



News Release

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eDocAmerica Reaches One Million Consumers

Now the Largest 3rd-Party Provider of Physician-Consumer Online Communications

For Online Press Kit, go to: www.edocamerica.com/about/presskit

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Aug. 2, 2005) — eDocAmerica, the nation's leading provider of online physician-consumer communication services, today announced that the company has reached the one million mark in lives covered by its web-based tool. The company is the largest third-party provider of physician-consumer online communications, said Dr. Charles W. Smith, founder of eDocAmerica.

"We believe our approach is better for employers and consumers," he said. Dr. Smith is executive associate dean and a Family and Community Medicine professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

eDocAmerica offers a different model in web-based communications between physicians and consumers. Unlike other services that establish email systems for doctors to exchange messages with their patients, eDocAmerica provides third-party Board-certified physicians through third-party sponsors such as employers, associations and insurance companies. Physicians respond within a guaranteed 24-hour period, and there's no co-pay for consumers, who have unlimited access to the service.

For employees and members of eDocAmerica's 600-plus member organizations, the online tool is secure, convenient, and packed with information and resources.

"We recognize the efforts of other organizations who have launched online tools for secure patient-doctor exchanges, yet the companies and associations that are our clients say our model is going to be more effective for them in the long-term," Dr. Smith said. "In our experience, eDocAmerica has been a big win-win for consumers and employers because of the rapid response, the cost savings, and our third-party business model."

Established in 1997

Created in 1997 under the auspices of a leading university medical center, eDocAmerica has opened new ways for participants to make improved decisions about their healthcare, and it's saving money for corporations, associations and insurance companies, as well as their employees and members.

With eDocAmerica, participants can take more ownership of their healthcare decisions. They can more efficiently obtain specific information and insight into their own healthcare issues through online dialogue with a physician-coach; they can save the cost of a medical visit co-pay when an office visit is not necessary; and they can save time off from their jobs and schedules by not having to go to unnecessary doctors' appointments. With more information, participants are equipped to make better choices about their health care needs.

eDocAmerica's goal is to be the leading online communication service between patients and board-certified physicians. With more than 350,000 covered families at over 600 companies and associations in all 50 U.S. states and 26 other countries, eDocAmerica is now available to approximately one million consumers, including family members. Advantages over other web-based health care sites include 1) third-party, Board-certified physicians and licensed psychologists associated with leading teaching institutions and private practices throughout the nation, 2) coverage of all eligible employees or association members and their family members, 3) full compliance with HIPAA requirements for privacy and security, and 4) unlimited use by participants and their family members without additional co-pays or fees.

"Employers are increasingly unable and/or unwilling to absorb large premium increases and are passing some of those increases along to employees in the form of higher deductibles, higher co-pays and reduced benefits," said Robbie Linn, president of eDocAmerica. "Until now, this cost shifting to employees has been the major strategy of employers seeking to sensitize employees to the rising cost of healthcare. Cost shifting gives employees a powerful incentive to make better healthcare choices. Unfortunately, it does not give employees the tools with which to make those better choices. That's where we fit in."

Adds Dr. Smith, "The overriding issue for patients is convenience and ease of use. We also get lots of comments from patients who feel the question they're submitting is embarrassing. They say they would never bring this subject up with their doctors. Our primary goal is patient education. And there's also an important coaching/cheerleading function."

Here's how eDocAmerica works: After completing a simple one-time registration and brief medical profile, the participant simply submits their question to an eDocAmerica physician using a unique, self-selected password. The process is online, simple and secure. A response from a physician is guaranteed within 24 hours, yet most responses arrive within two to three hours. Because eDocAmerica is web-based, participants can access eDocAmerica anywhere, anytime, via the Internet. It is ideal for anyone who travels and for children away at college. All of the patient's medical information, questions and replies remain completely private and confidential.

Most of the interactions are routine inquiries from patients seeking general health information. Dr. Smith said it's also common for people with colds or allergies to ask if they need antibiotics to recover.

About eDocAmerica

Companies offering eDocAmerica realize savings through reduced absenteeism due to avoiding unnecessary doctor's office visits, reduced doctor's office visits that are paid through the company health insurance plan, and reduced co-pays paid by employees for office visits. eDocAmerica's usage surveys indicate that an unnecessary visit to the doctor's office is eliminated in approximately 22 percent of the inquiries.

eDocAmerica charges a low per-employee, per-month fee for all eligible employees or members. The service is sold through traditional distribution channels including health insurance agents and brokers, third-party administrators, and other healthcare and employee benefit consultants.

eDocAmerica contracts with physicians and psychologists located across the United States to provide health information and assistance. The doctors often use these patient interactions to encourage healthier behavior as well as to promote preventive measures and screenings. The company recently introduced an electronic disease management service called eDocElite to help diabetic patients manage their chronic conditions. eDocAmerica also provides weekly "Health Tips" that are emailed to all registered participants.

For more information about eDocAmerica, visit the website at www.edocamerica.com, or call toll free 1.866.525.3362.

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