, he explains. Staff mentions financing and describes it in broad strokes. They provide brochures to patients to explain it further.

At Cascadia Eye, the most common use of patient financing is for refractive surgery, cosmetic procedures, and cataract surgery.

"We feel as though the patient should be the one making the decision on whether or not they think it is appropriate for their situation," Dr. Turpin explains. "We do our best to reserve judgment on who may require financing by providing information on CareCredit whenever we are asked about financing options by the patient."

## Staff Discussions and Action Points

*Communicating patient financing is a team effort. The following are discussion points for staff meetings with actions to be assigned and implemented.*

### DISCUSSION

**Patients are creatures of habit.** Patients tend to stay with their present provider over finding a new one. But patients also are consumers, and as such they value convenience and value. What pro-active steps do you take to give patients reasons to stay by providing excellent care and conveying empathy? How can offering patient financing help to retain patients?

### ACTION

**Analyze.** The first step is making a connection and providing great care. Once trust is built with patients, talk about financing. That way it doesn't feel like a sales pitch. Paying for the service becomes part of a larger plan to get the patient the services they want and need instead of being the only thing the patient can think about.

### DISCUSSION

**Patients want to know what's new.** Consumers say they look to healthcare providers to let them know about the latest and most effective treatments and options. How do you inform patients of the latest and greatest? Do you couple information about new options with mentions of patient financing?

### ACTION

**Strategize.** Maintain info boards in your waiting room to display new services and technology, including various multifocal IOL options. This starts the conversation about the pros and cons and ultimately a conversation about the additional cost of the IOL. More often than not, the patient has made the decision on whether or not they want a multifocal before coming into the exam room. It comes down to the patient and the patient services coordinator to decide how they'll pay for it.

### DISCUSSION

**It's about value.** Consumers are motivated by many things: price, convenience, and value. How do you deliver value in cementing your patient/practice relationship? What pro-active steps increase the value of the patient/practice relationship? How does patient financing add value to your practice offerings and practice/patient relationship?

### ACTION

The doctor is a teacher and guide, providing patients with honest and accurate information about their conditions and potential treatment options. Discuss how staff needs to reinforce the doctor's prescription to ensure that all of the patient's visual and eye health needs are met. Providing CareCredit credit card offers another option to execute your treatment plan.

# The Patient Path to Purchase

Examining the Patient Journey Through Patient Financing

## RESOURCES

### Free “Patient Path to Purchase” Resources

The following resources, all available at no cost from CareCredit, are designed to enable ECPs and staff, who are enrolled with CareCredit, to build their practices as they apply the findings from the “Patient Path to Purchase” research. For all the resources CareCredit has available to help you optimize opportunity along the patient journey, call 800.859.9975 (press 1, then 6). Ready to add CareCredit as a payment option? Call 866-853-8432.

## Provider Center

### Custom Apply Link

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Brochure

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Monthly Payment Presentation Chart

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Provider Locator

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Custom Financial Policy

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Team Training Scripts

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Payment Calculator

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Dispensing Mat

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### CareCredit Direct

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Glass Clings

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Eyewear Options Worksheet

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Mobile Apply/Transact

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

### Signage

[www.carecredit.com/providercenter](http://www.carecredit.com/providercenter)

## Toolkit

### Social Media Content

[www.carecredit.com/adtoolkit](http://www.carecredit.com/adtoolkit)

### Toolkit

[www.carecredit.com/adtoolkit](http://www.carecredit.com/adtoolkit)

## Optical Strategies

### Optical Trends Report

[www.carecredit.com/opticalstrategies](http://www.carecredit.com/opticalstrategies)