

DRUG TOPICS

THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR PHARMACISTS

Indiana hospital using Web service to manage prescriptions

Mark Lowery

It is hard enough to undergo an organ transplant. Once a patient returns home, sticking to the strict regimen of medications designed to encourage long-term success of the transplant can be another battle.

One healthcare facility, Clarian Transplant at Indiana University, is using the free Web-based program <http://MedActionPlan.com/> to help physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and patients manage prescriptions.

"Our hospital's transplant unit relies on MedActionPlan.com for all new transplant patients. Our transplant coordinators, inpatient nurses, and clinical pharmacists all use it," Mary Jo Burton, Clarian Transplant's manager of clinical operations, said.

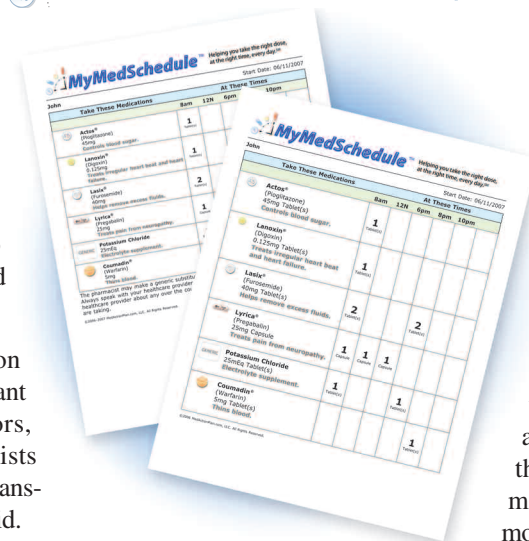
"It" is a free service that allows patients, doctors, nurses, and pharmacy staff to store, update, manage, and track all of a patients' medications in English or Spanish. It allows care providers to identify redundant or outdated prescriptions and eliminate them. Systems users can easily add medications or supplements to the patient's list. They can then print a schedule that includes color images of the prescriptions — to help patients make sure they're taking the right medication — and wallet-size and large-type charts for patients.

A weekly checklist is designed to help patients make sure they've taken all their medications. The Web service also allows patients to schedule refill reminders and find nearby pharmacies. MedActionPlan.com officials say service will eventually include links to online pharmacies and doctors.

"Clarian Transplant is well known for its clinical excellence, research developments, and commitment to cultivating innovative treatments so that each patient receives an exceptional quality of care," Tim Peters, president of MedActionPlan.com, said. "The integration of our program into their patient-care approach speaks to the value of MyMedSchedule as a patient education resource."

Clarian began using the program about five years ago as one of several pilot organizations. Burton said the hospital wanted an online format that was clearer and easier to use to replace

Be Safe and Sure with
MEDACTIONPLAN.COM, LLC



its handwritten process. "We had been doing a version of a medication sheet by hand, including pictures of the medications developed by our medical illustration department," Burton recalled. "We completed these handwritten medication sheets for all new transplant patients, updated them whenever the medications changed, and then continued to update them when the patients returned to us for follow-up visits."

Burton said the new system saves the created medication sheets from one time to the next, so that anyone who has authorized access to the system can pull up the most recent list of the patient's medications and modify it as needed. "No more interpreting handwriting," she said.

So how have doctors, nurses, and clinical pharmacists responded? "This program gave us an easy, online, automated system that saves us a ton of time in setting up and then modifying the medication sheets," Burton said. "It helps our patients keep their very complicated medication regimen in an orderly and manageable format, so they make fewer mistakes in administering their own medications."

The wife of one of Burton's patients is also very appreciative. "As a person caring for a family member who is dependent on prescription medication due to a chronic illness, I have found [the system] to be invaluable," Donna Hargett said. "I was originally introduced to the program by the staff of IU Medical Center in Indianapolis when my husband underwent a transplant there. ... I don't know how I could have managed my husband's medications without it."

What about patients who don't have Internet access or are not web savvy? "Our nurses will revise their profile on our system at each visit and send them home with an updated printout to reference and carry in their wallets in case of emergency," Burton said.

Print and save your own medication list!
www.MyMedSchedule.com