

Text Service Helps Care Coordination



Athenahealth's new secure text messaging service "athenaText" makes coordination within care teams easier and faster — which contributes to improved patient care. Integrated with athenahealth's cloud-based EHR platform, athenaText is available free to the more than one million healthcare professionals on the athenahealth network.

The service is accessible through the standalone athenaText and also via Epocrates mobile apps. Any medical professional across the U.S. can join the athenahealth network by accessing athenaText at no cost via mobile.

"We're excited to offer healthcare professionals one of the first end-to-end experiences that bridges communication gaps and keeps critical health information flowing between providers — through the EHR and mobile," according to Abbe Don, vice president of strategic design at athenahealth.

Better communication and coordination is important especially for teams caring for patients with complex diagnoses. However, some healthcare providers risk sending non-HIPAA compliant text messages, while others call, email, or use a combination of all three in a time-consuming effort to stay connected and informed.

"We designed athenaText so doctors and staff can communicate with each other wherever and whenever they need on a unified, easy-to-use platform," Don explains. "With athenaText, we're empowering providers to build secure care teams and engage in quick yet significant ways that improve the quality of care patients receive."

For example, Annapolis Internal Medicine in Maryland has started using athenaText to improve communication. At the clinic, the front desk alerts medical assistants via text when patients arrive to pick up prescriptions, while the billing team keeps physicians on task with text reminders to fill out patient charges.

"For years, we played phone tag," said Kevin Groszkowski, MD, Annapolis Internal Medicine. "Now our entire care team is communicating effectively and securely on one, fully-integrated system."

The biggest benefit, he notes, is the ability to respond immediately to clinical questions from nurse practitioners even when he is out of the office. "What I love is that the care isn't slowed down because I missed a call or email, and patients aren't kept waiting," Dr. Groszkowski explained. "athenaText keeps the care cycle moving forward, saving us valuable time while improving patient care."

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