



Doctors prescribe apps to patients

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By Amy Kraft

A common complaint among healthcare providers is that patients don't follow orders: they forget to take their medicine or aren't ready to give up a particular bad habit. And these issues can get in the way of health and drive up healthcare costs.

So Haptique, a [mobile health application store](#), created mRx™, a program that allows physician to, in a sense, prescribe apps to their patients. The company says this will make it easier for patients to comply with doctor's orders.

Here's how it works: A prescriber chooses an app or apps to be prescribed to a patient and the mRx™ sends the patient a secure email message with a link to download the app. The apps include medication reminders, diet and exercise plans, glucose monitoring, etc.

Researchers say these apps have a better chance of being downloaded and used than anything casually recommended during a patient visit.



"mRx™ allows clinicians to put health tracking and preventions tools directly into their patients' hands." Haptique CEO Ben Chodor said in an email.

The apps, which will only cost the patient and provider the amount designated by the developer, might also help drive down healthcare costs. According to pharmaceutical [research company PhRMA](#), 32 million Americans take 3 or more medicines daily. And 75 percent of adults don't follow their medication regimen in one or more ways, which costs our healthcare system \$290 billion a year.

Chodor says mRx™ can fix that problem. In one trial, George Washington University Hospital piloted WellDoc's DiabetesManager app with Chartered Health Plan. Thirty two of the patients that used the app for a 12-month period saw the number of ER visits and hospital stays go down by 58 percent.

Haptique will continue the trial through the summer tracking both prescribing processes and patient mRX downloads.

Mobile apps have become such an important part of our lives that it's hard to imagine how we ever lived without them.

Chodor says: "People may forget umbrellas or sunglasses, but very few people go anywhere without their smartphone or tablet. So, the chances of someone documenting glucose levels is much higher if is being done on a phone instead of hand-writing it on paper or in a journal."