

An App for That *Physician develops smart phone app for varicose vein patients*

By Larry Storer

If you had a way to increase revenue by up to 40 percent and at the same time cut down on employee costs, manage patient expectations and differentiate your practice from the competition – would you pick up a phone and make a call? Well, as the cliched marketing phrase goes, “There’s an app for that.”

No, really, there is an app for that.

Ariel Soffer, MD and a board certified cardiologist and varicose vein care specialist, has developed AppwoRx, a downloadable app for iPhone and Android cell phones that provides virtual consultations – including patient’s photograph of the areas of concern



– for patients with vein questions. Built to maintain client privacy, the app also is protected with all HIPPA safety and security standards.

The Florida owner of Soffer Health Institute developed this downloadable AppwoRx app as part of the Soffer Health Application product suite for patients with vein questions, while providing them with absolute privacy. The app is also compliant with all appropriate government health regulations.

APP

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"The AppwoRx tool can be used as a digital consultative device," he said. "Doctors have successfully used it to attract new patients by encouraging them to "take a picture of their legs and send it to us." This can be a "call to action" that engages patients to seek help in qualified offices.

"In fact, at least one public company in the vein space has engaged AppwoRx to build this lead generation platform for its customer base. In terms of being used as a telemedicine tool and the billing that goes along with that, it is a process that varies from state to state and practice to practice.

"Today's remarkable smart phone technology is combined with our sophisticated patient and user base, makes this new offering both valuable and sensible," Dr. Soffer said. "Patients concerned with the appearance of their veins don't need to wait for an appointment to get reassurance or feedback."

SECURE IN THE CLOUD

Clinical Photographic Recordkeeping (CPR) combines this powerful mobile application with a cloud-based HIPAA-compliant photography management tool. The result is the medical industry's first inexpensive, full-featured clinical photography suite. With CPR, there is no need to purchase expensive and bulky photography equipment. Your iPhone, iPod or iPad device is your camera and can be used anywhere.

Dr. Soffer said AppwoRx has patent pending intellectual property with the U.S. Patent Office that specifically encrypts this information to meet the highest HIPAA standards, ensuring the safety and privacy of this information.

By storing data in the HIPAA-compliant cloud, AppwoRx provides a level of security that is beyond that of a local server or any collection of paper documents. It has been shown by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that physical theft is far more common than non-physical theft when it comes to large-scale data breaches.

STREAMLINE RECORDKEEPING

AppwoRx and a practice's iPhone, iPad or iPod can also streamline photographic recordkeeping.

"Because there are no cords, no plugs, no special training, no special lighting requirements or rooms that need to be set aside, the photographic process is standardized and becomes a snap," Dr. Soffer said.

"Practices all over the world have stopped purchasing expensive camera equipment, and because the staff is likely to almost always have a smart phone or tablet near them, the convenience becomes a time saver.

"Additionally, because they are automatically and economically stored in the cloud, accessing the records from anywhere for anyone who might need them is simple and immediate."

This would make a practice more efficient, and also help guide patients looking for consultations and information.

PHOTOGRAPHY SYSTEM

"Most vein doctors have been using the app to replace their existing clinical photography system," Dr. Soffer explained. "With the use of these mobile devices and their powerful cameras, combined with the cloud-based HIPAA-compliant AppwoRx platform, clinicians now can use it to show patients how bad their legs truly look and then how much benefit they received from the doctor.

"This expectation management capacity tends to make patients infinitely more satisfied and likely to return and refer other patients. Most of the practices using the AppwoRx



platform have seen 20-40 percent increase in revenue from patient retention and new patient development.”

Photography is essential in the effective treatment of vein disease. Using photos taken before, during and after treatment, physicians can provide consultations, offer advice to patients and prospective patients, discuss expectations, suggest options and outcomes, and visually document the results. Doctors can also use these images to assess effectiveness of previous intervention and determine the best course of action for future treatment.

TECHNOLOGY AND TREATMENT

Dr. Soffer said patients download and install the software on their mobile device. They then can submit photos via e-mail and ask questions about treatments, progress or side effects. Patients can also access post-procedure care instructions, FAQs, directions, office hours and contact information through the consumer app.

He explained that doctors may communicate and interact with their patients directly through the app, allowing them to advise patients quickly if their submitted photos are normal or if they should come into the office. The submitted photos can be used to diagnose problems, alleviate patient fears or as an ongoing record of a patient’s treatment or recovery. The app also allows prospective patients to submit photos of their vein disease for review.

The clinical photography tool allows the user to select photography areas from a pre-defined list of anatomy. The user can also access previous patient photos for treatment reference or as a baseline for taking consistent new photos. As photos are taken, the doctor can add clinical notes before sending the photos to the AppwoRx HIPAA-compliant cloud server. The user can also access previous

patient photos for treatment reference or as a baseline for taking consistent new photos.

The cloud-based photo manager optimizes, standardizes and facilitates this tedious photographic process. Photos are stored and labeled with anatomy area, date taken, photographer name, notes, and more. Clinicians can create branded reports to assist with patient expectation management or insurance claims. Images can also be automatically integrated with many electronic health record or electronic medical record systems.

In the consumer version of the CPR App, the patient can take standardized photographs post-treatment that are then securely transmitted to a doctor’s private server where a clinician can monitor the patient’s progress or alleviate patient’s fears without the patient ever leaving the comfort of their home. CPR will private label this version of the App for a doctor’s vein practice by integrating the practice logo and pertinent practice information into the interface.



CONCLUSION

“Vein doctors should know that it could increase their revenue by up to 40, cut down on employee costs, manage patient expectations, and differentiate them from their competition. It’s a useful diagnostic tool that insurance companies often require,” Dr. Soffer said.

“Patients can have access to their physician’s information including FAQs on their smart phone, and can send a picture with questions about areas of concern directly to clinician for immediate review and response. They can connect and interact with their doctor like never before. This should give them unique peace of mind while undergoing treatment.”

Jeffrey H. Miller, MD and founder of Miller Vein with offices in Novi, Troy and Dearborn Mich., said using the iPhone in this way could be helpful if a patient has questions and wants to share findings with a physician.

“In the future I could see this kind of thing becoming more common,” Dr. Miller said. “I will say, however, that person-to-person contact is one of the most important aspects of care. So most things will still need to be dealt with in person, and for good reasons. Things can get lost in communication via text or e-mails.”

Dr. Soffer said the Soffer Health Institute, with Florida offices throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties, is dedicated to making patients feel at home throughout their medical evaluation and treatment procedures. **VTN**

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