

Digital Healthcare: EHRs, e-prescribing and Patient Driven Applications

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Abstracts

From the finance industry to manufacturing, from customer service to on-line shopping, the internet has changed the way the world does business.

And now it's changing the way it takes care of its health, too. As healthcare costs continue to rise for hospitals, physicians and patients alike, the industry is increasingly turning to electronic health record (EHR) systems and e-prescribing for cost-saving solutions.

Long the victim of patchy financial support, bad press over implementation and sketchy user uptake, digital healthcare is currently the positive focus of recent government and payor incentives to increase EHR adoption at an administrative level. Patients and physicians, meantime, are flocking to patient-centric IT solutions like smart-phone applications, telemedicine and websites. According to a recent study by Manhattan Research, more than 102 million people already use the internet to research drug information, while physicians have tripled their use between 2002 and 2009.

"A tsunami of data is coming," says Jonathon Linkous, CEO of the American Telemedicine Association, of the increased use of apps and sites for monitoring and testing. "[It is] taking healthcare out of the doctor's office, into the patient's home. Some physicians are worried about it, but it's efficient and effective for everyone," he adds. "Instead of spending an hour and a half for a 15-minute appointment, you could spend three to four minutes communicating with your doctor via email."

Revolutionary as that may sound, the most compelling argument for digital healthcare exists in its bottom line: A study at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital found EHR achieved annual net savings of \$5 million to \$10 million and reduced serious

errors by 5 per cent. What's more, researchers in Texas discovered that hospitals with EHR-ready patients had 15 per cent fewer deaths and 16 per cent fewer complications.

As healthcare enters the brave new world of cost-effective e-health, who will emerge the leaders?

Key insights and strategies

In *Digital Healthcare: EHRs, e-prescribing and Patient Driven Applications*, FirstWord explores the emerging world of on-line medicine and weighs the cost-saving and patient benefits that electronic healthcare can provide against its implementation. Based on patient and industry leader interviews, as well as solid statistical research, the report offers comparative analysis of EHR uptake in five American practice-sized settings, as well as insights into the key regulatory, financial, functionality and adoption problems and solutions in the United States, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and Denmark. The report also provides compelling insight into patient-centric IT solutions that are spearheading—or pushing—healthcare information into the digital age.

The report investigates the state of EHR in five countries to establish:

The financial, regulatory and adoption issues and solutions that are emerging

Key opinions and forward-looking strategies for digital medicine

The report

Provides critical insight into how EHR can function in five American practice-sized settings

Explains the key benefits of digital healthcare

Reviews the implementation experience in five key regions: Canada, United States, Germany, United Kingdom and Denmark

Offers detailed analysis and interviews with patient and industry opinion-leaders

Includes a breakdown of leading e-patient sites and applications such as Google Health, TheCarrot.com, Ringful Health and Dossia

Comments from the report

Smartphone “applications are an extension of telemedicine. It’s another way of using telemedicine, but it is accelerating consumer involvement. We are seeing more monitoring of diseases like in diabetes and asthma and medication reminders in these smartphone apps.” Jonathon Linkous, CEO of the American Telemedicine Association.

According a Manhattan Research report, 64 percent of physicians had smartphones in 2009, more than doubling from 2008. By 2012, 81 percent of physicians are expected to have smartphones as they rapidly become an indispensable medical assistant.

Patient-directed preventative healthcare and treatment management is transforming healthcare. Physicians report that increasingly patients arrive armed with Internet-based research with active engagement in healthcare decisions. Coupled with tech savvy Baby Boomers beginning to need more healthcare intervention, demand is growing for electronic patient healthcare tools.

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