

How **Payment Integration** Saves Time and Money—*and* Generates More Revenue



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Introduction
- 3 The importance of collecting payments
- 3 The reality of standalone payment systems
- 4 Integrate to save time and money
- 4 Improve your revenue cycle management
- 5 Reconcile payments faster
- 5 Improve the patient experience
- 6 Make treatments more accessible
- 6 Up your cybersecurity
- 6 Generate more revenue with integration
- 7 Payment integration is the future

Introduction

Getting paid on time is an essential part of running a practice. Yet each year, more and more patients are not paying their patient responsibility or choosing to forgo elective treatments. Rising inflation, recent layoffs, and higher deductibles—all of which contribute to this trend—aren't within your practice's control.

*One of the smallest, yet most powerful changes you **can** control is **choosing the right payment system.***

With a standalone payment system, your patients may have a more frustrating experience, your staff spends more time processing payments, and your practice loses out on revenue generating opportunities. An integrated system creates a seamless, efficient process for both you and your patients, all while creating the time and space for more revenue streams.

This whitepaper explains the many benefits of an integrated payment system like **Nextech Payments for both your patients and practice.**



The importance of collecting payments

Getting paid on time keeps you in the business of providing transformative elective and non-elective health services. But more and more, collecting payments is frustrating both practices and patients.

Thanks to higher annual deductibles, patients are forced to pay for more out of pocket. In 2016, over 51 percent of employees who received health benefits had a deductible above \$1,000 a year.^[1] And when deductibles rise, the willingness to pay copays and the bills for elective treatments drops.

Over 50 percent of Americans have difficulty paying medical bills under \$1,000, much less a deductible above \$1,000.^[2]

The increased burden on patients is only made worse by an uncertain economic climate. Widespread layoffs and inflation have negatively impacted accounts receivables and deferred procedures for many practices.

While the economy most likely won't improve soon, **you have control over a powerful part of the process: your payment system.** With the right payment system, you can process payments faster, improve the patient experience, and save your practice time and money.

The reality of standalone payment systems

When looking for the right payment processor, many practices turn to standalone solutions which aren't integrated with practice management (PM) software.

Without integration, payments acceptance is severely limited to mostly just in-person and phone payments.

This lack of integration frustrates 70 percent of patients because it adds confusion to the payment process and limits timely communication about patients' bills.^[3]

As you might imagine, the **specific frustrations patients experience with standalone systems** are many, with some of the most common including:

- Fewer payment options
- More time spent trying to figure out payment systems and how to pay
- Confusion around when to pay bills—and how much patients owe
- An increased risk of patient payment information being a target for cyberattacks

But patients aren't the only ones who suffer—**standalone payment systems also negatively impact your practice's bottom-line and your staff's time.** Processing collections takes longer, increasing the time your staff must spend on payments. Standalone systems add more steps to your revenue cycle management process, and they take longer to reconcile payments.

Neither patients nor practices are happy with standalone payment systems. Luckily, there is a better alternative: integration.



Integrate to save time and money

For practices looking to save time and money, integration is the name of the game. When you use an integrated system, such as Nextech Payments, your payments blend seamlessly with PM software.

The integration of systems equals simplification.

It creates a less complicated process to collect payments. Practices with integrated payment systems also spend less time on reconciliations and make fewer bookkeeping errors. All these improvements save your staff time—and save you the cost of paying for more labor hours.

With a standalone system, all payments must manually be entered into your PM system and ledger. This can cause missed payment entries, entering an invoice multiple times, and reporting an incorrect amount paid—all of which lead to a headache when filing taxes or creating next year's budget.

When payments are integrated, they are updated in your PM system and ledger automatically. This ensures every payment is documented where it should be—and for the correct amount—without your staff having to lift a finger.

Not only that, but **integrated payments sync up with your patient records and communication system** so your team spends less time manually creating bills and reminding patients about them. Simply plug the patient information and cost into an integrated payment platform and **let the power of integration deal with payment collection, patient communication, and reconciliation.**

Improve your revenue cycle management

To truly understand the power of integration, **let's look at what each step of the revenue cycle looks like with and without an integrated payment platform.**

STANDALONE SYSTEM

With a standalone system, your staff have to **manually enter in all contact and payment information** from your PM software. They then have to manually file with insurance companies and then send the bills to the patient and their insurance provider.

Staff will have to communicate with the patient and company about payments—and most likely continue to get in touch since a standalone payment system offers limited reconciliation capabilities.

Once a client pays, your staff has to manually enter that information into your PM software, a patient's records, and your booking software—providing three opportunities for human error.

INTEGRATED SYSTEM

With an integrated system, your **staff can process patient insurance information quicker, determine how much to bill the insurance company and the patient, and enter each invoice once**, not multiple times in various software. The system then pulls the patient's information and communicates with them directly. At the same time, it can send the rest of the bill to the health insurance company.

If reconciliations or follow-up reminders are needed, the system handles these communications.

Once the payment is made, the system automatically updates the invoice in your PM software and bookkeeping software.



The integrated process means:

- Improved communication with clients on how to collect patient payments
- More clarity around copays, what insurance companies owe, and how to follow up with health insurance companies
- Faster financial reporting and reconciliation

A standalone payment system creates an inefficient revenue cycle process while **an integrated system is quicker, leaves less room for error, and offers smooth revenue cycle management.**

Reconcile payments faster

The trickiest part of revenue cycle management is often reconciliation. It can typically take hours of frustration and tedious effort to account for patient payments. However, practices with Nextech report an 80% time savings as a result of this feature.

By finding an integrated partner with a fast reconciliation process, you'll get:

- Simple, quick, and accurate error identification
- One click error resolution options
- A reputation management tool, thanks to fast error corrections

You'll know when a payment system is good at reconciliation like Nextech's Best in Class Reconciliation Utility because **it will offer an integration reconciliation feature.**

Improve the patient experience

In an increasingly complicated world, **one of the greatest gifts you can give your patients is**

simplicity, especially when it comes time to pay. A simpler, less stressful process makes it easier for patients to pay their copays and for elective treatments.

An integrated payment system offers your patients more ways to pay, including:

- Through contactless payment methods, like ApplePay and Google Pay, which have jumped in usage over 150 percent year-over-year since 2020.^[4]
- With a digital wallet, either online or in-office
- By tapping or swiping their credit card using an in-office card reader
- With the Nextech Patient Portal and online payment capability
- Allowing patients to pay overtime with installment payment capabilities

Because an integrated payment system lets you securely store cards on file, patients can also **pay over the phone or online.** Or they can **set up automatic payments** and not have to worry about manually paying health bills in the future.

You can also connect their patient portal to your payment system for seamless, clear communication about bills and copays, a feature over 58 percent of patients want.^[5]

***65% of patients would switch to a new provider with a better payment method.**^[6]*

A better payment experience lets your patients focus on their health and frees up time for your practice to take on more patients.



Make treatments more accessible

Integrated payment systems usually offer payment plans, which make elective procedures accessible to more clients and ensure bills for necessary treatments are less of a burden.

Over 72.9 percent of patients who opted out of elective treatments said they did so because they couldn't afford it. That translates to **\$86.5 billion lost in healthcare revenue** in the United States.^[7]

Payment plans allow your patients to pay in smaller increments, making the bill for elective treatments more manageable.

And, thanks to integration, your system, not your staff, can send reminders about upcoming payments, making payment plans a logistical reality for your practice.

72.9% of patients opt out of elective treatments due to costs. Integrative payment systems allow you to offer payment plans which can make these treatments more accessible and affordable.

Up your cybersecurity

Even though patients undeniably want digital payment options, **there is still one challenge to paying online: credit card security.** With an integrated cloud-based system like Nextech Payments, your patients' payment information is stored in the cloud, not on your servers.

This extra security is combined with a compliance program to take cybersecurity worries off your practice's shoulders.

The reason cloud-based systems are willing to take on cybersecurity liability boils down to one simple fact: the security they offer is just that good. When patients pay, they tap, swipe, or enter their card details into an encrypted card reader, securing payment from the terminal to the processor.

96% of practices and 94% of patients are concerned about security when it comes to digital payment options.^[8]

Once the information is in the cloud-based software, it is stored in compliance with both medical and payment regulations, making it harder for payment information to be stolen. This means your patients' payment information is safe every step of the way.

Generate more revenue with integration

Not only can payment integration save your office time and money, it can also bring in more revenue! Revenue generating opportunities with integrated payments include:

- In-house memberships and subscriptions
- Integration with strategic third parties to grow sales
- Payment plans to make your offerings accessible to more patients



There's also more revenue-generating opportunities if you use a system designed for medical practices.

Nextech, for example, specializes in integrated payments for ophthalmology, dermatology, orthopedic, and plastic surgery practices. Nextech's partnerships are in these four specialties, meaning their integrated software is custom-tailored to your industry's needs. **Current collaborators include:**

- DermPRO: lets practices sell dermatology products online
- FlexSys: allows ophthalmology practices to offer retail optical sales

Even though the revenue generating opportunities are limitless, one stands out above the rest: improving the patient experience. **When you put patients first, they're more likely to come back and refer you to friends.**

Payment integration allows you to invest in your patients and practice—and that investment will be reflected in your bottom line.

Payment Integration is the future

The road to a brighter future in healthcare payments is clear: integration. Patients are overwhelmingly in favor of an integrated payment system with clear communication. The time and money saved by an integrated payment system is undeniable.

The opportunities to generate more revenue are limitless. All that's left to decide is if your practice will enter the future of smooth, integrated payments.

[1] "2016 Employer Health Benefits Annual Survey"; <https://files.kff.org/attachment/Report-Employer-Health-Benefits-2016-Annual-Survey>

[2] "Patient Finance Report"; <https://accessonepay.com/press-news/medical-expenses-patient-finance-report/>

[3] "Financial Responsibility Frustrates 70% of Patients"; <https://patientengagementhit.com/news/patient-billing-financial-responsibility-frustrates-70-of-patients>

[4] "Will Contactless Payments be Able to Maintain Their Popularity?"; <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/will-contactless-payments-be-able-to-maintain-their-popularity-2021-01-05>

[5] "Patient Engagement"; <https://www.nextech.com/hubfs/Infographics/Infographic-Patient%20Engagement.pdf>

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[7] "How Consumers Pay For Elective Medical Procedures Report"; <https://www.pymnts.com/study/how-consumers-pay-for-elective-medical-procedures-report>

[8] "Financial Responsibility Frustrates 70% of Patients"; <https://patientengagementhit.com/news/patient-billing-financial-responsibility-frustrates-70-of-patients>