
Shared medical records engage patients and manage populations

Group Health Cooperative, Seattle, Washington

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Group Health Cooperative, a large, integrated health care system, facilitates patient-provider communication and empowers its patients to share responsibility for their health and health care by offering an array of interactive services and tools on its Web site. As part of a secure member portal, a system-wide online shared health record allows patients to access medical records online; provides secure e-mail access to physicians; and offers the ability to complete an interactive electronic health-risk assessment. The system also allows patients to easily access relevant educational information, obtain test results, and schedule appointments.

Excerpted from:

AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange

“Innovation Profile: Online Tools and Services Activate Plan Enrollees and Engage Them in Their Care, Enhance Efficiency, and Improve Satisfaction and Retention”

<http://www.innovations.ahrq.gov/content.aspx?id=2133>

“Problem Addressed

The Internet offers great potential to help patients engage in their care—and pursue that care efficiently—via functions such as online medical records and e-mail communication with providers. However, few patients have access to these services.

- E-mail communication with providers is rare, despite consumer interest: According to a recent study, only 24 percent of physicians used e-mail to communicate with patients in 2004–2005.¹ However, a 2002 Harris Interactive poll conducted found that 90 percent of U.S. consumers with Internet access would like to be able to communicate with their providers via e-mail.²
- Access to online medical records is even rarer: One survey found that up to 96 percent of the population does not have online access to their medical records.³

“Description of the Innovative Activity

Group Health Cooperative enables patients to communicate easily with their providers and empowers them to participate in their health care through an online patient portal, called MyGroupHealth, that includes a comprehensive shared health record and electronic health risk assessment. The shared health record is an online medical record that includes secure e-mail access to every Group Health Cooperative care provider and to laboratory and other test results, allergy information, and visit summaries. The portal also allows enrollees to access educational information tailored to their specific condition(s), schedule appointments, and complete an electronic health risk assessment, an interactive tool that collects important clinical information and integrates it into the electronic medical record (EMR).

Group Health also recently began offering tools to enrollees to assist in deciding whether to undergo common elective surgical procedures. . . .”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Stephen Tarnoff, MD

Associate Medical Director, Strategy & Business Development

Group Health Cooperative

320 Westlake Ave. N., Suite 100

Seattle, WA 98109-5233

tel.206.448.5006

tarnoff.s@ghc.org

www.ghc.org