

The Impact of EHRs on the Physician-Patient Relationship

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Disclosures

- Editor in Chief, “Cancer.Net”
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Objectives

- Background and Current Status
- Innovation with EHRs
- Partnership in Physician-Patient Relationship
- Case Studies
- Overcoming Hurdles

21st Century Cures Act

Signed December 16, 2016

- Streamlined development and delivery for drugs and devices
- Opioid crisis
- Improve mental health services
- Greater interoperability
- Adoption of electronic health records
 - Open Notes Rule-in effect since April 2021
 - Immediate access to health information in medical record
 - Includes: consultation notes, discharge summaries, progress notes, imaging narratives, laboratory and pathology reports, procedure notes
 - Exceptions: Preventing harm, privacy and security

Open Notes and Opportunity

- Medical records are no longer written solely for clinicians
 - Chance to “extend the visit”
 - By removing negative language or including supportive wording, documentation might heighten feelings of empathy and build trust
 - writing understandable notes balanced against over-simplifying medical information and devaluing the utility of documentation
- Can improve communication, enhance compliance and improve outcomes

Enhanced Understanding

Shaverdian N, Pract Radiat Oncol 2019; 9: 102–07

- Patients undergoing radiation therapy with access to open notes
 - 96% reported improved understanding about diagnosis
 - 94% had better understanding of risks and side effects
 - 91% learned important information they missed in-person
 - 11% described feeling more worried after receiving their notes
 - 6% felt they were more confused after reading notes
 - 4% regretted reading their notes

Oncologist Perceptions About Sharing Clinic Notes with Patients

McCleary et al, The Oncologist 2019;24:e46–e48

Question, %	Oncology (n = 126)	Nononcology (n = 683)	p value
My visits will be more efficient	3	7	.10
My visits will take longer	61	59	.77
Patient safety will improve	22	32	.03
I will spend more time addressing patient questions outside of visits	85	83	.57
Patients and their families will read notes and be offended	30	43	.007
My visits will better address patient concerns	19	23	.35
My risk for lawsuits will increase	23	34	.01
→ I will be less candid in my documentation	69	73	.39
I will order more tests and/or referrals	12	18	.09
I will spend more time writing my notes	64	62	.72
Patients will be more compliant with their care plan	19	25	.15
Patients will request changes to the content of visit notes	77	86	.008
I will spend less time on the phone updating family members who could not make visits	15	15	.95

Chi-square comparing agreement to statement between provider specialties. Percentages rounded to nearest whole number. Bolded *p* values are statistically significant.

Oncologist Reaction to 6 years of OpenNotes

Moll, Health Informatics J, 2020 Jun

- 58% felt they spent more time writing notes
 - 73% felt that sharing notes with patients was helpful
 - 64% felt that patients were better prepared for visits
 - 67% felt that they were more restrictive with what was shared in a note
 - 64% felt that the majority of patients were more worried than before
-
- Authors concluded, “Oncologists were moderately positive”

Case Study

- 47 previously healthy never smoker with chest pain
- CT scan with mediastinal mass
- Biopsy cw thymic cancer
- Treated with curative intent with chemoradiation and surgery
- Ongoing toxicity with neuropathy, arthralgias
- Started surveillance imaging



Case study



- PET with low grade uptake in lesion
- Proceed with biopsy on Tuesday
- Signed out on Friday
- Clinic appointment on Wednesday
- Patient portal releases results prior to appointment

Clinical Scenarios

- 62 yo with history of lung cancer undergoes routine imaging on treatment and found to have new brain metastases. Seeing her oncologist three days later
- 57 yo male with EGFR+ lung cancer and recent progression. After appointment to go over treatment options last week, his wife sends MyChart with detailed questions about prognosis, estate planning, and his mental health over the weekend
- 74 yo male on surveillance after chemoradiation now sees scans that describe “tortuous thoracic aorta,” “abrupt cut of upper lobe bronchus,” “crazy paving in left lower lung,” and “hypodensity in the liver”

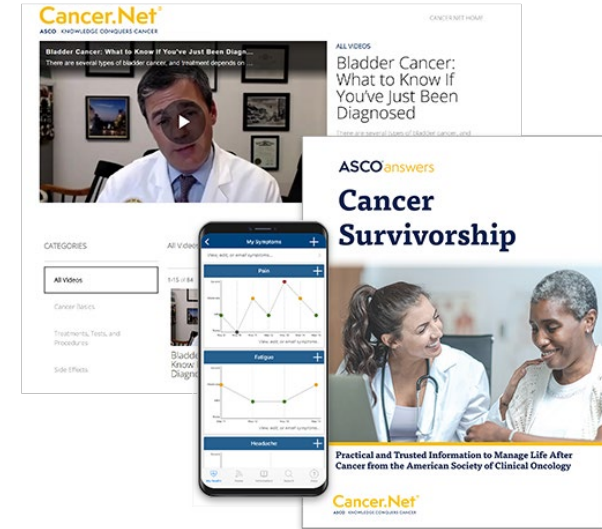
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- Reaches **33 million people worldwide** annually, with **56 million page views** in 2021
- **35%** of visitors self-identify as patients or survivors, and **22%** of visitors are friends and family members



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- **ASCO Answers**, an award-winning line of printed patient education materials
- The **Cancer.Net Blog** features patient stories, cancer research news, and deep dives into cancer-related topics



How to Make the Most of Your Patient Portal During Cancer

- Published on the Cancer.Net Blog **November 24, 2021**

“By using electronic records effectively, people with cancer can gain a deeper understanding about their health, develop more trust in their providers, and be better prepared to interact with their providers about their care.”

- Context
- Timeliness
- Straightforward questions

How to Make the Most of Your Patient Portal During Cancer

November 24, 2021 · Jyoti Patel, MD, FASCO



Jyoti D. Patel, MD, FASCO
Cancer.Net Editor in Chief

A patient portal is a secure online website that gives people with cancer convenient, 24-hour access to their personal health information from anywhere with an internet connection. Under the recently enacted [21st Century Cures Act](#), health care organizations must share medical records electronically to all patients. Because of this, health care users can now read notes recapping their visits to the doctor's office and look at test results electronically. Most patient portals also include features such as direct and secure messaging, online appointment scheduling, online bill payments, and online prescription refill requests.

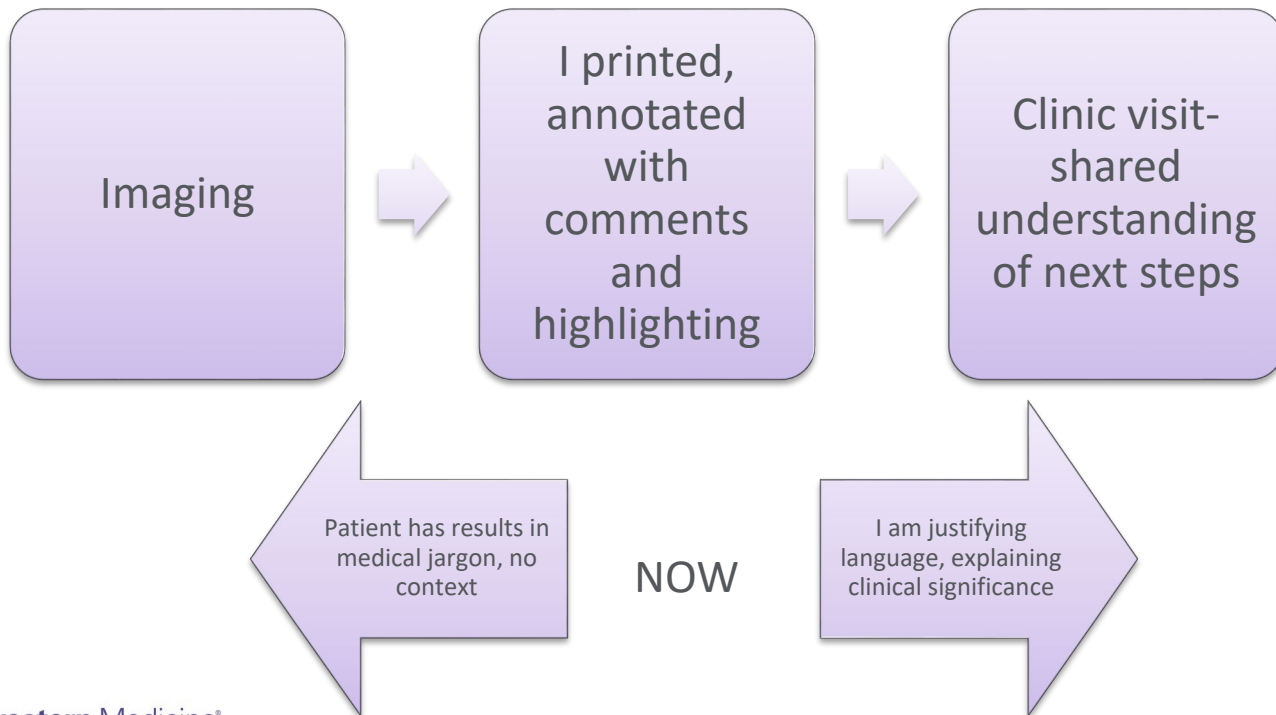
Patient portals can be particularly helpful for people who are navigating cancer care. For example, people with cancer and survivors often require lifelong follow-up care and may have specialized [treatment and survivorship care plans](#). Some people with cancer may also require close monitoring for treatment-related side effects, also called toxicities, and may need to have frequent lab or imaging tests. All of this can be more easily managed through the patient portal.

More importantly, research has shown that communication between patients and their health care teams can lead to meaningful improvements in survival and quality of life. By using electronic records effectively, people with cancer can gain a deeper understanding about their health, develop more trust in their providers, and be better prepared to interact with their providers about their care.

Here are some tips for using these patient portals effectively:

Order of Information Delivery Matters

Before instantaneous electronic delivery of results



Conclusions

- New opportunities for communication, particularly in cancer care when misunderstandings between risks and benefits of treatments are common
- Incorporation of infographics, hover boxes could enhance understanding without burdening physicians or compromising quality of records
- Oncologists might benefit from training in supportive language
- Patients need advice on portal usage