Patient Engagement: Opportunities and Challenges for Health Care and Information Management Professionals

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Abstract Patient engagement has become a new aim of health care reform programs. In fact, patient engagement has been hailed as the health care breakthrough of the 21st century with patients charting the course of their own health care. Similar to other industries, health care is experiencing consumers that have expectations for value, transparency, choice, and engagement. Today’s consumers are accustomed to making informed decisions and have experience with digital markets. The expectation is that the health care industry affords consumers the same value-added services of accessible information and connectivity. Patients want to have access to and share information seamlessly between themselves and their caregivers. The expectation is also that the patients becomes well informed with actionable data so as to be able to choose treatment options wisely and become an active participant in self-management of their own health and health care. The birth of the health care consumer and the recognition by health care organizations that achieving patient engagement can indeed improve one’s health, reduce cost and readmissions, increase patient satisfaction, and enrich health care data has served as a driving force for a patient-centric framework creating opportunities and challenges not only for the patient but also for health care providers, policy makers, system developers, and health information management professionals.

Keywords. Patient empowerment, consumer engagement, health information management, shared decision making

Introduction of the topic

This panel will present commentary, educational, and research initiatives representing global perspective of the methods in place and new concepts developed in achieving patient engagement. Each panelist will present a brief overview of patient engagement initiatives from their respective countries - Spain, Germany and the United States, as well as their perspective from global consulting experiences within this realm.
Collaborative commitment by health care professionals and patients with shared responsibilities is needed to guide and support this initiative. Challenges, as well as opportunities, will be discussed allowing the audience to share ideas, experiences, and tested solutions within the panel framework.

The objectives of this panel are to compare and contrast the drivers of patient engagement between Europe and the US. Moreover, the panel should engage the audience and present solutions for data capturing, data validation, and use, given that such data is generated external to the respective health care institution. This panel is intended to stimulate discussion of new roles and competencies for Health Information Management and Health care professionals in order to achieve patient engagement. As a final result, colleagues from the audience who are interested in collaboration with IFHIMA are cordially welcome to join an international working group to develop a white paper on patient engagement.

1. Focus of Speaker Birnbaum

Cassi Birnbaum will present the dynamics that are driving patient engagement and how this aim has been addressed in the USA at the national level. Cassi Birnbaum is president of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), a 71K+ member association of Health Information Management Professionals, will provide an update on AHIMA’s strategic initiatives related to achieving patient engagement.

Challenges such as ensuring data integrity, privacy and security, data governance & data stewardship implications, meaningful use, patient education, and provider acceptance of change will be presented. The incentives that are needed to encourage providers to place greater emphasis on engaging patients in their care will be addressed.

2. Focus of Speaker Haendel

Angelika Handel will present an overview of initiatives designed to achieve patient engagement in Germany.

Examples will be discussed of how health information management professionals in collaboration with other health care professionals are leveraging the electronic health record (EHR), personal health record (PHR), patient portals, data aggregation, and data capturing standards to allow for data to move freely bi-directionally between patient and provider. Presenting data in novel ways through dashboard displays and from different data sources will be explored.

3. Focus of Speaker Dr. Romero

Dr. Ramón Romero will present an overview of initiatives designed to achieve patient engagement in Spain. Commentary from a physician’s perspective will be shared with the audience.

Acceptance of new roles and responsibilities, as well as changes in patient/physician communications will be shared. Research supports the notion that
health systems can be dramatically better if health care professionals listen to and engage with patients and families.

4. Focus of Speaker Dr. Abdelhak

Dr. Mervat Abdelhak, chair of the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) will present the new roles, responsibilities, and functions for health care professionals including health information management professionals, in achieving patient engagement. Curriculum competencies designed to prepare the health care workforce for patient-centric enabled by e-Health industry will be presented. In addition, steps that can be taken to encourage the education system and academic programs to teach students how to engage patients and promote health literacy will be explored.

Examples will be presented of collaborative research projects currently underway at the University of Pittsburgh that are designed to test mobile apps that collect patient-generated data and engage patient in self-management and just-in-time intervention. These research projects demonstrate how patients can be engaged as full partners in research.