



PATIENT CENTRIC PORTALS

By Meghan Homa, Region II Vice President

A recent health care industry trend is patient portals or web based health care communication for patients. The portals that have been established across the country so far offer services ranging from standard e-mail communication between patients and health care staff to secure prescription refill requests. Patient portals can also send direct physician-patient communication text messages via the health care system's messaging system.

The portals allow patients to communicate with their physician and clinic staff via the Internet and, although the growth of the portals is slow, the interest among patients is high. Research shows that a number of health care systems and organizations are investing in patient portals. However, a negative aspect to the patient portals is the potential lack of acceptance by health care staff and physicians because the portals require a significant change in the established daily operations. It is much like technology implementation in the past; however, the portals will become easier to utilize once the process is learned and embraced.

Patient portals offer health care systems and organizations the ability to save money and are a convenient way to promote quality and effective patient care.