



Examining Care Quality

How Patient Engagement Improves Health





METHODOLOGY

West conducted a pair of online surveys in the spring of 2017 in partnership with Kelton Global.

Responses received from 1,010 consumers and 138 healthcare professionals

Collected from consumers in March of 2017

Collected from healthcare professionals in April of 2017

Captured using an email invitation and an online survey

The goal was to gain a better understanding of:

How patients and providers view the state of healthcare in America

What patients and providers think about care quality

The connection between prevention and wellness and care quality

What patients and providers believe is necessary to achieve better outcomes

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Executive Summary

With the emergence of population health and value-based care, much has been written about quality in healthcare. How is quality measured? What are the metrics? How is it reimbursed? This report, *Examining Care Quality*, explores the concept of quality from another perspective: **Do patients and providers believe that Americans are getting healthier?**

Unfortunately, the answer is no.

Despite the fact both patients and physicians believe patients often pay for more services, neither group thinks this has resulted in better outcomes. In fact, most Americans don't think their health has improved during the past year. Patients place a lot of responsibility for outcomes on providers, yet they also know they aren't doing everything necessary to maintain their own health.

Patients define quality care as proactive care. They are looking to providers for leadership and guidance on wellness, preventive care and healthy living. While physicians feel patients need to take a more active role in their health, they also confirm that more can be done to achieve better quality and healthier outcomes for patients. This includes using technology that is already in place—their appointment reminder system—to educate patients and encourage them to become more involved in their own healthcare.

Being more proactive is key for both patients and providers in advancing care quality and generating better health outcomes. Increasing communications about preventive care and improving wellness among chronic populations leads to greater patient engagement, and ultimately helps both patients and providers improve the quality of healthcare in America.

Key Findings

- Most Americans believe their **health has not improved** during the past year.
- Patients and medical providers agree that **care quality is a top priority**.
- Patients define quality care as **proactive care**.
- Providers have opportunities to **increase patient engagement and improve outcomes**.

Patients and providers agree that paying for additional services is not improving the quality of care.



KEY FINDINGS

Patients and Providers Are Equally Frustrated with America's Healthcare System

Patients Are Concerned About Care Quality and Health Outcomes

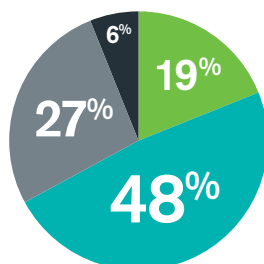
Nine out of ten healthcare consumers believe there are problems with healthcare in the U.S. Twice as many patients say they feel frustrated compared to optimistic about healthcare. Cost is the top complaint, as cited by 79% of patients surveyed, but they also blame care quality and disappointing health outcomes for much of their frustration. Patients are not alone in thinking quality could be improved. Providers acknowledge patients' frustrations are warranted, and many agree the American healthcare system does not make patients feel confident they are getting the best possible care.



Most Providers Don't Think Patients Are Getting the Best Care

The healthcare system in the U.S. does not make patients feel that they are getting the best possible care:

- STRONGLY AGREE
- SOMEWHAT AGREE
- SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE



Frustration Outweighs Optimism

Adults in the U.S. describe their feelings about America's healthcare system as:

 **FRUSTRATED (43%)**

 **DISAPPOINTED (38%)**

 **STRESSED (29%)**

 **OPTIMISTIC (20%)**

 **HAPPY (13%)**



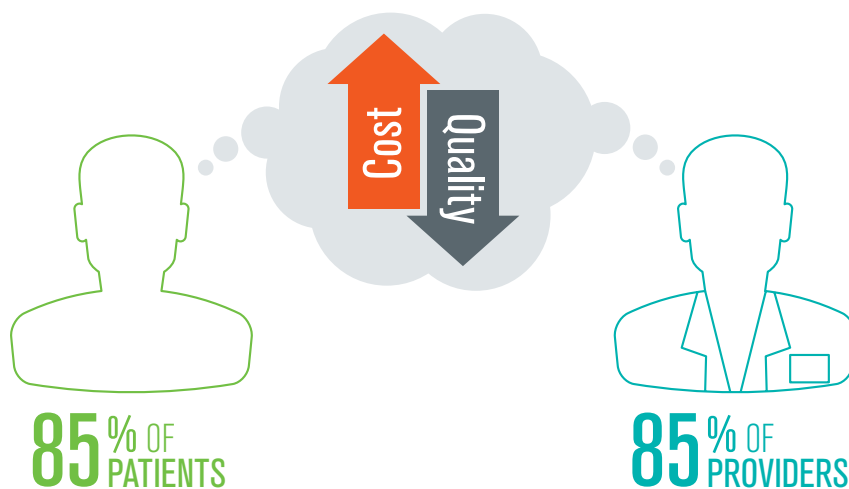
Patients See Increases in Cost, Not Quality

Patients' frustrations about the quality of their healthcare experiences are compounded by the burden of increasing costs. As deductibles rise, patients are paying more for healthcare. Yet, the quality of care continues to wane. A majority of patients and providers say America's healthcare system is forcing patients to pay for more care or services rather than better care. But more care or services is not what leads to better health. The consensus is that patients deserve better quality for their healthcare investment.



Patients and Providers Agree That Costs Are Disproportionate to Quality

85% of both patients and providers feel the country's healthcare system often forces patients to pay for more care or services rather than providing better care.



KEY FINDINGS

Patients and Providers Agree Care Quality Is a Top Issue

Consumers Are in the Market for Healthcare Quality

Nearly two in five patients cite quality of care as one of the biggest issues with healthcare. Quality is clearly a priority for patients, and a key consideration for choosing a provider and selecting where to go for care. Patients seek out providers and facilities known for delivering high quality care and the best possible health outcomes. One reason many Americans are placing high importance on choosing the right provider is because they have been disappointed by their health outcomes or feel the quality of their current care is not up to par.

Providers know quality impacts their organization's reputation and financial viability, and agree with patients that it is one of healthcare's biggest issues. Focusing on improving quality can help them attract and retain patients, as well as earn incentives and avoid penalties through value-based payment programs.

Patients and Providers Agree Healthcare Quality is a Problem

42% of healthcare professionals feel that quality is one of the biggest issues with healthcare.

37% of patients feel that quality is one of the biggest issues with healthcare.

Quality Matters to Patients When Selecting Healthcare Providers



67% when choosing a healthcare provider.



65% when choosing a healthcare facility.



Patients and Providers Expect More Accountability from Each Other

Patients and providers each believe the other could be more accountable for quality and improving health outcomes. Providers are troubled that many patients do not take responsibility for their own health. They would also like to see patients more engaged and taking an active role in maintaining their health, and they feel this would lead to better outcomes.

Patients' criticism is that providers are not focused enough on preventing health issues. Patients say quality care is proactive care. Most want their provider to be less reactive and demonstrate greater accountability by putting more emphasis on prevention and wellness. Being more proactive is key for both patients and providers in advancing care quality and generating better health outcomes.

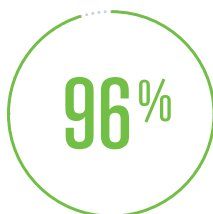
Patients Assign Responsibility for Outcomes to Providers



of Americans hold their healthcare providers responsible for their well-being.

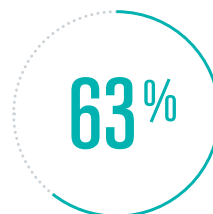


Providers Expect Patients to Take an Active Role in Managing Their Own Health



of providers are frustrated or very frustrated by patients not participating in managing their own healthcare.

Providers Can Demonstrate Accountability by Promoting Prevention and Wellness



of patients believe their healthcare provider is more attentive to treating illnesses rather than preventing them.

KEY FINDINGS

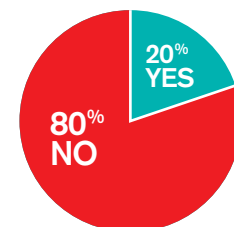
Americans Feel Their Health Is Not Improving

Disappointing Outcomes Underscore the Need for Improvements

Many patients are dissatisfied by the direction their health is taking, and disappointment over outcomes is impacting patients' feelings about care quality. Rather than seeing improvements, the majority of patients say their health either stayed the same or declined during the past year. Stagnant and declining health fuels beliefs that care quality is substandard and improvements are necessary.

However, it is unlikely that outcomes will improve if patients remain passive and providers don't change their focus to preventing illness. Becoming partners in improving health outcomes can help strengthen the patient-provider relationship and increase patient loyalty.

“Did your health improve last year?”



Unhealthy Behaviors Attributed to Declining Health

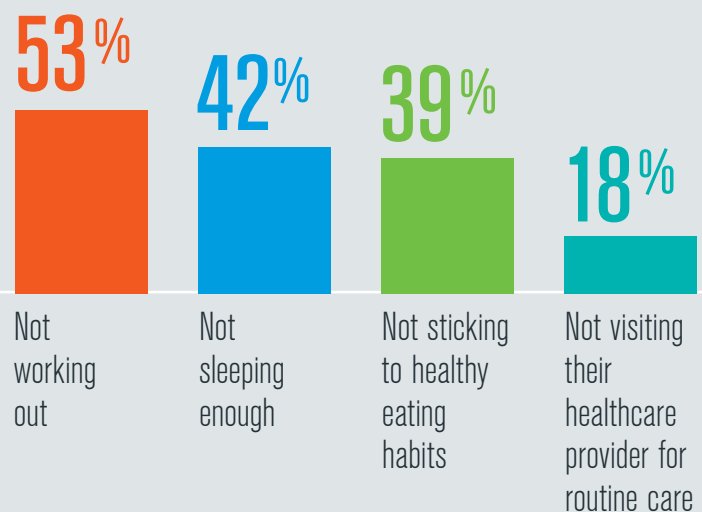
Patients are aware that their health is their personal responsibility, and that their actions impact their health. Patients who feel their health declined last year attribute it to unhealthy choices. These choices include skipping routine healthcare visits, not working out, not sleeping enough and not following a healthy diet.

Although patients know healthy behaviors contribute to good health, they do not always make the best choices or follow routines to improve their health. Many patients say they do not know what preventive services are available or when they are due for routine screenings. Providers can help patients address both of these issues by providing wellness education and communicating about recommended preventive services.



Patients Blame Unhealthy Behaviors for Poor Outcomes

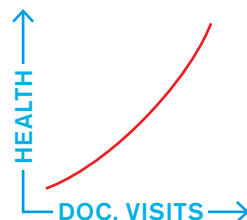
Patients who feel their health declined in the past 12 months blame unhealthy behaviors such as:





Routine Care and Wellness Considered a Solution for Better Health

Many patients who say their **health improved** in the past year believe this was because they had annual visits with their provider (38%), and saw them when they were sick (23%).



of Americans say lifestyle changes, such as **exercising** and maintaining a **nutritious diet**, would help them improve their health in the next year.

Providers Can Educate Patients About the Availability of Preventive Care and Wellness Services

Patients who say their health declined in the past year (44%) are more likely than those who say it stayed the same (34%) or improved (27%) to say they were not aware of all the preventive care services accessible to them.



who say their health declined were not aware of **preventive care services**.



KEY FINDINGS




More Commitment to Prevention and Wellness is Needed

Patients Expect Providers to Spearhead Wellness Plans

Patients see lifestyle improvements and preventive services as pathways to better health, and they expect providers to lead the way with prevention and wellness support. Even though the majority of Americans say lifestyle changes would help them improve their health, patients don't hold themselves solely accountable for making those changes.

Most patients believe driving improved health requires action from their medical teams. Patients feel that if providers educate, encourage, remind and push them to make healthier choices, then they would be more prepared and likely to take steps to maintain their own health.

PATIENTS SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING WOULD HELP IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH:

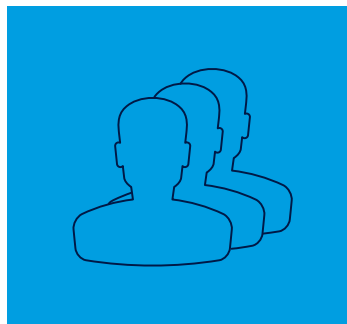
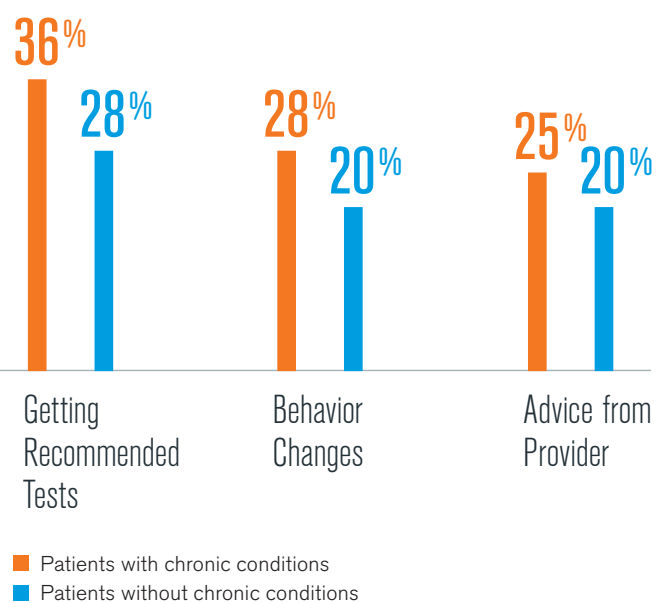
PATIENT RESPONSIBILITY 		PROVIDER DRIVEN 	
	Patients say lifestyle changes would help improve their health.	Patients believe that if their providers pushed them to make certain changes, it would lead to better outcomes.	
	Lifestyle changes 70% (e.g., getting more exercise, eating a healthy diet, stopping unhealthy habits, reducing stress)	31%	Getting all recommended preventive tests or screenings
	Behavior changes 23% (e.g., filling prescriptions, taking medications as prescribed, attending scheduled doctor's appointments)	24%	More education on how to improve health
		22%	Advice from healthcare providers
		15%	Encouragement from healthcare providers
		12%	Frequent reminders from healthcare providers
		12%	Additional support from healthcare providers



What Drives Outcomes?

Chronic Patients More Confident In Prevention and Wellness

Patients with chronic conditions are more likely to believe that getting recommended tests (36% vs. 28%), behavior changes (28% vs. 20%) or advice from their provider (25% vs. 20%) would help them improve their health.



Providers Can Encourage Patients to Work on Their Health

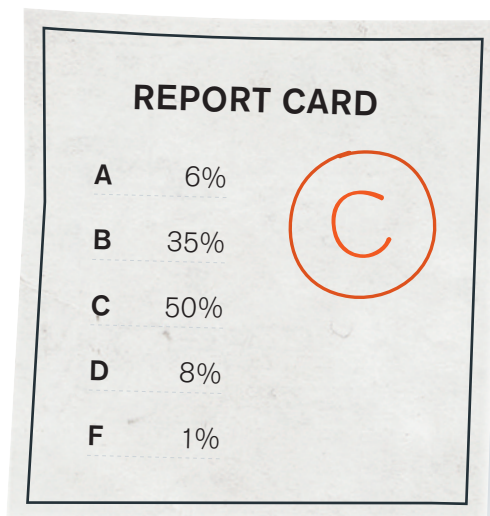
Patients have several suggestions for how providers can help them improve health outcomes, but providers know patients can also do more to help themselves. Patients are the ones that choose the foods they will eat, whether to sit on the couch or go for a run and if they will make time to schedule appointments for routine healthcare services.

Proactive outbound communications can be used to encourage patients to schedule an appointment when they are due for a preventive care service. These messages can be sent automatically and include an easy-to-follow call-to-action.

Providers were asked:

What grade would you give patients for practicing wellness and preventing illness?

Only six percent of medical professionals would give their patients an "A" grade for practicing wellness and taking actions to prevent illness and chronic disease. Fifty-nine percent of providers would give their patients a grade of a "C" or below.





Patients Will Get Screenings When Urged

Many patients admit that they do not get all recommended preventive screenings. Patients often do not take the initiative to schedule appointments themselves. However, patients suggest they are open to getting screenings if their medical team schedules the appointments for them.

Proactively scheduling appointments for patients, and even reminding them to show up, can be done automatically using patient reminder technology.

Scheduling Appointments is Key to Preventive Screenings



of patients say they would get preventive screenings if their **healthcare provider scheduled them.**



of patients do not think their provider offers them **all available preventive care services.**

Although patients are often reactive rather than proactive when it comes to their health, they expect the opposite from providers.

Patients want their healthcare team to be proactive about encouraging wellness and prevention.

By contacting patients and leading them through the process of setting up appointments, healthcare teams could drastically increase the rate at which patients utilize preventive services.

Encourage Health and Wellness to Improve Quality

To improve outcomes and help patients feel better about the quality of care they receive, providers need to find more effective ways to prompt patients to do the things that will keep them healthy. Rather than leaving prevention and wellness up to patients, medical teams can focus on eliminating the barriers keeping patients from utilizing these areas of healthcare and then engage patients to encourage greater participation.

Providers can use technology-enabled communications to engage patients between appointments during their daily lives. Most providers and healthcare organizations already have appointment reminder technology in place that allows them to deliver personalized messages to patients about the services they need and how they can participate in staying healthy.

Providers can:

- **Eliminate barriers** keeping patients from getting preventive care.
- Use technology-enabled communications to **engage patients**.
- **Deliver personalized messages** about services patients need.
- Educate patients about **how to stay healthy**.



What's Standing Between **PATIENTS** and **WELLNESS?**

Providers can address obstacles that deter patients from utilizing preventive and wellness services.
The solution is to leverage technology-enabled communications to educate, engage and activate patients.

Cost

Patients assume preventive services are expensive.

 Nearly **1 in 3**
think they can't afford preventive care.

LESS THAN 1/3 are aware of no-cost screenings for diabetes (30%), colorectal cancer (26%) and lung cancer (18%).



COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS

Blood pressure screenings are a free preventive service. Call to schedule your appointment.

Lack of Awareness

Patients don't know what services they need.

28% don't know what services are recommended for them.

29% don't know when they are past due or how often (**28%**) they should get these screenings.

Regular breast cancer screenings are recommended for women over 40. Schedule your exam now.

Forgetfulness

Patients forget to schedule appointments or don't realize they are past due for tests.

Nearly **1 in 4** don't know when they are due for a screening.



It is time for your annual wellness exam. Call or schedule your appointment online.

Uncertainty About Appointment Scheduling

Patients are unsure who to contact to schedule an appointment.

20% don't know who offers preventive services or where to access them.

You are due for a routine cholesterol screening. Call 800-644-4266 to schedule your appointment with Dr. Parker.

Reactiveness

Patients do not make preventive care a priority.

 **27%** only schedule appointments when they are sick.

Stay healthy this winter. Stop by Central Healthcare this Friday between the hours of 9am-4pm for your annual flu shot.

Scheduling for Success

A Health System in Louisiana:

Leveraged appointment reminder technology to reach out to patients with recent colonoscopy orders.



Sent **phone notifications** that encouraged patients to book preventive screenings for colorectal cancer.

578

Scheduled **578 colorectal test screenings** after just two months of patient outreach.

145

Helped an estimated **145 patients benefit from early detection** (based on the average 25% polyp detection rate).



Received positive feedback from appreciative patients who said they would not have gotten the screening if they had not been nudged by their healthcare team.



A Healthcare Practice in Arizona:

Conducted an outreach campaign to drive more patients to schedule mammograms.



Identified every patient who had previously been seen for a mammogram and was **30 days past due** for their next one.



Sent overdue patients an **automated voicemail** asking them to schedule their preventive screening.

1,200

Booked approximately **1,200 mammograms** year-over-year.



BONUS

GENERATED MORE THAN
HALF A MILLION DOLLARS IN
ADDITIONAL REVENUE.

BONUS

EARNED A QUARTER OF A MILLION
DOLLARS IN ADDITIONAL REVENUE.

Help Patients Manage Chronic Conditions to Improve Quality

Chronic patients rely on their healthcare team to help them stay well and manage their health. To deliver the daily support these patients need, providers can leverage automated surveys to monitor patients between visits. This strategy also allows providers to escalate cases and proactively intervene when patients are at risk. Healthcare teams can use their appointment reminder system to create and send surveys to chronic patients, and then follow up with additional communications.

Providers can:

- Leverage automated surveys to **monitor patients between visits**.
- Escalate cases and **proactively intervene** when patients are at risk.
- Use their appointment reminder system to **create and send surveys**.



Monitoring and Managing CHRONIC DISEASE

Chronic diseases like congestive heart failure, COPD and diabetes are costly and affect patients' quality of life. Healthcare teams can improve outcomes for patients with chronic conditions by stratifying by disease state, monitoring patients with surveys, escalating cases quickly and intervening when necessary.



HEART DISEASE IS THE
#1 CAUSE OF DEATH
IN THE U.S.¹

COPD

ALMOST
15.7M AMERICANS
HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED
WITH COPD.²



7.2M
HOSPITALIZATIONS
ARE ASSOCIATED WITH
DIABETES ANNUALLY.³



91% OF CHRONIC
PATIENTS SAY THEY
NEED HELP
MANAGING THEIR DISEASE.⁴

1

STRATIFY BY DISEASE STATE

Providers can stratify their patients into risk populations to personalize care management for chronic patients.

88%

of patients with chronic conditions feel their providers are not doing enough to provide information tailored to their specific needs and condition.



2

MONITOR

Providers can use their appointment reminder system to send automated surveys and monitor patients between visits.



Patients can easily respond to surveys.

3

ESCALATE

Providers can receive automatic notifications when patients' responses signal they are at risk or an action is required.



4

INTERVENE

Providers can contact patients, schedule appointments or intervene in other ways before serious issues arise.



75% of chronic patients want their provider to touch base regularly so they can be alerted if anything looks off.⁵

Prioritizing Chronic Care

Providers can do more to help patients manage chronic conditions, and patients welcome that help.



70%

At least 70% of patients with a chronic condition would **like more resources** or clarity on **how to manage their disease**.⁶



66% of chronic patients would pay up to \$10 per month for **between-visit support from their healthcare team**.⁷

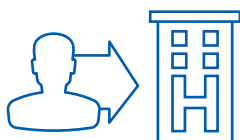
Crunching the Numbers on Chronic Care

By prioritizing high-quality chronic care, providers can not only improve patient outcomes, they can also see financial returns.



Providers can earn reimbursements for chronic disease management.

Medicare allows providers to earn reimbursements of approximately \$40 per month for each patient they enroll in Chronic Care Management (CCM) services.⁸



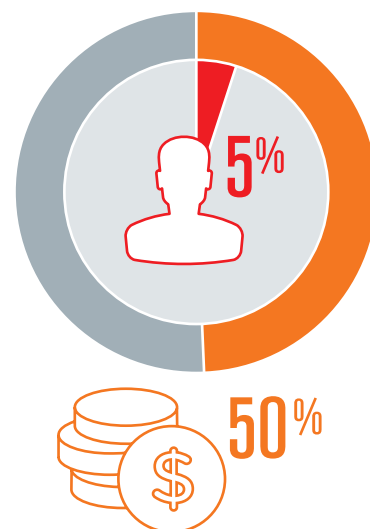
Managing chronic disease helps providers avoid readmission penalties.

Readmissions cost hospitals an estimated \$528 million in Medicare penalties for the 2017 fiscal year.⁹



Chronic patients are expensive to treat.

The sickest 5% of the population accounts for nearly half of healthcare expenditures.¹⁰



Conclusion

Patients and providers agree that healthcare quality has room for improvement. There is a lot of frustration surrounding outcomes and accountability, and rising healthcare costs only exacerbate those issues. Patients want to be healthier, and providers are financially motivated to improve care quality and deliver better outcomes. The keys to solving quality issues? Prevention, wellness and chronic care. Healthcare teams that engage patients and activate them to become fully involved in prevention, wellness and chronic disease management have not only improved health outcomes, but also seen financial gains as a result.





About West

West's Engagement Center Solutions help organizations effectively activate and engage patients beyond the clinical setting. West's unique combination of technology-enabled communications and clinically managed resources are designed to improve patient engagement by solving complex communication challenges in four key areas along the care continuum: Patient Access, Routine Care, Chronic Care and Transition Care. By providing innovative technology and delivering meaningful and relevant communications, West enables healthcare organizations to optimize the patient experience, improve quality, maximize revenue and reduce costs.

West is a leading provider of technology-driven communications, serving Fortune 1000 companies and clients in a variety of industries, including: healthcare, telecommunications, retail, financial services, public safety, and technology.

Learn more about how
West is changing healthcare:

west.com/healthcare

televox.com

we connect. we deliver.



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