

BEST OVERALL DIGITAL PATIENT EXPERIENCE

UCLA Health Uses Digital Tools to Shorten Urgent Care Wait Times & Improve Patient Satisfaction

PROBLEM

Almost [75% of Americans](#) think that visiting an emergency department (ED) is easier than making an appointment at a doctor's office. Despite the fact that 84% of Americans had a primary care doctor they regularly visit, 65% of them would still rather go to an ED if they can't get an in-office appointment soon enough.

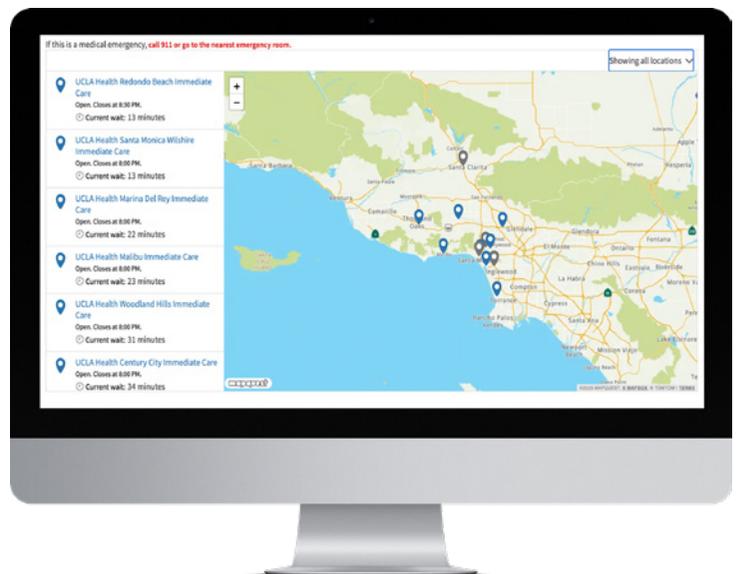
But waiting for an in-office appointment with a primary care provider can take days, weeks, or even months. It comes as no surprise that ED and urgent care wait times are increasing given the long waits patients have with in-office visits.

Research shows these increasing wait times are the result of several interrelated issues. The first is that many Americans delayed receiving medical attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, around [one in five Americans](#) claimed they delayed or skipped getting medical attention because of COVID-19, and 57% of those who did so claim to have had unfavorable health effects. As a result, pent-up demand for medical care is increasing.

INSIGHTS

To help reduce the volume of people trying to get into their primary care provider's office or the ED, UCLA Health offers walk-in [immediate care services](#) at 12 locations throughout the greater Los Angeles region. But patients dealt with less-than-ideal wait times there, too. Working with multiple departments across UCLA Health, the marketing team sought to create shorter wait times for patients choosing immediate care.

Patients of all ages are more tech savvy than ever before, and they expect sophisticated, easy-to-use digital tools. UCLA Health is committed to providing the medical care they need when they need it, quickly and efficiently, with the help of technology.



SOLUTION

To solve this growing issue, the UCLA Health marketing team collaborated with the myUCLAhealth team to create a website widget that allows visitors to view Immediate Care locations and see how long the current wait time is for each one.

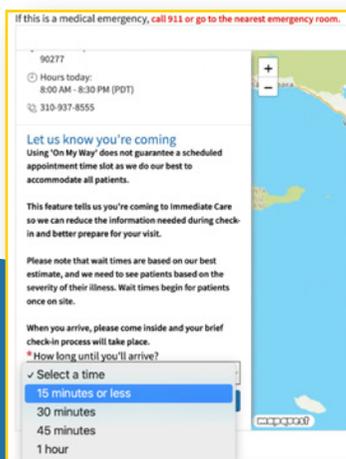
Using a visual map, website visitors can zoom in to specific locations nearest them, see the wait times, operating hours and address, then submit an On My Way notification to the location. This essentially puts them on a wait list before they arrive and lets them pre-register online, saving time during check-in upon arrival.

For example, rather than be placed on the bottom of the wait list once they arrive at Immediate Care, patients using On My Way have a shorter wait time since they've already pre-registered and submitted their appointment request.

The goal of the On My Way widget is not only to provide visibility into the wait times at Immediate Care locations, but to shorten the wait times for patients who arrive at a location. This gets people the care they need faster, improves patient satisfaction and enhances the overall patient experience.

The On My Way widget also provides:

- **Streamlined scheduling:** UCLA Health's open scheduling allows new patients to search and schedule appointments, all in one platform. Patients can select an in-person or video visit without having to sort through multiple pages or backtrack. It's simple, seamless and efficient.
- **Improved access to care:** The marketing department sought to make it easier for website visitors to find and access the care they need without waiting days, weeks or months. By offering a simplified way to join a wait list and pre-register online, UCLA Health is meeting them where they are.
- **Increased new patient acquisition:** As a "digital front door," the UCLA Health website is designed to be warm and welcoming to all patients, and the On My Way widget is a key component in cultivating this friendly environment. It guides new patients to the action they're hoping to take in an easy-to-understand way, allowing them to join an immediate care waitlist of their choice.
- **Enhanced patient retention:** Shorter wait times mean happier patients. Happier patients are more likely to return to a UCLA Health location or provider in the future.
- **Lower ED volumes:** Encouraging more patients to visit an immediate care location creates less strain on emergency departments and primary care provider offices. Patients with non-emergent health issues can access the right level of care when and where they need it.



Ranked as the #5 best health system in the nation, UCLA Health has always aimed to improve access to exceptional care. Digital tools play a critical role in its ability to connect with patients and help them find care. The flexibility and dynamic nature of digital tools allow the organization to continue to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the community and remain agile in a world where technology is becoming more and more ubiquitous. This enables UCLA Health to partner with patients and work together to improve their well-being.