Managing health appointments in Hong Kong Public Hospitals at your fingertips

- The Next Big Thing in eHealth

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Introduction

The Information Technology and Health Informatics Division (IT&HI) of the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong (HA) has putting forward a five-year IT Strategy in 2017-2022, namely "Innovation for Better Care" and one of the key deliverables is to develop a patient mobile app "HA Go" to enhance patient experience and health outcome.
In taking forward, different mobile services will be provided by phases in HA Go, and the appointment service provided via "My appointments" and "BookHA" modules will be the first Minimum Viable Product (MVP) of HA Go in considered that managing health appointments is one of the most wanted features in mobile hospital apps [1] .

Objectives

1. To provide a digital-enabled platform for patients to manage health appointments
2. To realize the benefits of managing health appointments via HA Go from patients, staff and corporate perspectives

Methodology

In the planning phases of the appointment service, the most wanted features in managing health appointments are delineated, which includes

• Book new appointments
• View future appointments
• View attendance records
• Receive appointment reminder(s)
• Cancel the appointments
• Mark arrival to clinic and make online payment
• Request rescheduling appointment
• Confirm appointment
• Provide digital appointment slip (in pdf and text format)
• Provide clinic specific instruction or preparation information
• View the queuing status for consultation

These features will be developed in a phased approach, and to be evolved gracefully along the roadmap. Major considerations on prioritizing the features include the timeliness and complexity of data standardization and workflow standardization among hospital and clinics, the need for enhancements on current information system(s), and the implementation timeline of complementary information systems, to say but a few.

Result and Expected Benefits

In December 2019, the HA Go will be officially launched to the public, more than half of the planned features will be available via the "BookHA" and "My Appointments" modules.   The utilization figures and user feedback will uncover the usability.

The appointment service in HA Go is win-win-win for the patients, staff and the corporate.   Patients can manage health appointments in public hospitals at fingertips while staff can enjoy streamlined workflow via automation. The corporate is actualizing a digital-enabled health appointment services for better patient care.   All is an upcoming big thing in eHealth.

Reference

[1]   8 Types Of Mobile Hospital Apps And The 3 Features Patients Want Most - Merraine. Merraine. https://www.merraine.com/8-types-mobile-hospital-apps-3-features-patients-want/