



# How Cost Impacts the Patient and Provider Journey: The Importance of Consistent and Proactive Financing Discussions

## The impact of out-of-pocket costs on the healthcare journey is not a new topic in the United States. Costs can be a barrier to patients seeking the care they want and need.

As out-of-pocket costs rise, this barrier may persist and grow, which could increase the likelihood of patients delaying or forgoing health and wellness care for themselves and loved ones due to concerns with how to pay.

Healthcare providers could suffer as well; their ability to facilitate optimal patient outcomes and operational cost management may be limited. And while some offer in-house financing to help patients, this practice can also come with unnecessary risk, time, and expense to their bottom line.

Flexible financing with the CareCredit health and wellness credit card can help address these barriers and limitations by enabling patients to commit to the care they want and need. With less potential risk and administrative burden than in-house financing plans, CareCredit financing solutions also help providers minimize accounts receivable.

Sources: The insight shared in this e-book is informed by several proprietary market research studies conducted by CareCredit and Synchrony. Specific citations are included.



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 **CareCredit**  
a Synchrony solution



# General Healthcare

**Costs can create barriers to care for patients.**

Across health and wellness categories, costs can be a barrier to patients seeking both essential and elective care. Patients may be dissatisfied with payment options, and the perceived lack of options could impact the speed and rate to which they commit to care.



**Patients reported feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, annoyance, or frustration related to out-of-pocket health and wellness expenses.<sup>1</sup>**



## Research Shows



**1 out of every 2 patients struggle to pay**

for out-of-pocket health and wellness expenses.<sup>1</sup>



**1 out of every 2 delay health or wellness care**

due to out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>1</sup>



**3 out of 4 would seek more services**

for health and wellness care if they had ways to pay for them.<sup>1</sup>



**59% said available options from their healthcare providers are limited**

when it comes to paying for out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>1</sup>

1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchrony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.



# General Healthcare

## Costs can create limitations for healthcare providers.

Patients delaying or forgoing care limits providers' ability to ensure optimal outcomes for their patients. In addition, many providers can spend significant time, money, and resources chasing and collecting payments or offer in-house financing programs that are risky and time-consuming to administer.



### Barrier to care

70% of providers surveyed believe cost is a barrier to patients scheduling care.<sup>1</sup>



### In-house financing

Providers surveyed are 2x more likely to offer in-house financing vs. a third-party financing solution.<sup>1</sup>



### Dissatisfaction with plans

Yet only 40% of providers surveyed are satisfied with in-office payment plans.<sup>1</sup>



### Delinquent accounts

Depending on the industry, practices may have anywhere from 8-18% of accounts that are delinquent.<sup>1</sup>



### Debt collection

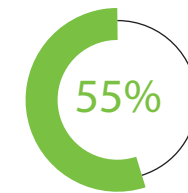
50% of practices use debt collectors for late payments.<sup>1</sup>

1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchrony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.

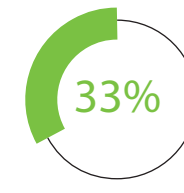
## Better timing and settings for offering payment options help reduce barriers to care.

Patients want to hear about payment options when scheduling the appointment and directly from their provider. Currently, that information typically comes later and from someone else.

### Patients surveyed prefer payment option discussions

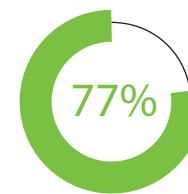


before scheduling<sup>1</sup>

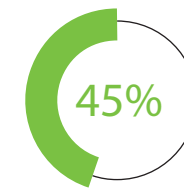


at the time of scheduling<sup>1</sup>

### Providers surveyed claim payment option discussions happen



at the appointment<sup>1</sup>



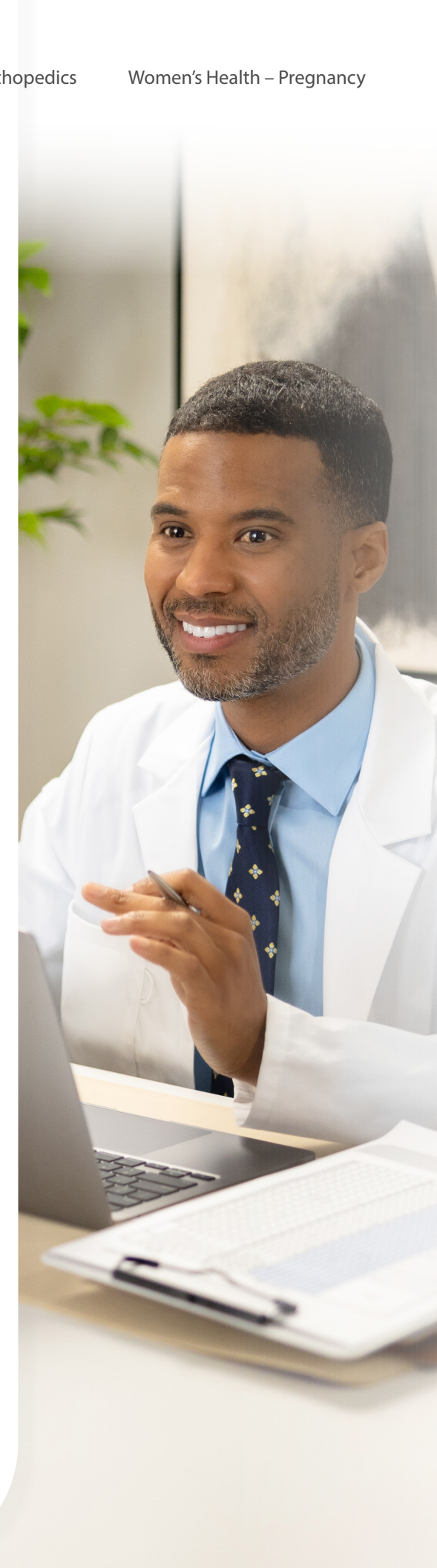
after the appointment<sup>1</sup>

61%

of patients surveyed prefer to learn about payment methods directly from their provider.<sup>1</sup>

5%

of the time, providers surveyed said they handle billing and payment conversations.<sup>1</sup>





# Dermatology

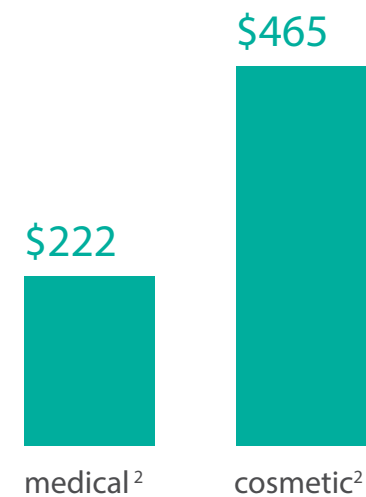


Dermatologists admit the bill can be higher than what is quoted 19% of the time, sometimes by more than 20%.<sup>1</sup>

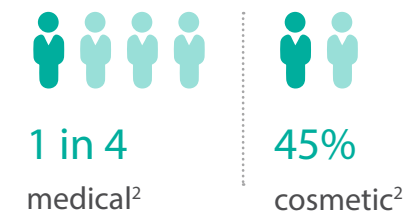
While most **dermatology patients** may not start their journey concerned about costs, the out-of-pocket expense does end up surprising some, making costs and financing options critical when choosing a provider.

## Research Shows

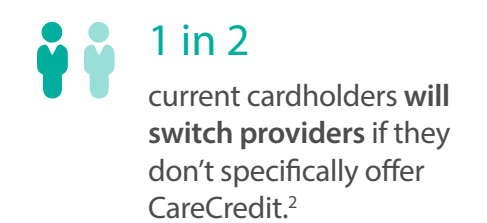
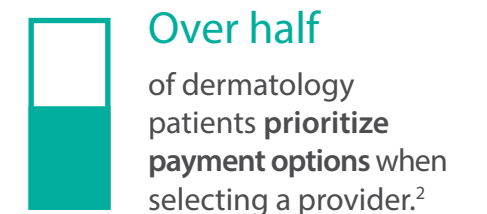
Average out-of-pocket dermatology costs



Patients are surprised by cost



Payment options availability is critical



While some **dermatologists** offer financing, there is significant room for improvement in how often, when in the journey, and what type of financing they offer.

## Findings Suggest



**Only 19%** of providers feel that **not offering a payment solution will have a negative impact** on their practice.<sup>1</sup>



**Only 11%** will offer **payment solutions** to patients unprompted.<sup>1</sup>



**16%** said their office **does not promote payment options** at all. Those that do mostly promote financing options on the bill.<sup>1</sup>

1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchony solution.  
2. Dermatology Patient Journey, Synchony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchony solution.



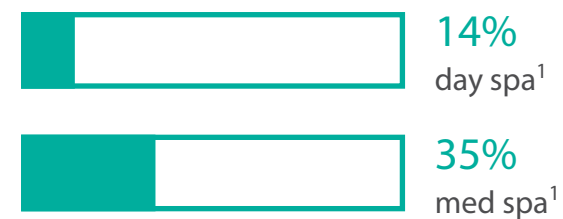
# Medical and Day Spas

Medical and day spa patients and clients appreciate the tangible health and wellness benefits of spa services, but costs and a lack of attractive financing options could keep them from engaging in these services as often as they'd like.

## Patients and clients surveyed want to engage in spa services more often



## Patients and clients said they were offered any type of financing or payment plan



64% said cost is the number one barrier to engagement.<sup>1</sup>



CareCredit can lead to better experiences and outcomes since it can help patients commit to recommended services.

1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchrony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.



# Plastic Surgery

Cost can be a barrier to plastic surgery patients pursuing the procedures they want and need.



**\$4,804**

is the average out-of-pocket cost for plastic surgery reported by patients surveyed.<sup>1</sup>



**57%**

said they have struggled with, delayed, or pushed off care due to out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>1</sup>



**83%**

said they would pursue additional services if they had ways to pay.<sup>1</sup>



**72%**

said that offering payment options is important when deciding where to go.<sup>1</sup>

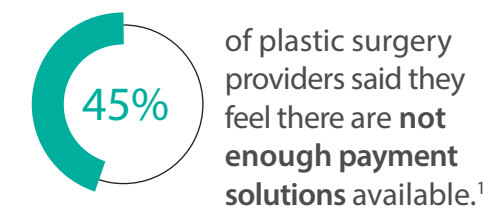
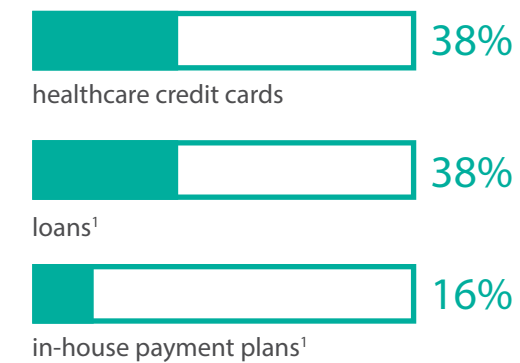


Offering CareCredit allows more patients to get the care they want and need today.

There are major discrepancies in how patients and providers feel about financing in the plastic surgery category.

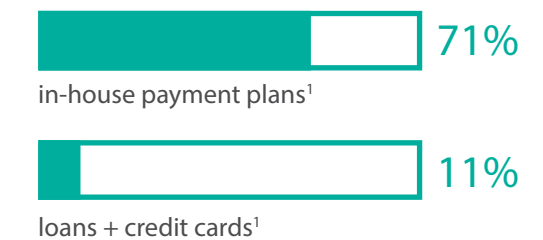
## Providers

claim to offer a wide-range of payment options, including:



## Patients

claim in-house payment options are the dominant offering:



1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchrony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.



# Ophthalmology

While most patients try to prepare themselves for the cost of their ophthalmology procedures, out-of-pocket costs can be a struggle for some.

Ophthalmology providers recognize the limitations costs can have on their practice, but many have not recognized the value of offering payment solutions.



**\$1,850**

is the **average out-of-pocket cost** for ophthalmic surgery reported by patients surveyed.<sup>1</sup>



**Over half**

of ophthalmology patients said they **struggle to pay out-of-pocket costs** (56%).<sup>1</sup>



**24%**

of ophthalmology providers admit the **bill can be higher** 1 in 4 times.<sup>1</sup>



**35%**

of ophthalmology patients said they were **offered a payment solution**.<sup>1</sup>



**72%**

of ophthalmology providers surveyed said they believe **cost may be a barrier** to scheduling care.<sup>1</sup>



**Only 17%**

of ophthalmology providers said they feel a **negative impact on their patients and business** by not offering payment solutions.<sup>1</sup>



**12%**

of ophthalmology practice accounts are **delinquent** on average, as reported by providers surveyed.<sup>1</sup>





# Refractive and Optometry

According to studies, refractive patients have limited payment options, but most do not take advantage of them.<sup>1</sup>



Nearly 3 out of 4 refractive patients said they were offered financing or a payment plan.<sup>1</sup>



But only 1 out of 4 said they accept or leverage the offer.<sup>1</sup>



59% of refractive patients believe their options are limited when it comes to paying for out-of-pocket care.<sup>1</sup>

Costs play a role in the speed at which patients commit to optical care procedures and products, making the availability and proactive offering of payment options important. Unfortunately, optometry providers typically reserve financing for perceived “inability-to-pay moments,” and even then, many aren’t comfortable proactively offering it.<sup>4</sup>



Half of patients said offering a variety of payment options is critical in selecting an optical provider (52%).<sup>3</sup>



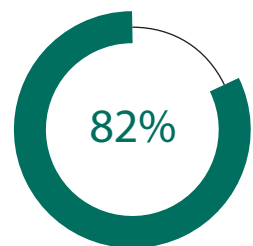
1 in 3 said they will postpone making an optical purchase if it's not covered by insurance (32%).<sup>3</sup>



Nearly half said they will consider financing if it helps enable an immediate purchase (40%).<sup>3</sup>



1 out of 4 said they were either not aware of (16%) or were not offered (10%) the CareCredit financing solution.<sup>3</sup>



82% of payment options offered are in-house plans according to patients, despite providers’ claims to offer a wide variety of third-party financing solutions.<sup>1</sup>



CareCredit is financing that works for patients and helps them commit to the care they want.

1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchrony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution; 3. CareCredit Path to Care - Optical Purchase Findings, 2021; 4. ECP Activation, CareCredit, 2024



# Hearing

Costs can be a barrier to consumers committing to hearing care and optimal hearing devices, and affordability, accessibility, insurance coverage, and payment collection are some of the top challenges providers face.<sup>1</sup>

## Consumers



50% of hearing aid consumers surveyed wish they had worn hearing aids earlier and 68% said cost was the reason they didn't.<sup>5</sup>



Nearly 16% said they ultimately had to settle for a lesser/different pair of hearing aids due to cost.<sup>5</sup>



Over half (59%) said they were not offered any type of payment solution.<sup>5</sup>

## Providers



Only 1 out of 4 providers surveyed realize that cost is a barrier to care for their patients getting the hearing aids they need.<sup>5</sup>



About 1/4 of the time, hearing care providers surveyed offer CareCredit, despite patients paying by general credit card more than half of the time.<sup>1</sup>



Offering CareCredit earlier and more often can help improve the patient experience.



# Orthopedics



Offering CareCredit as a payment option can enable orthopedic providers to better answer the patient need and enhance their payments process.

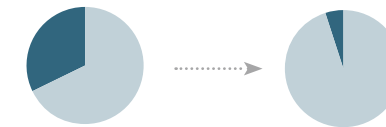
While costs are an expected part of the orthopedic surgery journey, **orthopedic patients** can be stressed and frustrated when expenses are surprisingly higher, and not all patients are offered a payment solution.<sup>1</sup>

## Research Shows

34%



of orthopedic patients are surprised at how high their care costs are.<sup>1</sup>



32% of bills are higher than the estimate.<sup>1</sup>

5% of bills are more than 20% higher than the estimate, orthopedic providers reported.<sup>1</sup>

53%



said they were offered a payment option.<sup>1</sup>

**Orthopedic providers** rely heavily on in-house payment plans, despite continued struggles to collect payment and general dissatisfaction with this method.<sup>1</sup>

## Findings Suggest



62% of providers said they offer in-house plans.<sup>1</sup>

5% of out-of-pocket costs are paid for with this method, according to providers.<sup>1</sup>



52% of late payments at orthopedic practices are sent to collections.<sup>1</sup>

5% require legal intervention or a lawsuit.<sup>1</sup>



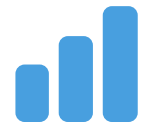
49% of orthopedic providers said they are satisfied with their current payment methods.<sup>1</sup>

1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchrony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.



# Women's Health - Pregnancy

Out-of-pocket costs with women's health and pregnancy can add up and cause stress for new parents. Providers typically offer payment plans after the birth, but many patients prefer to research and plan for costs in advance.<sup>1</sup>



**For 41%** of patients surveyed, the total **cost of pregnancy is more than they expected.**<sup>1</sup>

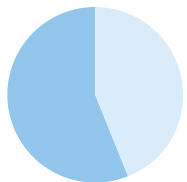


Patients said providers mostly offer payment plans after receiving care (72%).<sup>1</sup>



Pregnant patients said they would **prefer to learn about payment options before receiving care.**<sup>6</sup>

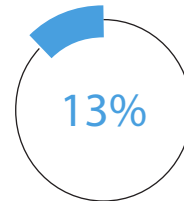
Despite many providers recognizing that offering alternative payment solutions has a positive impact, most practices surveyed spend time reaching out to patients and debt collectors when payments are late.



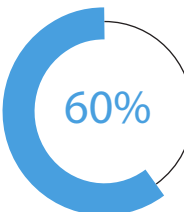
**60%** of patients surveyed are **offered financing or payment options.**<sup>1</sup>



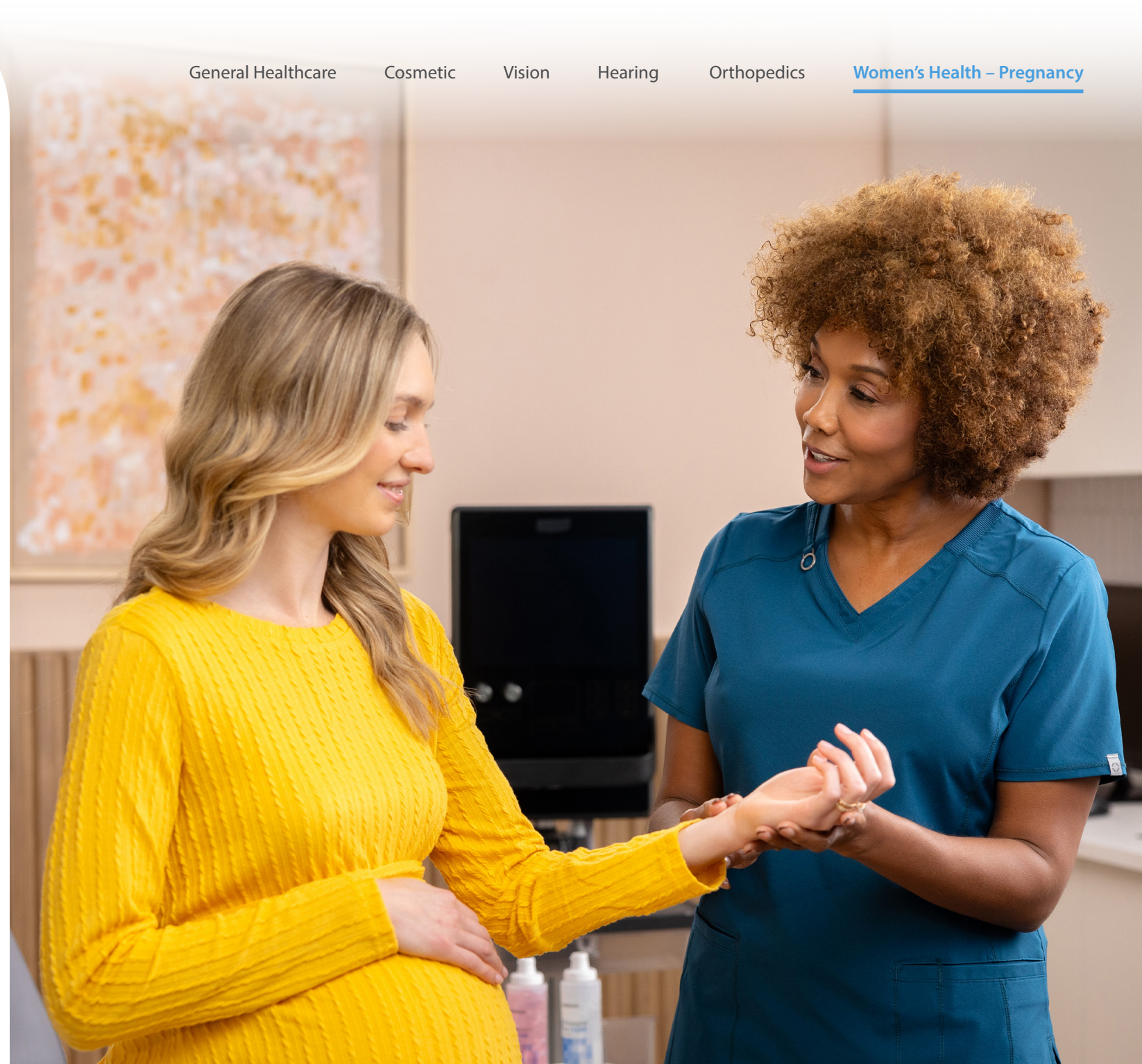
**Over 10%** end up **negotiating costs down** in the process.<sup>1</sup>



**13%** of OB-GYN accounts go delinquent.<sup>1</sup>



**60%** of the time debt collectors are used.<sup>1</sup>



**Learning about CareCredit as a payment option earlier can help new parents better navigate costs associated with pregnancy, removing burdens on practices that can hinder providing optimal care.**

1. Healthcare Journey Research Consumers and Providers, Synchrony, 2023. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution;  
6. CareCredit Consumer Healthcare Journey Qual Report \_ Baby, 2023 CareCredit is a Synchrony solution



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