



Nurse Informaticist as Consumer eHealth Advocate

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The rapid adoption of health information technologies and the increasing access of consumers to health information require a redesign of healthcare delivery. Rather than being told what to do, consumers make decisions about their care, guided by the expertise and knowledge of the healthcare team. At one hospital, a nurse informaticist was added to the healthcare team to assist with the transition to patient-centered care. The nurse informaticist made rounds with the healthcare team and served as advocate for the consumer. Responsibilities included enrolling the consumer in the patient portal, collecting consumer email, and educating and training the consumer on how the "smart room" screen interacted with the healthcare team and the patient, all with the goal of engaging the patient as a partner with the team in making health decisions. The nurse informaticist forged a relationship with each patient that continued throughout hospitalization and after discharge, making sure information flowed both ways between the patient and the healthcare team. The nurse informaticist role was thus a key component of patient-centered care. After six months, 75% of post-discharge patients were using the patient portal for making appointments, reviewing their data, and messaging with care givers. An additional 15% of former inpatients registered for the portal and received training after discharge, bringing participation by the population that had ever been hospitalized here to 90%. A survey showed that patients were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the support received from the nurse informaticist. The healthcare organization plans to develop this new role in the remaining six hospitals within their network.

