The Personal Health Record

In today's generation everything is forever changing and everything is based on technology. New technology is not only based on new cell phones, new cars, but computers are the future, especially for the doctor office. How many people remember going to the doctor office and have to fill out paperwork, or going to each doctor to get information for you take to your other doctors, well today you can manage your information with little to no effort. Most doctor offices or medical facilities are using personal health records. A personal health record is an electronic application that is used by patients to update and manage all of their health records from the privacy of their own home or anywhere that they choose to.

To create a personal health record, you must gather all of your health information. You can share with one doctor or multiple doctors or with one doctor it's your personal choice, the easiest way is by using a digital format, please make sure you store your information securely. If you have print outs you can create a folder but make sure to store it somewhere safe or if you are computer savvy you can scan your documents to the computer and save all info to a usb drive. last but not least to access your personal health records, you would create a username and password (do not share) to login to a portal that has all of your records listed there, just make sure you store your information in a safe place. Security is also very important, so I recommend do some research to make sure that it's a good portal, make sure to read the terms and agreements, make sure not to enable any of your information on social media or the web, because once its posted its permanent. If you are not sure please do not use the portal or to be on the safe side call your doctor office to see if they have any recommendations or pamphlets about personal health records.

Let's talk about the some of the advantages of using a personal health records. 1. you are able to provide all of your doctors with your information (medicine that you are taking, symptoms, family history, dates of surgeries etc.), this is really useful if you are going to a new doctor or just want to verify any information. 2. helps reduce administrative costs, you have the capability to submit appointment requests and refill prescriptions all by logging into your portal. I love this feature, I log into my dad's account to refill his prescription all the time, I don’t have to wait on the phone or wait until to submit the requests, it saves the staff a lot of time by using this feature. 3. Enhance communication, which means that the patient can submit questions and the doctor or nurse can respond to them. 4. Encourage family involvement, you can setup the portal so that your spouse or kids have access, so that they can be involved with the management of your health or ask questions to your doctors. 5. Encourage patient use of the portal, some people are not computer savvy or might not know that the portal even exist, so by advising your patients or answering questions about the portal is very beneficial.

As with anything you have your disadvantages, some disadvantages of using a personal health records are as follow: 1. Older patients are not able to use the portal, they might not have a computer or just don’t want to use it. 2. some patients might feel that it is a waste of time and prefer to go into the office or call and leave messages. 3. some patients might input the wrong information, some people will think that doctor is wrong and enter the information that they are correct. 4. security of patient information, with everything being accessed over the internet you have to worry about hackers and viruses. 5.HIPPA is something that you have to careful about when update records, please check and make sure.

The affect that the personal health records has on the staff can help decrease the phone calls for prescription refills, appointment requests or calls for the doctor or nurse. To make sure that the staff is prepared or educated about the personal health records, you will need to make sure that everyone is properly trained on how to use the tool whether it’s a portal for the local doctor office or a portal that is online. I have worked several jobs where we role play to make sure we understand the process or look up information that is needed. We also made sure that we follow all the guidelines so that we are not breach of any kind, another training strategy is process-based training, it is used to train the users on how your practice, hospital or health center will provide clinical summaries for patients (<https://www.healthit.gov/providers-professionals/faqs/how-should-i-train-my-staff>).

Not only is the staff affected by personal health records by the patients are as well. It's the nurse or doctors job to make sure the patient is well educated about advantages of using the tool, to make sure that the staff is prepared to answer any questions that the patient or family member might have. It's not something that will take effect right away, it takes time. Younger patients might be more willing to try it because they use their phone or tablet for everything versus an older person who doesn't have the patience. For example, my dad does not have a smartphone, and will only use a computer to sign up for his benefits every year at work, his doctor has a portal that I take advantage of every chance I get. Its better because I can login and handle all his needs for him, I know when he has appointments coming up, I can use it when completing my paperwork at the doctor for things like blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma etc. He was unaware that they offered this portal, so I showed him the emails and explained to him what we could do with his portal, his exact words were whatever makes it easier on you, lol. The staff should have made him aware that they had a portal, but I handled that part.

Personally, I feel having a personal health record is awesome. You don't have to wait on hold for the doctor or nurse. No matter what time of day or night you can login to your portal to send emails, prescriptions refills or request an appointment. Another reason why I think it's awesome is because if you don't understand what the doctor or nurse say or if you forget you can login and look at the notes, tests results or care notes to see what's going on or to see what you are supposed to do. I feel like it really improves communication with your doctor and yourself. Your portal could have helpful links that you are able to click on to improve your lifestyle. I believe everyone should give it a try to see. If you are older and do not have a computer allow your kids to create an account on your behalf, that way everyone is taking an active part in your healthcare. No matter what we do there will always be advantages and disadvantages, that's life but if we can get the good out of new technology and be aware of the disadvantages we will be thoroughly prepared.

References

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