

myHealthFolders

Save to myBoK

by Ron Peterson

Everyone has encountered situations where they are asked questions about their health history. In emergency situations, individuals will be asked a series of rapid-fire questions: “What medications are you taking? What dosages? Are you allergic to any medications? Are you being treated for any chronic conditions? Who is your primary care doctor? Do you have health insurance? Is there anyone we should contact?” For most individuals, health records are spread among various providers and contained in file folders of insurance claims and tax records not immediately available.

For this reason healthcare provider BJC HealthCare developed myHealthFolders, an electronic personal health record (PHR). The tool’s primary objective was to help the organization’s 26,000 employees take responsibility for their health information and the health information of their family members. BJC encourages employees to know their health history and have it available to them in an emergency.

PHR Community Outreach

BJC HealthCare, one of the largest nonprofit healthcare organizations in the United States, delivers services to residents primarily in the greater St. Louis, southern Illinois, and mid-Missouri regions through 13 hospitals and other health service organizations. BJC is the largest provider of charity care in the state of Missouri and has an extensive offering of community outreach programs. The organization is especially committed to a variety of efforts to increase health literacy, or an individual’s ability to understand health information and make choices to improve his or her health. The myHealthFolders program is a major part of that community outreach initiative.

In 2004 Steven Lipstein, president and CEO of BJC HealthCare, asked the organization’s IS department to recommend an electronic PHR program to offer as an employee benefit. Finding no existing tools that met all the criteria and features sought by BJC, the decision was made to build our own.

Introduced to BJC employees in the fall of 2005, myHealthFolders serves two primary purposes. It is both a secure and confidential health information repository and an emergency health information service. The confidential, secure, and free Web-based tool allows individuals to organize, store, and retrieve personal health information electronically for themselves and their family members.

Today, myHealthFolders is being offered to other regional and national employers as well as other healthcare service providers. BJC’s only financial goal is to recover a portion of the cost of the customer support center that operates 24 hours a day, every day, to assist individuals with general myHealthFolders questions and to provide emergency access to their health information when Web access is unavailable. The only requirement of employers is that they offer myHealthFolders to all employees as a benefit at no cost to the employee. If employees leave the company, BJC allows them to maintain their myHealthFolders accounts at no charge.

myHealthFolders Features

The program allows members to record, track, and change important health information such as medical history, emergency contacts, test results, physician contacts, insurance information, and prescription and nonprescription medications. Members can add as many family members, friends, or others as they wish to their myHealthFolders account.

Members select an identification code and password that provide them secure access to their accounts. They can print a medical emergency card to carry with them so that emergency medical personnel can have immediate access to this information at any time. A unique emergency identification code and password are assigned to each family member. When the card is presented to emergency personnel, they can access a complete history report that can be viewed online or printed. For

convenience, members also can print an updated medical report for themselves or a family member and bring it to physician appointments.

The personal information that members enter into the site is maintained in a secure database in an encrypted format. It is only accessible using the emergency card, the unique myHealthFolders identification code and password created by the member, or when a member verifies his or her identity and requests assistance through the myHealthFolders customer support center.

Personal information will not be accessed by BJC HealthCare, insurance companies, or employers. It will not be used for any type of research or marketing and will never be sold. Like other medical records, the information in myHealthFolders is subject to the federal privacy provisions of HIPAA and is protected accordingly.

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Visit myPHR.com, AHIMA's consumer-education Web site, offering information about health information rights, how to start a PHR, and answers to frequently asked questions.

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