UCLA Health

BEST PROVIDER DIRECTORY

To Match Patients with Providers, UCLA Health Uses Proximity Search, Smart Filtering Options and Star Ratings

BACKGROUND

UCLA Health has made it easier than ever for patients to choose the right provider for them. The website's Find a Doctor search functionality gives patients the options they need to narrow down their search results to the most relevant providers, making it easy to schedule an appointment.

PROBLEM

Research shows that location matters to patients when choosing a health care provider. According to a Healthgrades study, patients care most about:

- Whether the provider is in network with their health insurance (72%)

- The provider's office location (69%)

- Which hospital the provider is affiliated with (49%)

- How long it takes to get an appointment with that provider (47%)

Finding this information on the internet should be quick and seamless for all patients, no matter where they're located.

SOLUTION

With the above research findings in mind, the UCLA Health marketing department set out to make the Find a Doctor search more robust while prioritizing location. By searching within UCLA Health's provider directory, patients now have several options. They can filter their search by:

- Location (with "near me" proximity search)

- Area/neighborhood

- Specialty

- Providers accepting new patients

- Recognitions like Top Doctor or LGBTQ+ Champions

- Whether a provider is patient-rated or allows scheduling online

- Gender

- Languages spoken
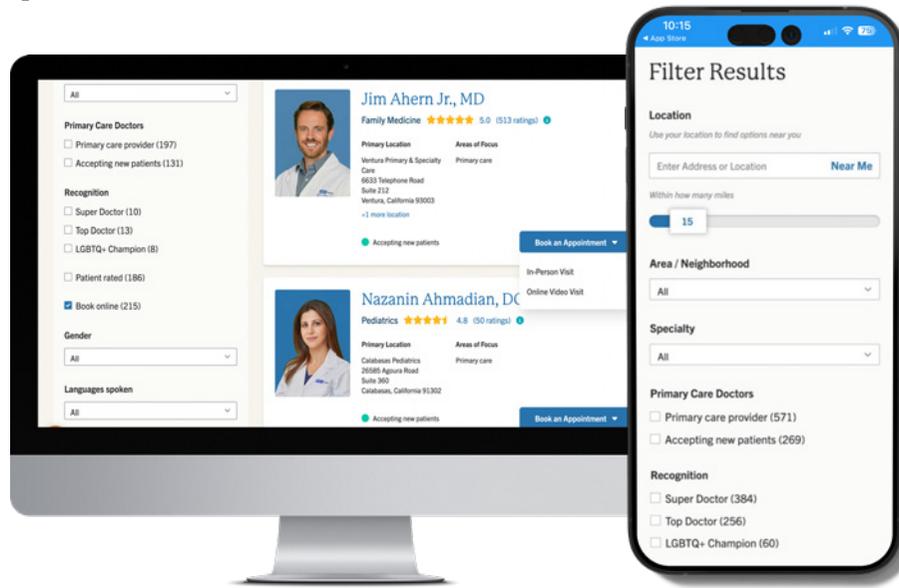
The search results prioritize providers who are accepting new patients, as well as those who have upcoming availability. With this feature, patients don't have to waste time scrolling through lists of providers who aren't available in the near future.

In addition to these features, UCLA Health designed the Find a Doctor search to be as stress-free as possible by using:

Updated information and interconnected directories

With hundreds of clinic locations and an extensive network of providers across UCLA Health, the robust directories are all interconnected — once people find a doctor, they can easily navigate through the site to locate a clinic nearby and take the next step, including scheduling an appointment online.

The UCLA Health marketing department partnered with the IT team to pull information about providers' schedules and locations directly from the electronic medical records system, Epic. Each provider's availability is dynamic and constantly updated in real time, so the information a patient sees online is accurate and always up-to-date.

Chatbot-guided search and open scheduling

Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence, the marketing department created a chatbot to help patients find a provider, search for a location and even schedule an appointment online. The chatbot guides people through each step with easy-to-understand prompts and questions.

Patients can use the chatbot to find a certain provider, enter symptom-specific information or search by location. The chatbot responds in conversational language to the patient's answers and provides details about the provider near them. Once they've found a provider, patients can choose to schedule an in-person or virtual appointment and secure a day and time, all on one platform.

New patients can schedule an appointment online with hundreds of primary care doctors, as well as specialists in orthopedics, ophthalmology and more. Through this streamlined experience, UCLA Health has made it simple for people to connect with a provider and get the care they need, when they need it.
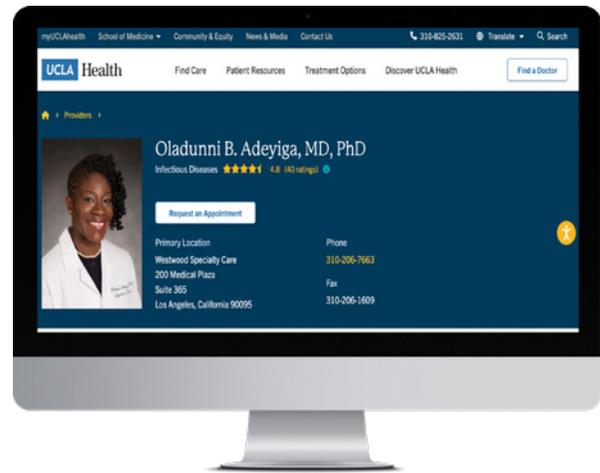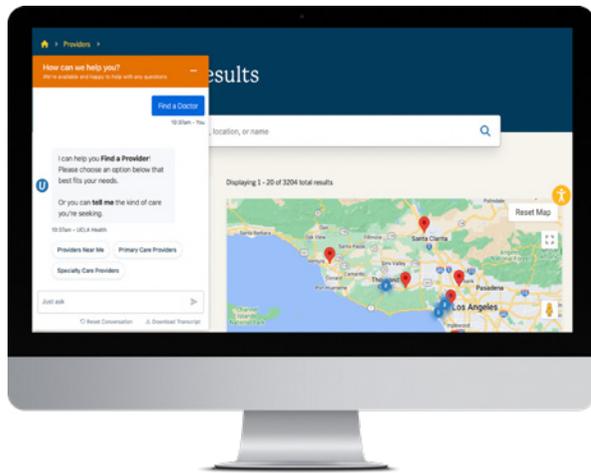
Star ratings and reviews

Reviews and star ratings matter in the health care industry. [Healthgrades research](#) says that 70% of patients rely on online reviews to help them select a health care provider. Ratings are one of the most important considerations for patients when choosing a provider, and providers claim that honest ratings help them to provide better patient care. Along with thorough information about a provider's credentials, it's crucial to know what actual patients have to say about their interactions with a physician.

The UCLA Health marketing department implemented star ratings and reviews on select provider profiles. Star ratings are displayed for those physicians who participate in UCLA Health's patient experience survey program and have received a minimum of 30 survey responses.

Always-there search tools

Patients shouldn't have to scroll through a website looking for a provider's contact info. That's why the UCLA Health chatbot appears on every page of the website, allowing patients to search for a provider no matter where they are on UCLAHealth.org.

METRICS

Timeframe: December 2021 – June 2023

On average, patients schedule about **3,000 appointments** per month through the Find a Doctor tool. Approximately 4**,400 appointment request forms** are submitted from a Find a Doctor search each month.