

Going digital:

When patients go digital everybody wins



Across the country, physicians, nurses, medical office assistants and their patients are discovering the power of technology and information first hand. They're seeing what the future of healthcare looks like, and that the future is already here.

They're connecting with patients through the TELUS Patient Portal, a web application that gives patients and caregivers convenient and secure access to patients' health information so they can book appointments online, access information in their electronic medical chart and receive notifications, health alerts and health information.

Giving clinics and their patients an edge

The TELUS Patient Portal is a secure and private application. It's a tool that benefits medical professionals and clinics by:

- reducing time spent booking appointments and responding to routine requests;
- streamlining everyday tasks, allowing staff to focus on more high-value work;
- decreasing the number of outbound calls for non-urgent recalls and screening reminders.

For patients, the portal offers secure online access to medical information. Not only does this mean they can be more actively involved in their own care beyond an office visit, but physicians have a direct avenue to provide them with more reliable supplementary health education to enhance their care.

The benefits of being digital also extend to family members linked to the account. Those who may be co-managing a patient's care can access information and updates safely and securely from anywhere in Canada or worldwide, especially helpful when care for young or aging family members is concerned.

These and other advantages of "going digital" are assisting patients and their families in making timelier and more informed decisions about overall care and improving communications between clinics, doctors and their patients.

The portal in action in Mission, BC

Mission Oaks Medical Centre signed on to the TELUS Patient Portal in Fall 2015. The clinic has eight physicians, three nurses, eight medical office assistants and 8,760 patients.



"Our patients love the freedom they have to go into the system on evenings and weekends to book with their doctors," says Erin Philbrook, a medical office assistant with the clinic. "They appreciate the system's flexibility, and being able to readily access their medical summaries, lab results, medications and vaccinations lists first hand when they need that information."

"We've found the portal helps patients book appointments in a more convenient fashion and has become more popular," says Dr. Peter Barnsdale, a physician at Mission Oaks. "Some patients are enjoying the opportunity to see results and diagnostic summaries, although it has led to occasional discussions about diagnoses of which they weren't fully aware."

Going forward, the clinic anticipates taking fuller advantage of the portal by tapping into additional features such as a messaging function that will enable the clinic to connect with their patients using the portal rather than by phone or in person — more efficient and convenient for everyone.

Overall, studies have shown that patients actively engaged in their healthcare, working and communicating directly with their providers and others involved in the decision-making process, tend to be healthier and have improved health outcomes. That makes using the TELUS Patient Portal an all-around win for patients, physicians, clinics and the healthcare system.

The patient portal at work: automated health reminders

One portal feature that has proven especially popular with the Mission Oaks Medical Centre team and its patients is the recall/reminder notice feature. The patient portal has the ability to automatically reach out to patients with information specific to their health. Quickly and easily, it allows clinics to connect with their patients about routine recall screenings or with educational information related to their medical chart, informing them in patient-friendly terms about appropriate next steps.

Recently, Mission Oaks used the portal to automatically send out notices to women in the appropriate age ranges who were due for breast cancer screening, with guidance about how to get screened. Of these, approximately 70 per cent of patients who received the reminder notice logged into the system — the same day they received the notification — to initiate screening.

“It all went very smoothly,” says Philbrook. “We will continue using the automatic breast cancer screening notifications with our patients on an ongoing basis.” Philbrook is also keen to see the portal’s use expanded to other notifications — particularly for patients with chronic disease. “Going forward, I’d love to set up more notifications.”

Looking to the future

The TELUS vision for healthcare is a system that enables timely, convenient, accessible and effective patient experiences. In support of this vision, the TELUS mission is to turn information into better health outcomes by providing applications and services that connect patients, providers and insurers through the TELUS Health platform. It’s about seeing clinics that are technology-enabled, collaborative, accessible and secure.

It’s what TELUS calls The Future Friendly Clinic.

A trusted name and brand

TELUS Health is a leader in tele homecare, electronic medical and health records, consumer health, benefits management and pharmacy management. TELUS Health solutions give health authorities, providers, physicians, patients and consumers the power to turn information into better health outcomes.



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