Why your patient portal needs a committee

In our continuing series, we explore how healthcare organizations can make the most of their Epic MyChart patient portal to engage patients for better care while also having a profound impact on the “business” of healthcare. With this post, we consider the role of an oversight committee—how and why this group and its guidance lead to a successful MyChart program.

Michael Clark
Posted July 1, 2019
This blog post is part two in a five-part series to explore how healthcare organizations can make the most of their Epic MyChart patient portal to engage patients for better care.

When it comes to the adoption and use of an online patient portal, recent industry data offers a bit of a mixed bag. The good news: 90% of healthcare organizations offer a patient portal of some sort. The discouraging news: only 30% of organizations actively use the portal to engage patients in their care.

So the question becomes: What’s holding organizations back from making the most of these investments?

In some cases, patient reservations and preferences are to blame. We know, for example, that if patients do not have a good first-time experience, it’s unlikely that they will come back and try again. (We’ve got some ideas on addressing this; look for our upcoming article in July.) Often, it’s a matter of providing education and support so patients understand the hows, wheres, and whys of accessing and using their portals and, more importantly, so your staff is on board to build and nurture a successful program.

An EpicMyChart oversight committee can take on this mission. One of the best aspects of the patient portal is that it touches so many layers within a healthcare organization: billing, appointments, healthcare providers, compliance teams, patient experience advocates, marketing, and information technology. Electing a champion from each of these areas to an oversight committee is an essential first step toward a successful portal program.

Ideally, their work would begin well in advance of a MyChart rollout. Begin by composing a charter that establishes goals and objectives. Explore and validate the features and functionality that drive the desired patient experience, and—especially—understand the ways these layers intersect and affect each other. Imagine a patient reads in the portal brochure that lab results are available in MyChart within three business days. On the third day, the patient cannot locate their lab work because their specialized test requires 14 days of turnaround time. The patient is frustrated, which could have been avoided had an oversight committee collaborated on patient communications and marketing materials.

You may be wondering how successful healthcare organizations establish their oversight committees. Below you’ll find an example of leaders from key departments who define the roadmap and strategy for the MyChart patient portal and continually work across departments to support patient interactions and needs.

**Example MyChart Patient Portal Oversight Committee Charter**
As healthcare organizations continue to evolve, as patients demand more from their patient portal, and as the model of care adjusts, the oversight committee will play a key role in defining an innovative roadmap for long-term success.

On June 20th, Nuance’s Director of Epic MyChart Service Desk, Mandy Love, hosted a webinar on this very topic. If you missed it, you can watch it on-demand. And, be sure to stay tuned as we continue our series over the coming month. Next up: we dig into the MyChart features that positively affect patient adoption.

Tags: EHR Services, Epic, Epic MyChart, patient engagement

About Michael Clark

Michael Clark is the senior vice president and general manager for Provider Solutions within Nuance’s Healthcare division, leading EHR Services, clinical documentation creation and improvement. A results-driven, accountable leader, Michael aligns organizations to prioritize the customer experience, honor the product roadmap, and execute against the company vision. He has more than 20 years of experience in the healthcare market and a breadth of experience driving and transforming global teams, products, and services. Prior to joining Nuance in 2016, Michael held several executive leadership roles at healthcare organizations including Evariant and MedQuist. Michael holds a B.A. in Marketing and International Business from Miami University and MBA from the University of Miami School of Business.

View all posts by Michael Clark