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**MEDICAL PRACTICES IMPROVING SERVICE, CONSUMER SATISFACTION RISES**  
***Press Ganey Medical Practice Pulse Report Released Today***

March 2, 2009 (South Bend, Ind.) – Competition and consumer empowerment has spurred improvements at medical practices across the nation and patient satisfaction is inching upwards as a result, according to a new report from Press Ganey Associates, Inc. The *2009 Medical Practice Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care* illustrates the impact of consumer-driven health care in which patients are making more proactive decisions about their own care. The report is based on the experiences of nearly 2.4 million patients treated at more than 10,000 locations across the nation in 2008.

“In recent years, actions like being more sensitive to patients, decreasing wait times, and making exam rooms more comfortable have led to an increase in patient satisfaction with medical practice services,” said Lisa Cone-Swartz, vice president of medical practice and home care services at Press Ganey. “Administrators need to continue emphasizing changes to improve on the areas where consumers remain frustrated, including respect for the patient’s time, both in the exam room and spent with the provider.”

The report found physicians are motivated to implement changes to better retain patients and maintain a financially successful practice. This focus, in part, is linked to additional means for consumers to access, compare, and select the source of their health care. Pay-for-reporting and pay-for-performance initiatives are bringing even more national attention to patients’ perceptions of their care and escalating the importance for caregivers to know what consumers are thinking and understand how patients define quality health care services. The report found patients’ top priorities were:

1. Sensitivity of caregivers to patient needs
2. Overall cheerfulness of the practice
3. Overall rating of care
4. Comfort of exam rooms
5. Time spent waiting in the exam room

Other interesting points revealed by the report include:

- Patients kept waiting for more than 10 minutes in the exam room report an 8.9 point drop in satisfaction (100-point scale). Patients kept waiting for more than 10 minutes in the waiting room report an 8.2 point drop in satisfaction (100-point scale).
- Oncology practices have the highest level of patient satisfaction with scheduling office visits, followed by cardiovascular practices and general surgery practices.
- Medical practices with 3 to 8 physicians have the highest level of patient satisfaction, while practices with more than 9 physicians have the lowest.
- Among provider types, therapists have the highest patient satisfaction and the lowest average wait time. Residents have the lowest patient satisfaction, coupled with the highest average wait time.

From scheduling an appointment to clinician empathy, a patient's perception of all aspects of the medical practice visit can greatly impact the patient's satisfaction, their likelihood to return, and their subsequent rating of the practice. To maintain fiscal stability, all medical practices must assess these aspects and take the necessary steps to improve the patient experience.

**The 2009 Medical Practice Pulse Report: Patient Perspectives on American Health Care is available at [http://www.pressganey.com/galleries/default-file/2009\\_Med\\_Practice\\_PulseReport.pdf](http://www.pressganey.com/galleries/default-file/2009_Med_Practice_PulseReport.pdf). Commentary from Ms. Cone-Swartz is available upon request.**

**Press Ganey Associates, Inc.**

For more than 20 years, Press Ganey has been committed to providing insight that allows health care organizations to improve the quality of care they provide while improving their bottom-line results. The company offers the largest comparative customer feedback databases, actionable data, solution resources, and unparalleled consulting and customer service. Press Ganey currently partners with more than 7,000 health care facilities—including over 40% of U.S. hospitals—to measure and improve the quality of their care.

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