

*Access to care is no longer an operational problem to be solved at the margins; it is a key way patients experience and judge a health system. In an increasingly consumer-driven market, access has become the front line of growth, loyalty, and competitive differentiation, not just an entry point. Strategically, access is both a system capability and a product. It determines how well demand is matched to capacity, how efficiently existing resources are used, and whether patients choose—and continue to choose—your health system.*

## Research Overview

Strategy Catalyst has published a [series of reports](#) that treat access as a strategic differentiator, not a collection of fixes. We step back and examine the system conditions that make access succeed at scale: culture, standardization, governance, and redesigned care models. Rather than asking, “How did this system implement X?,” we ask, “**What assumptions did they break, what structures did they change, and why did access finally improve?**” The result is a strategic playbook and discussion catalyzer for CSOs and leadership teams who want durable access improvement that fuels growth, experience, and margin—largely using the resources they already have. Our biggest takeaway is that **access improves most when systems challenge assumptions.**

## Key Insights from our Research

- 1 Access transformation starts with culture. A cultural reorientation around shared enterprise responsibility catalyzes transformative change.**  
*3 reframes:*
  - You can't hire your way out. Unlock capacity you already own.
  - Incremental improvement works until it doesn't. Sometimes a reboot is required.
  - Patient experience is a leading indicator of access failure.
- 2 Access is as an entire floor plan of entry points, rather than a single front door, that must be designed around patient intent.**
  - Patients aren't trying to just enter your “front door”—they're trying to quickly solve a problem. The health systems that get it right orchestrate every touchpoint to simplify the experience of finding and entering care.
- 3 Executing on “right care, right time, right place” requires challenging long-standing assumptions about how access to care is designed.**
  - Health systems are redesigning visits, centralizing throughput decisions, and rethinking what “soon enough” means for care to happen earlier and more consistently.

## Select Case Studies

Emory Healthcare [launched](#) a three-month sprint with a hard reset that added 800+ daily ambulatory arrivals without new clinical FTEs.

Kaiser Permanente's AI navigator [routes](#) patients to the right service based on their stated goal, boosting booking success by 20% and cutting abandonment rate to 3%.

Inova Health [unlocked](#) hidden capacity by centralizing transfer decisions, bed placement, and referral routing.