



Patient Portals

NCIOM Task Force on Patient and Family Engagement

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Patient Portals

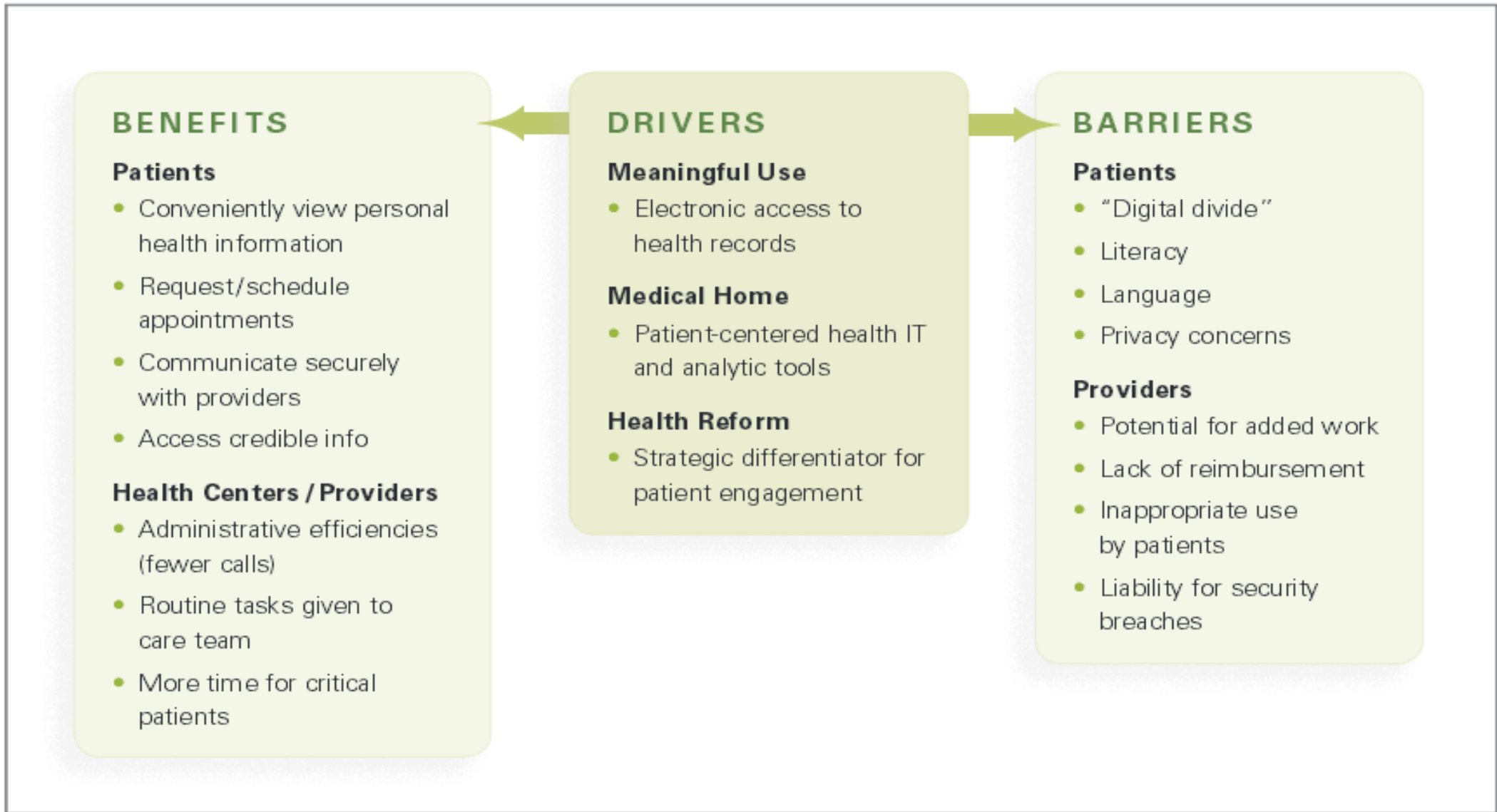
“A patient portal is a secure online website that gives patients convenient 24-hour access to personal health information.”

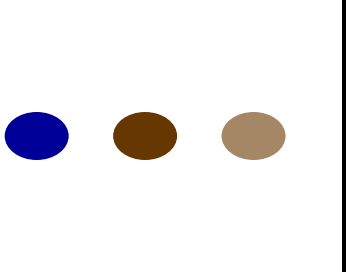
(Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology)

Common Features:

- Schedule appointments
- Access health records
- View lab results
- Order prescription refills
- Send secure emails to providers

Figure 1. Drivers, Benefits, and Barriers to Patient Portal Implementation





What do we know about patient portals?

- Those most likely to use patient portals:
 - Younger (*Shaw and Ferranti, 2011*) (*Van der Vaart, 2014*)
 - Higher education and higher SES (*Ancker et al., 2014*) (*Emont, 2011*)
 - More frequent internet use and greater self-perceived internet skills (*Van der Vaart, 2014*) (*Ancker, 2014*)
 - Patients with chronic conditions (*Emont, 2011*) (*Ancker et al., 2011*)
 - Patients who report greater trust and better communication with providers (*Lyles et al., 2013*)
- Portal features most commonly used:
 - Filling prescriptions (*Adler, 2006*) (*Sarkar et al., 2014*)
 - Secure messaging with providers (*Adler, 2006*) (*Ammenwerth et al., 2012*) (*Lyles et al., 2013*)



What do we know about patient portals?

- Portals impact patient experience and satisfaction
 - Positive: portals are easy to use, useful, improve communication with providers, and enhance the quality of appointments (*Van der Vaart, 2014*) (*Wade-Venturo et al., 2013*) (*Schnipper et al., 2008*)
 - Negative: portals hinder communication with providers, are difficult to use (*Emont, 2011*) (*Zarcadoolas et al., 2013*)
- Portals can increase patient engagement
 - 44% of users reported feeling more involved in their treatment and 37% felt they had more knowledge about their treatment (*Van der Vaart, 2014*) (*Emont, 2011*)
 - Users felt like a “team member” in their own care and more connected to their providers (*Emont, 2011*)



What do we know about patient portals?

- Portals can increase operational efficiency and reduce health care costs
 - Fewer office visits and phone calls per patient (*Emont, 2011*) (*Ammenwerth et al., 2012*)
 - Enhanced efficiency during office visits (*Wade-Venturo et al., 2013*)
 - Hospitals and providers report savings in lab result delivery costs and appointment scheduling costs (*Emont, 2011*)
- Use of portals improves patient adherence to treatment (*Sarkar et al., 2014*) (*Ammenwerth et al., 2012*)
- Portal use increases preventive care
 - Screening rates for colorectal, breast, and cervical cancer increase with portal use (*AHRQ, 2012*)
- Use of portals improves disease management
 - Diabetes management, cholesterol control (*Shaw and Ferranti, 2011*) (*Sarkar et al., 2014*) (*Wade-Venturo et al., 2013*)

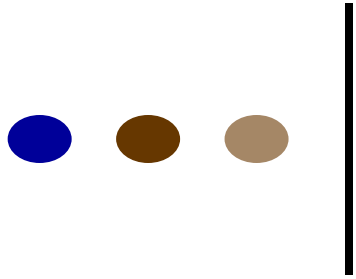


Unique Opportunities

- Connection with community and statewide HIEs/connection with integrated care systems
 - Must prioritize portal functionality over convenience; as of yet, most health systems go with the convenient option of using the patient portal aligned with the existing EMR/EHR (*KLAS, 2012*) (*Iatric Systems*)
- Potential for more patient engagement in quality and safety improvement
 - Some portals allow patients to view and modify lists of their medications and allergies, give feedback on side-effects and other medication-related problems, and view and approve provider notes after appointments (*Schnipper et al., 2008*) (*Delbanco et al., 2012*)
- Room for innovation in portal design to attract and sustain more users
 - Special populations

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Discussion

What are the benefits and challenges of patient portals?

- Patient perspective
- Provider perspective
- Health system perspective