

Hospital Takes Proactive Approach to mHealth App Development



As healthcare entities embrace the ways in which technology can improve care delivery, some institutions are bucking the trend toward software standardisation and opting to build customised platforms. One such organisation is New York-Presbyterian Hospital, which is developing its own mobile software and apps aimed at an improved patient experience.

"We're thinking about workflow issues in the hospital, ways we can save time or move things along," said Aurelia Boyer, the CIO of New York-Presbyterian, in a recent *InformationWeek* article. "If patients get their pain med faster, that's significant."

Proactive Software Development

The inspiration comes in part from the different ways people use their smartphones. Hospital employees, including physicians, are also consumers, and their experiences with existing apps have prompted novel suggestions for improvement. Meanwhile, patients and caregivers are increasingly interested in how mobile technology can facilitate the delivery of healthcare services.

Boyer observed that consumers use their phones in different ways, organising the functions that are most relevant to them. She also knows that the most useful apps work with multiple devices and platforms, but developers are slowed by governmental meaningful-use mandates. "Our vendors are not going to get there fast enough for us," said Boyer. Peter M. Fleischut, MD, the hospital's associate CIO, agreed. "We can't be keeping up with the Apple Watch while dealing with all the iOS versions. It's just going to come too fast," Fleischut told *InformationWeek*.

Award-Winning Innovation

New York-Presbyterian's foray into mobile software development earned it a spot on *InformationWeek's* list of "Elite 100" awards in 2014. On the hospital's surgical units, traditional nurse call buttons were replaced by tablet computers. Not only did the tablets improve communication between patients and staff, but patients could access a portal that gave them access to their medical records. Additionally, they could select in-room entertainment options.

"I also think we have an opportunity to change the patient experience and make it more modern, so that when patients come into the hospital they don't feel like they've all of a sudden left the modern world," Boyer said.

Compared to the estimated \$40 million cost of an updated nurse call system, the software development cost New York-Presbyterian less than \$500,000. The hospital has since built a number of apps for its patients, including one which communicates pain levels so that medication can be delivered more quickly. Thus, there is great potential for home-built software solutions to improve the hospital's bottom line and add value for the patient.

Source: InformationWeek

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