



Mobile health: WellDoc Diabetes Manager cuts hospital, ER visits in half

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[WellDoc](#), a healthcare company that develops technology solutions aimed at engaging patients and enhancing health outcomes, has announced results showing that Type 2 diabetes patients who used its WellDoc DiabetesManager in a [demonstration project](#) significantly reduced their need for hospital stays and emergency room (ER) visits. The demonstration program, titled *DC HealthConnect*, was part of the Chronic Care Initiative sponsored by the DC Department of Health (DOH) and was conducted by the George Washington University Medical Center under the supervision of Richard J. Katz, MD. According to the company, patients using the WellDoc DiabetesManager for an average of 12 months reduced their ER visits and hospital stays by 58% compared to the 12 months prior to the program.

WellDoc DiabetesManager is the first clinically tested and FDA-cleared mobile health (mHealth) solution to provide automated, real-time behavioral patient coaching and clinical decision support.

The *DC HealthConnect* project followed 32 patients recruited by the Chartered Family Health Center in Washington. According to WellDoc, the demonstration project confirmed the positive impact that real-time, cell phone-based diabetes management, powered by an Automated Expert Analytics System, can have on a Medicaid population. Patients in the program used their own cell phones and were offered a \$20 monthly discount for their phone plan.

Exit surveys indicated patients were highly satisfied with the WellDoc DiabetesManager. For instance:

- 100% of patients found instant coaching feedback helpful.
- 100% agreed that the system increased their glucose testing.
- Only 6% found it to be a bother to enter their diabetes information.
- Only 6% were worried about data privacy.



“This project demonstrated that a mobile health diabetes self-management program can benefit a high-risk Medicaid population using their own cell phones. Patients were better engaged in their chronic disease management with lower emergency room visits and reduced hospitalizations. We learned that an mHealth self-management system can be successful and should support all ‘links in the chain,’ including patients, providers, educators and nurses,” says Dr. Katz, director, Division of Cardiology professor of medicine at George Washington University Medical Center. “We’re excited about the potential to drive down the costs of ER visits and hospitalization stays, while improving patient health.”

Diabetes care costs the United States \$218 billion annually, according to the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Specifically, in 2008, diabetes hospital fees alone cost Americans \$83 billion a year—representing 23% of total hospital spending and an average cost of \$10,937 per diabetic hospitalization, according to a report from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

The *DC HealthConnect* project follows on the heels of a landmark randomized controlled trial (RCT) that used the WellDoc system and was published in the September 2011 issue of *Diabetes Care*. In this trial, patients using the DiabetesManager plus their usual care had an average decline in A1C of 1.9 percentage points compared to a 0.7-percentage-point decline seen among patients treated with usual care alone, regardless of starting baseline A1C.

“WellDoc’s DiabetesManager supports people with Type 2 diabetes as they manage their medications, communicate with care providers and better control their outcomes,” said Suzanne Sysko Clough, MD, founder and chief medical officer at WellDoc. “Now there is a growing body of evidence indicating that, in addition to lowering A1C, DiabetesManager can help patients self-manage their diabetes, which may help keep them healthy and out of the hospital.”