

# HIM Using mHealth to Teach Patients Why and How to Access Health Records

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*By Katherine Lusk, MHSM, RHIA, FAHIMA, and Jennifer Manahan, MBA, MJ, MSHI, RHIA, CHTS-IM, CHC*

THERE ARE SEVEN billion people in the world, with more than three billion using the Internet. And of the North American population of 565 million, 320 million are using the Internet. There are also 6.8 billion cellphone subscriptions across the world, with two-thirds of Americans owning a smartphone.<sup>1,2,3</sup> The connectivity possibilities that exist for the utilization and exchange of health records through mobile devices is obviously vast, with standards laying the foundation for connectivity.

Mobile health (mHealth), including a personal health record (PHR), is made possible by technology that provides efficient communication regardless of location and socio-economic status. mHealth communication to/with the patient health record can be delivered via cell phone messaging or e-mails.

Serving as an advocate for the patient with the health record has long been a priority for health information management (HIM) professionals.<sup>4</sup> And this mission now needs to extend to mHealth. Healthcare is changing, moving care delivery outside physical walls by leveraging technology. The HIM professional is changing to meet these needs in this rapidly morphing environment. Standards ensure accurate communication in a secure manner, providing trust.

## Opportunities of mHealth

The Loyola Recovery Foundation project documented the power of mHealth in the prevention of readmissions for veterans under treatment for alcohol dependence, trauma, mental health, and physical illness.<sup>5</sup> The strategy was defined as mPOWER, Mobile Patient Opportunities for Wellness, Empowerment, and Recovery. mPOWER provided patients with care coordination, medication reminders, location tracking, access to information, and the ability to contact healthcare professionals. The most actively used applications were discussions, “my messages,” and weekly surveys. Care communication was improved with this veteran population by increased peer support and dialogue. Also, the group participating in the project experienced a 63 percent reduction in hospitalizations.

Practical examples of the value of mHealth include: improvements in efficiency with online scheduling, prescription refills, communication with one’s healthcare team, capture of discrete data in real time, dissemination of educational material when needed, and easier bill pay. An often under-appreciated value of mHealth is the ability of the individual to identify errors in the health record and provide feedback to the provider via the amendment process based on HIPAA to ensure the health record is complete and accurate.

The sources of data included in the health record are changing with inclusion of patient-reported data, wearable devices, mHealth applications, and social media. Healthcare delivery is changing from a focus of “sick care” to patient-managed “well care.” Today, the health record primarily belongs to the healthcare provider community; however, mHealth is providing a future where an individual will own their health record and utilize technology to enhance communication.

## Standards for Trusted Exchange of Information with mHealth

The HIPAA that governs information management in healthcare organizations does not govern an individual’s management of their health information. HIPAA protection is only provided if a PHR is administered by a covered entity. Choosing a PHR that provides a level of protection that aligns with HIPAA is valuable. Many PHR vendors advertise that they are “HIPAA compliant,” but the HIPAA Privacy Rule does not apply or provide protection for all PHRs. Private PHRs are governed by internal policies and practices and are not regulated at a federal level. The HIM professional can provide value in assisting with selection of a PHR in relation to privacy and security. The HIPAA Privacy Rule supports individuals’ use of a PHR as a

mechanism for access to and control over their information. This rule requires HIPAA-covered entities to send and provide the information in a secure manner. It does not govern what the individual does with the information after provision.

Communicating the value of protecting personal health information is an advocacy opportunity for the HIM professional. Individuals are not always cognizant of the lasting nature of the Internet or the impact of compromised security. The HIM professional can provide guidance on the need to maintain privacy protection and the long-term impact if not maintained.

The following efforts and entities illustrate health information technology standards and initiatives to set the structure in place to ensure trusted exchange of information with mHealth:

- Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) integration profiles including Cross Community Access (IHE XCA), Cross-Community Patient Discovery (IHE XCPD), and other profiles for requesting information when needed for care<sup>6</sup>
- Direct Project secure e-mail communication (IHE Cross-Enterprise Document Reliable Interchange (XDR) integration profile) for sending information during a known transition of care
- Health Level Seven (HL7) Consolidated Clinical Document Architecture (HL7 C-CDA) standard<sup>7</sup> and Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) standards<sup>8</sup> for formatting information sent
- RxNorm, LOINC, SNOMED CT, and ICD-10 standards for coding
- US postal service standard for addresses
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for general wellness in low risk devices
- Learning Health System<sup>9</sup> for improving efficiency and reducing the burden on patients and healthcare professionals

The barriers to using mHealth can be overcome with advocacy, communication to support patient engagement, and the adoption of standards to protect information privacy, enable secure information sharing, and manage patient health information at healthcare settings as well as in PHRs.

## Barriers to Overcome

Not all individuals understand the value of management of their healthcare or the standards overseeing mHealth. This is a barrier to overcome with mHealth. A trained HIM professional can provide training, communication, and hands-on assistance with personal care management using technology.

However, mHealth has its own technical/logistical barriers, including:

- Lack of widespread knowledge regarding mHealth standards
- Consistently maintained cell phone coverage
- Internet access is not always available in the home
- Not everyone has or provides an e-mail address

The HIM professional serves as a resource for overcoming the barriers identified above. The HIM professional can help guide selection of a mHealth application that includes necessary privacy/security controls. Though cell phones are used widely, patients may need assistance choosing and using a mHealth product and addressing usability and technical gaps in the transition. Not every patient will need this assistance, but being prepared to provide it to those in need is important. Making the journey possible on an individual level, person by person, is the key to the overall success of mHealth adoption.

## How to Get Started

HIM professionals need to gain an understanding of mHealth standards and be able to provide succinct communication to the community. A practical way to start encouraging mHealth utilization is with requests for copies of medical records. The HIM professional can aid in setting up patient access on a patient portal or setting up a secure e-mail connection between the patient's cell phone and the facility to send the copies of the record. This is a natural progression of HIM professionals' services that links the individual patient directly to the healthcare entity.

AHIMA maintains the [www.MyPHR.com](http://www.MyPHR.com) website that aims to assist individuals with organizing their PHRs.<sup>10</sup> This site provides resources for the multiple facets of the population (i.e., patients, parents, seniors, caregivers, and physicians) identifying potential needs and requirements, how to avoid identity theft, and discussing privacy protection considerations. The

website also contains detailed directions on how to choose a PHR. In addition, the website provides information on health literacy to assist in understanding the information one receives.

As health information technology goes mobile and health information becomes more accessible, HIM professionals must move toward being directly engaged with patients to assist with this transition.

## Notes

- [1] World Population Review. "[North America Population](#)." December 2016.
- [2] Smith, Aaron. "[U.S. Smartphone Use in 2015](#)." Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech. April 1, 2015.
- [3] Internet World Stats. "[Internet Usage Statistics: The Internet Big Picture](#)." June 2016.
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- [5] Loyola Recovery Foundation. "[mPOWER Project](#)."
- [6] Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE). "[Information Technology Infrastructure Technical Framework](#)."
- [7] Health Level Seven. "[HL7 Implementation Guide for CDA® Release 2: IHE Health Story Consolidation, Release 1.1 - US Realm](#)."
- [8] Health Level Seven. "[HL7 Wiki: FHIR](#)."
- [9] Friedman, Charles et al. "[Toward a science of learning systems: a research agenda for the high-functioning Learning Health System](#)." *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* 22, no. 1 (January 2015): 43-50.
- [10] AHIMA. "[MyPHR home page](#)."

Katherine Lusk ([katherine.lusk@childrens.com](mailto:katherine.lusk@childrens.com)) is chief HIM and exchange officer at Children's Health System of Texas. Jennifer Manahan ([jennifer.manahan@viachristi.org](mailto:jennifer.manahan@viachristi.org)) is manager of HIM at Via Christi Clinic, based in Kansas.

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