

Mobile Printers Boost Compliance and Safety in Home Health

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Posted on: June 1, 2015

Complying with the constantly growing number of Meaningful Use sharing requirements and other Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) mandates presents a constant challenge for home health providers already under pressure to provide efficient and high-quality patient care. Fortunately, advances in mobile printing and other mobile technologies are enabling clinicians to quickly and easily ensure compliance while also improving the safety and quality of care delivered to patients in their homes.



For example, CMS requires that hospice and home healthcare workers leave a detailed medication list at the patient's residence.

Handwriting lists is both time-consuming and prone to error for several reasons. Home health patients often take numerous medications with sometimes confusing instructions. Handwritten materials can sometimes be difficult to read, increasing the risk for medication errors. The possibility that hurried clinicians may copy down information inaccurately can also contribute to increased risk.

However, thanks to advances in compact, lightweight mobile printers, clinicians can now quickly print full-page 8½ x 11½ hard copies and immediately hand them to patients and/or family members and caregivers during a home visit. The ability to print these updated and personalized medication lists — along with helpful administration instructions and drug interaction data — ensures compliance and offers numerous additional benefits. These include saving valuable time, boosting patient safety, supporting adherence and improving outcomes.

In addition to current CMS mandates, proposed HHA rules call for home health providers to furnish patients with an individualized written plan of care. Proposed §484.60(a)(1), the Plan of Care, states that all health services provided to patients would follow an individualized written plan of care. The plan of care would set out, among other things, the frequency and duration of therapeutic interventions. In accordance with proposed §484.50(c)(4)(iii), each patient would also have the right to receive a copy of his or her individualized HHA plan of care to be kept in the home.

Clearly these new mandates, when approved, will further underscore the advantage of including convenient mobile printers in the field toolkits for home health providers.

Empower clinicians to deliver better, safer care

Along with mobile printers, highly portable laptops, tablets and smartphones are transforming home health care delivery. Mobile devices make it simple and convenient for nurses, therapists and other clinicians on the go to document vital data, access patient records in real-time, check drug interactions and coordinate with other care providers, right in patient homes.

Although portable peripherals such as mobile printers sometimes take a back seat to other technology, they can play game-changing roles in enhancing patient safety and clinician productivity. By enabling clinicians to print consent, waiver and refusal of service forms and get the required signatures on the spot, mobile printers can save valuable time and speed proper treatment. Clinicians can also print teaching guides, point of care treatment plans and patient master demographics. This ability to educate family and caregivers about patient conditions and convey complex information about patient care in what may be an emotionally charged situation can prove crucial to avoiding hospital readmissions and the resulting Medicare reimbursement penalties for providers.

Low maintenance, high performance

Thermal mobile printers have no inks or toners to maintain or replace, making them reliable performers day after day even in extremely hot or freezing cold environments. The only consumable they require is thermal paper, which can be cut-sheet, fanfold or continuous roll, up to 8.5 wide. Obviously, long battery life is a must for clinicians constantly on the move, while a variety of mounting and power options ensure the printers adapt to almost any vehicle as well.

Approximately the size and weight of a small box of spaghetti, today's mobile printers comfortably fit in field bags, backpacks and large purses, making them ideal for highly mobile clinicians. The current generation can print as fast as six pages per minute, with high resolution text, graphics and pictures. They connect directly and seamlessly to laptops, tablets or smartphones via USB Bluetooth or WiFi technology, and compatible models are available for iOS and Android operating systems.

With the healthcare industry's growing emphasis on providing a full continuum of patient care beyond hospital walls, home health care will play an increasingly vital role in the future, and in-home printing of critical patient documents will become more valuable than ever. Not only do mobile printers promote and ensure compliance with the plethora of mandates integral to providing care in today's environment, but they enhance the quality of care home health providers deliver — and enable them to deliver it more efficiently than ever.

For more information, contact:

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