

eHealth – Transforming Health Care for your Patients

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Introduction

Communication and information technology have effectively closed the time and space gap in all areas of our lives. This includes healthcare. The eHealth technology explosion has in fact effectively improved healthcare for both patients and their caregivers. Not only has the healthcare delivery system improved, but it has also lead to increased transparency and accountability. eHealth makes it easy for healthcare professionals to;

- Remotely monitor their patients.
- Gain quick access to patient health history.
- Pass on important and vital information to patients about their health.
- Share patient information with all the participants in a patient's care team.
- Improve the process of building and managing patient records.

Health information is a precious commodity. Patients want greater control over their healthcare. In addition to accessing health related information via the Internet and digital TV/WebTV as well as over their smart phones, digital patients are increasingly using healthcare apps and healthcare wearables as a way of improving their health.

The Role of eHealth in Today's Digital Health Space

The electronic framework is no longer a luxury for healthcare professionals and practices. Programs such as Accountable Care have made it necessary for faster adoption of health based hardware, software, and workflow processes that support these kinds of initiatives. In addition to ensuring better coordinated care, eHealth technology aims at improving health delivery for the general population while effectively lowering instances of health disparities which can impact overall health delivery success. Furthermore, eHealth adoption is increasingly becoming an important aspect of cost-saving for healthcare practices and health-based organizations.

eHEALTH AND YOUR PATIENTS



DIGITAL HEALTH IS EVOLVING

- ➔ Technology is increasingly playing an important role in keeping **patients healthy**.
- ➔ An increasing number of patients are already heavily invested in **digital healthcare**.
- ➔ The **U.S.** digital health market is expected to touch **233.3 billion dollars** by **2020** - driven more specifically by the **mobile health market**.
- ➔ **Healthcare practices** that take steps to digitally partner with their patients stand a better chance of delivering patient-friendly solutions covering various health concerns.



eHEALTH BENEFITS FOR HEALTHCARE PRACTICES

Increase in the number of insured patients, a growing aging population, and increase in instances of chronic conditions place great burden on healthcare systems that are already reeling under immense pressure. By moving patient health information online, a number of crucial issues such as errors, test duplication, and delays can be effectively addressed.



- ➔ Secure and authorized access to **health records** from any location.
- ➔ Improvement in **public health service** delivery.
- ➔ Increase in time spent with patients as the **healthcare professional** spends less time procuring clinical information.
- ➔ As **healthcare** delivery improves, it subsequently reduces the need for unnecessary hospitalization and or follow-up visits or the need for repeating tests.
- ➔ **Healthcare professionals** can easily and quickly access patient records.
- ➔ Improved information sharing between various sources (e.g. - between **dentists** and **GPs/Hospitals**).
- ➔ **Healthcare professionals** can play a more active role in helping their patients better manage their health.
- ➔ Patient correspondence can only be viewed by treating **healthcare professionals**.

eHEALTH – EMBRACING DIGITAL HEALTH



- ➔ **Dental practices** need to quickly incorporate digital tactics that can attract and retain more well-insured patients.
- ➔ According to a **Deloitte 2011 Survey of U.S. Health Care Consumers** survey, two out of three patients will consider changing providers if it means they can gain access to their **medical records online**.
- ➔ **Dental practices** that offer a competitive patient portal will be in a stronger position to dominate their **ePatient market share**.
- ➔ **eHealth technology** not only improves access to information, but it can also facilitate improved reach to rural or underserved populations.

eHEALTH AND YOUR PATIENTS

- ➔ Identify **patients** who stand to benefit the most from having **eHealth records**.
- ➔ Educate your patients about the **eHealth record** system.
- ➔ Implement systems that allow you to gain informed consent from those patients.
- ➔ Have in place processes for informing patients of any changes to their **medication lists**.
- ➔ Encourage **patients** to provide input on how they would like to use the **eHealth record**



Transforming Oral Healthcare via eHealth

eHealth can effectively improve quality of oral health care for patients. Not only does care delivery get a boost, but eHealth can also drive positive patient experiences which collectively lead to better oral health outcomes.

Benefits to Healthcare Providers;

- Faster access to patient records from different sources leading to coordinated and improved care delivery.
- Quick and timely access to crucial clinical alerts, reminders, and or any other necessary health information.
- eHealth framework comes with performance-improving tools as well as real-time quality reporting.
- Access to patient documentation leading to greater accuracy in coding and billing.
- Easy information sharing among all participants in a patient's care giver team ensures improved co-ordination and collaboration which can result in better health outcomes.

eHealth and Your Patients

Information sharing between patients and healthcare professionals can help build a more collaborative partnership which in turn can enhance patient health as both parties are in a stronger position to make informed decisions. However, collaboration can only happen when your patients are actively engaged in the process of improving their health.

eHealth Implementation;

- Prepare a list of patients who will benefit the most from having eHealth records.
- Make sure you educate your patients about the eHealth record system.
- Have in place systems that allow you to gain informed consent from those patients.
- Implement processes for keeping patients informed about any changes to their medication lists.
- Talk to you patients about ways in which they would like to use the eHealth record.
- Work on systems and processes that encourage patient information and record sharing with other healthcare providers who are a part of the patient's healthcare team.
- Identify ways in which you can use the eHealth record system to drive oral health literacy among your patients.

eHealth Success – Why you Need to Encourage Patient Engagement

Your practice staff as well as other participants in the patient's healthcare team can play a crucial role in educating patients about the importance and usefulness of eHealth. A big benefit of eHealth is that patient satisfaction can get a big boost as eHealth tools can provide a secure communication channel between patients and their healthcare professionals.

Using eHealth patients can;

- Easily access information about their health and health care.
- Collaborate with healthcare professionals and make informed decisions about their health choices.
- Take necessary action to better manage their health.

eHealth Tools for Patients;

- Patient portals.
- Clinical summaries.
- Patient education resources which include – mobile applications, health trackers/scales, internet-based resources, self-health management tools, and decision aids.
- Secure electronic messaging.

Educate your patients about each of these tools and how they can use them to manage and improve their health.

Studies have shown that patients who are interested in learning about and managing their own healthcare are more willing to participate in programs that encourage preventive care. They are also far more invested in self-managing their health conditions. Furthermore, patients with chronic conditions can benefit from easy and quick access to electronic health information as a way of better managing their condition and understanding the implications of informed choices regarding their health.

Conclusion

Digital health is on the rise. Most patients today seek greater control over their health and want to have an interactive partnership with their healthcare professionals and teams. This is where eHealth can make its impact as it helps in fostering stronger and more effective communication among patients and healthcare professionals.

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