The Importance of Email Capture

The practice of email capture began in inpatient areas where it was closely related to Patient Portal registration numbers and Meaningful Use (http://goo.gl/zs20VL). Poor email capture rates can leave millions of dollars at stake because of Patient Portal registration expectations and penalties (http://goo.gl/BJjJa3). It can also result in large, completely avoidable gaps in important patient feedback measures. Email capture doesn't have to be a difficult process. This document outlines best practices for successful email capture, including some helpful suggestions from our clients.

Best Practices

Educate Staff: Let staff know why email capture is important. Show them patient marketing materials and explain how a feedback program benefits patients and the organization overall. Clarify the process and the importance of their role within it. Focusing on real-time feedback can highlight successes with recent patients, illustrating tangible benefits of the program. Recognize and promote positive patient comments about staff.

Provide scripting for staff: A confident approach is key to successful email capture. Don't ask, "Do you want to give me your email…" but rather, "please verify…" or "please confirm your email address." Some registrars may be uncomfortable asking, especially if emails have not been captured in the past. Scripting is a shortcut to comfortable, confident phrasing.

Ask right away, every time: Ask patients for email addresses during registration or via online avenues. Include an email section on registration paperwork. Ask patients to verify existing listed addresses.

Increasing Capture Rates

In addition to the best practices outlined above, there are several ways to increase capture rates.

Learn about your demographics: Some registrars assume that patients don't have email access. Educating staff with demographic research can correct misconceptions that may prevent them from asking. It can also help you find demographic gaps which may need to be reached via other modes of communication.

Explore multiple avenues for capturing email: Consider capturing emails across multiple care settings or at different times during the patient visit. For example, it may be easier to capture emails during registration in an inpatient facility than it is in an emergency department. Similarly, it is probably more effective to ask during registration rather than in the exam room. Test different scenarios to find the most effective method(s) for your facility.

Be aware of technical barriers: Technical barriers can exist in systems that weren't designed for the entire patient experience (i.e. only focused on a specific visit type or environment) or where emails have not been collected historically. Some programs may not be able to handle certain criteria like blanks, @, or suffixes like, ".com" and will need to be updated. Consider making the email field mandatory but be sure to provide a consistent option for instances when none is available. Drop-downs or checkboxes for "none given" or "no" are faster than typing in a comment or fake address and aid in record consistency. Developing an interface that can

carry information across multiple EMR systems will also aid in consistency and make visits more efficient for patients and staff alike.

Investigate current capture process: Sometimes, it may be necessary to investigate how emails are being captured. Assure staff that investigations aren't punitive and are actually intended to monitor patient care standards. Asking a random sampling of patients immediately after admission whether or not they were asked for their email address has proven very effective for many of our clients. When investigating the process, many clients have found that registrars often ask inconsistently – some ask, some don't, some will with one patient and won't with another. Consistent requests are the biggest driver of a successful capture process. Many clients who have implemented EMR monitoring at the registrar level have found that holding each staff member accountable results in significant increases to capture rates.

Provide Recognition and Incentives: Partnership between staff and leadership is huge, and all staff want to feel as though they are an important part of the organization. Recognizing and incentivizing great performance assures staff members that their work is appreciated. Compare existing metrics with intended capture rates and set goals specific to either teams or individual registrars. For example, individuals may be tasked with increasing capture by five addresses in a given month. Teams can be given stretch goals like reaching 25% capture in a given timeframe. Competitions between different shifts or unit directors have proven effective for building strong team involvement. Incentives can include gift cards at the individual level or team events like a free lunch for groups.

From: Alia McDonald [mailto:amcdonald@connecthealthcare.com]
Subject: Contest - Collecting EMAIL Addresses

Let's make this fun and have a contest...
All you will need to do is to ask patients for their email addresses and keep track of any NEW, valid email addresses that you enter into the system. At the end of the month one person will win two movie tickets AND a $20 gift card. The person who collects the highest volume of emails will win!*

*To make the contest fair, the winning number of emails collected will be based on total number of emails collected for the number of hours worked.

Thank you!!!!

Alia McDonald
Team Coordinator
Connect Healthcare