CASE STUDY

mediprocity

Sinclair School of Nursing
University of Missouri Health

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center for **aging services technologies**

The LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST) is focused on accelerating the development, evaluation and adoption of emerging technologies that will transform the aging experience. As an international coalition of more than 400 technology companies, aging-services organizations, businesses, research universities and government representatives, CAST works under the auspices of LeadingAge, an association of 6,000 not-for-profit organizations dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

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To Text or Not to Text? That is the Question

Categories

- Increased patient/client engagement and communication around care planning and coordination.
- Improved care coordination and data sharing ability.

Organization Name

University of Missouri - Columbia / Sinclair School of Nursing

Organization Type

All post-acute (long-term care) services and providers

Other Partners

Mediprocity and all healthcare entities under HIPAA

Organization Description

The Missouri Quality Initiative (MOQI) is a Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) innovations center and Medicare Medicaid coordination office-sponsored initiative to reduce avoidable hospitalizations of nursing home residents, and improve quality of care for long-stay residents nationwide. In 2012, MOQI recruited 16 nursing homes in the St. Louis region to participate in a two-Phase project targeting care for long-stay nursing home residents, and those who need additional care in the nursing home for short-term management of acute conditions to avoid hospitalization. Interventions included using advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to model evidence-based practice, focus on Advanced Directive completion, technology, and use of standardized documentation.

Project Description

MOQI used the Mediprocity technology for secure communication "texting" in a HIPAA compliant setting to improve communication workflow, as well as support clinical communication primarily on mobile phones used by healthcare workers within nursing homes to help manage the care of older adults' health.

The research was a retrospective qualitative content analysis of text messages sent and received using Mediprocity. The technology is available on the web and a mobile app and includes secure passwords, encryption, and many of the standards required by the Health Information Technology for Economics and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) under the HIPAA omnibus rule.

Shared Care Planning and Coordination System Type

Secure Text-Based Care Coordination and Communication Tool

Business Model

SaaS model (pay direct)
Pharmacy offer as added value tool
Free for prescribers

Implementation Approach

During the project, (16) nurses were given the Mediprocity technology to support clinical communication with nursing homes over a six-month period (Jan. 1 – June 30, 2018).

The nursing homes' size ranged from 120-321 maximum capacity and were located in both urban and rural communities in the Midwest. During the project, all of the APRNs were trained along with the nursing home users on how to properly use Mediprocity in a healthcare and HIPAA compliant manner.

Over the six-month period, 8,946 text messages were captured and analyzed. The heavy usage existed between licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs), and other APRNs, and physicians. The most common subject and data included patient updates (26%) and confirmations or clarifications (14.7%). A top feature used was to add a user to an existing discussion. Nearly 88% of patient updates were received by the APRNs.

The project continues to use secure texting, examples of text exchanges include:

- Post-ambulatory care discharge follow-up.
- Chronic illness management.
- Cardiac rehabilitation in coronary heart disease patients.

Secure texting is one of many emerging technologies impacting healthcare. If used correctly and with proper staff training, this tool can avoid the dangerous pitfalls that could lead to unintended consequences for patient safety and quality of care. If a system is not managed properly and staff do not adhere to the policy, not only can this have a negative impact on secure texting, but staff may also begin to resort to unsecure methods for communication.

Outcomes

- Healthcare communication ecosystems have positive impact.
- Secure collaboration with workflow impacts patient outcomes.
- Analytics and escalation help save time and avoid mistakes.
- Increased patient/client engagement.
- Increased family/caregiver engagement.
- Improved care planning.
- Improved care coordination and data sharing ability.
- Improved care transitions.
- Improved quality of care and outcomes.
- Reduced cost of care (redundancy).

For example, in this MOQI project, avoidable hospitalization rates have been drastically reduced: a) 40% reductions in all-cause hospitalizations (P < .001); (b) 57.7% reduction in avoidable hospitalizations (P < .001); (c) 54.1% reduction in all-cause emergency department (ED) visits (P < .001); and (d) 65.3% reduction in avoidable ED visits (P <.001).

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

- Customers are creatures of habit - difficult to break habits of phone, fax, and unsecure text.
- Allowing staff to ignore the HIPAA law when it comes to compliance.
- Repeated workflows for calls, call backs, copy/paste, and faxing causes time lapse issues and leads to mistakes.

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2

Lessons Learned

If a team does not implement after the free training, the chances of usage drop by almost 70%. If a team begins to use internally after training and add their providers and pharmacy, there is over an 85% success rate for adoption.

Advice to Share with Others

Executive management and owners MUST implement a mobile device policy and add secure messaging and communication to their risk analysis. They should enforce it and update their analysis quarterly. It only takes one mistake to cost an organization of 10 nursing homes close to $1,000,000 in fines and penalties by HIPAA, CMS, OCR, and ONC.

Employees and staff are a key component to giving excellent care to patients – however if they are ignoring encrypted standards to share data in 2019, it is the equivalent of handing our personal credit card information to hackers.

The cost of a secure messaging system, such as Mediprocity, is nothing compared to the loss should a breach occur.

Secure messaging capabilities, like Mediprocity is flood insurance – no one thinks they need it until it starts to rain. A hacker can cause a flood in a matter of minutes.

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3