Coordinated care networks are vital to healthcare improvement strategies. By encouraging clinicians to collaborate with each other, coordinated care networks offer integrated, managed care that's convenient to access. By enabling providers to collaborate with payers within a value-based contracting model, coordinated care networks also help deliver high quality care more cost effectively.

People plainly like coordinated care as a concept. According to the Accenture 2014 Patient Experience and Accountable Care Study, when presented with the characteristics of a coordinated care network and asked if they would choose such a model over a self-directed approach, 55 percent of US adults said yes. For those already experienced in elements of coordinated care networks, that proportion rose to 62 percent.
But the success of coordinated care networks is not guaranteed unless they can achieve sustainable membership growth. As these networks proliferate, both payers and providers need a more detailed understanding of what encourages people to join them—and what keeps them loyal. Patients, after all, are also consumers.

**Choice is relative**

Consumer choice in healthcare is nuanced. True, our research confirms that 77 percent of healthcare consumers appreciate having a range of options and being able to evaluate them personally. But 84 percent also agree with the proposition that “I don’t need 50 doctors to choose from—I’m fine with a few, as long as they are good.”

**It’s not all about price**

Healthcare consumers also know what “good” looks like. And while price is important, it doesn’t trump a quality experience. Our research reveals that only 5 percent would definitely drop out of a network for a lower-cost plan; 47 percent would even be willing to pay more for a better experience.

**Empowerment is key**

Healthcare consumers want to feel in control of the care they receive. Without control, nearly 80 percent would be likely to drop out of a coordinated care network. Not having enough say in their care, having too many rules to follow, and having to work too hard to follow the rules are the top three reasons why consumers would definitely leave.
Three critical considerations

While choice is relative, the quality of members’ experiences—as both patients and consumers—is clearly critical. Our findings suggest that three network design considerations are key to loyalty and growth:

1. **Think retail shopping**
   A few good options are better than boundless choice—as long as they are “good” options. Limited choices in narrow networks could cause consumers concern, however. So choice architecture—the positioning and marketing of options—is clearly important. Communicating the benefits and trade-offs relative to traditional self-directed alternatives is important as well.

   In this regard, healthcare has much to learn from other industries—especially retail. Consider, for example, how Amazon facilitates consumer decision-making. It leverages analytics to understand customers better as individuals, and uses the insights derived to curate the shopping choices open to them into fewer, more personally relevant options.

2. **Arm the front line**
   Physicians are a key trusted source, but only 26 percent of healthcare consumers say they would definitely leave a coordinated care network if their own doctor stopped participating. Furthermore, 61 percent would trust a care manager who knows them and their preferences personally. So arm front-line resources—both clinicians and care managers—with the means to deliver the personal focus and experience that builds trust and loyalty.

   Be accurate and fully transparent with front-line resources. Enhance clinicians’ understanding of the resources available, including the price information and money-saving advice that 88 percent of patients say they want and 97 percent are likely to consider if it comes from their doctor. Enable care managers as personal assistants who tailor practical advice. Remember too that members receive care as patients relatively infrequently. Most of the time, these individuals are making much broader lifestyle choices. By providing customer-service-oriented healthcare coaches to help improve overall health and fitness, a coordinated care network would integrate with consumers’ daily lives.

3. **Give consumers control—and a voice**
   People want to be more than just involved in their healthcare: they want control. Access to their medical records, whenever they want it, is the single most important aspect of information sharing for 94 percent of patients. Ease of communication with their care team ranks a close second: 67 percent want to be able to “talk to a doctor personally during office hours,” for example, while 59 percent want to “speak with a knowledgeable person after hours.”

   As technology-enabled consumers, patients are accustomed to controlling the pace of decisions, to anywhere-anytime-anyone content, to “always-on” touch points, and to choice being almost effortless. So healthcare IT needs to facilitate ease of communication between patients, care teams, insurers—and other patients—with digitally enabled engagement platforms. By aggregating disparate data sources from across the network ecosystem (including payer and provider systems) these platforms could expedite omni-channel interactions and present information to consumers in a user-friendly fashion.

**Choice. Transparency. Personalization.**

These are now the critical components of success in consumer-facing industries like retail—and the future success of coordinated care networks depends on them as well. The time to start enabling them is now.

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1 Accenture 2013 Healthcare Transparency Survey
About the Accenture 2014 Patient Experience and Accountable Care Study

The Accenture 2014 Patient Experience and Accountable Care Study, an online survey of 1,980 adults in the United States, included 1,751 insured and 229 uninsured respondents and assessed preferences for coordinated care model attributes. The research was conducted on the Accenture Health Preference Analytics Platform, powered by TrueChoice Solutions. The platform is a customizable preference analytics capability that enables real-time preference measurement and in-depth analytics of each customer’s values, attitudes, and needs to drive improved user experience, personalized offers, and continuous insight. The survey was conducted in April 2014.

About the Accenture 2013 Healthcare Transparency Survey

The Accenture 2013 Healthcare Transparency Survey aimed to understand the sources of information consumers seek during their medical decision-making process, how consumers perceive these sources and the impact these sources have on purchasing decisions. Accenture surveyed 2,003 respondents from across the United States and across the spectrum of insurance companies. The survey was conducted in October 2013.

About Accenture Insight Driven Health

Insight driven health is the foundation of more effective, efficient and affordable healthcare. That’s why the world’s leading healthcare providers and health plans choose Accenture for a wide range of insight driven health services that help them use knowledge in new ways—from the back office to the doctor’s office. Our committed professionals combine real-world experience, business and clinical insights and innovative technologies to deliver the power of insight driven health. For more information, visit: www.accenture.com/insightdrivenhealth

About the AHIP Foundation’s Institute for Health Systems Solutions

The AHIP Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization. Its Institute for Health Systems Solutions’ mission is to advance solution-based, forward-looking, collaborative ideas and thought leadership focused on health systems change that improves the quality, affordability, and availability of care and puts the healthcare system on more sustainable financial footing. For more information, visit: www.healthsystemssolutions.org

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Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with more than 323,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$30.0 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2014. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

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