

ORTODAY

Life in and out of the OR

VOL. 12, NO. 2 | FEBRUARY 2012

BUSINESS briefs

WELLDAC DIABETESMANAGER REDUCES DIABETIC PATIENTS' HOSPITAL AND ER VISITS

Type 2 diabetes patients who used the 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, M.D. The patients using the WellDoc DiabetesManager for an average of 12 months reduced their ER visits and hospital stays by 58 percent compared to the 12 months prior to the program.

The WellDoc DiabetesManager is the first clinically tested and Food and Drug Administration (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, DC. This real-world 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. In 2010, Medicaid covered nearly 53 million people and accounted for about 16 percent of all health care spending. Patients in the program used their own cell phones and were offered a \$20 monthly discount for their phone plan.

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 percent 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). Report author Dr. H. Joanna Jiang told the Financial Times, “One of the key messages here is that some of the hospital admissions and costs could be prevented if the patient could take care of their own conditions: monitor their blood sugar level, their behavior or lifestyle — you know, watch their diet and exercise more.”

For more information, visit www.welldoc.com.