

After more than 2 decades of online shopping and online banking, online access to medical records for patients is finally entering health care's mainstream. Most US and UK health care providers now have the technology to gather patient medical information electronically, and to provide patients with online access to that information.

For both the US and UK, this represents significant change. In the UK, technology to enable patients to access their records currently covers 99% of the population. Historically, doctors had feared data protection issues and therefore blocked patients from accessing their records. Attitudes, however, have been changing.

Since April 2015, doctors in England have given online access to their Summary Care Records (SCRs) to 55 million patients (97% of the population). Although SCRs currently store limited information—allergies, medicines taken and adverse reactions to any medications—this access is a significant step forward and shows commitment from health professionals to allow patients greater access to their own medical data.

In addition, since being re-elected in early 2015, the UK government has reiterated its ambition to give every patient in the country online access to full health records, including details of every consultation, prescription and test result, by 2018. If this ambition is met, life insurance applicants in the UK will have online access to their medical records within the next 3 years.

In the US, health care records have been computerized for decades. In 2004, President George W. Bush laid out a 10-year plan to promote the development and adoption of electronic health records, with the goal that every American would have an electronic health record by 2014. Bush's plan created the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information



Within the field of e-health in an application in the US and UK a little of the online access to electronic health records. What is the impact on the medical community and the end user? The end user is the patient and the doctor.

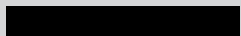
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Technology (ONC) to oversee nationwide development of policies and standard (see) to permit efficient electronic exchange and use of health information, and for certifying the required standards and technologies for effective exchange of health information.

Five years later, President Barack Obama passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This economic stimulus act included an allocation that would help to finance the modernization of the nation's health IT infrastructure and strengthen interoperability of information in EHRs. The subsection of the act that provides funding to promote adoption of health information technology is called the Health Information Technology for Eco-

this is not just free money; simply transferring information from paper to digital form is not enough. HITECH mandates the meaningful use of the EHR to improve quality, safety, effi

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, is Vice President, Electronic Health Record Initiatives, and heads RGA's Electronic Health Record (EHR) Initiatives area. This area's function is to conduct in-depth research and analysis of this evolving segment and monitor all activity in the US and around the world, with the objectives of positioning RGA as an industry thought leader and better assisting clients with EHR-related issues.