



Western Medical Care, Inc.

ONLINE PRIVATE MEDICAL RECORD ACCESS SYSTEM

PATENT PENDING - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Limited Disclosure – Background and Summary Only

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to the medical records of individuals. An individual's medical record is useful to a healthcare provider who is primarily responsible for providing healthcare for the individual. It would also be useful to those treating the individual on an emergency basis. However, medical records are private and there are laws that protect the privacy of individuals' medical records from unauthorized disclosure. For example, there is the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, PL 104-191, or HIPAA, which sets standards for access and release of electronic health information. Medical personnel must obey this and other laws and are therefore sometimes faced with a dilemma when a third party healthcare provider requests medical records of an individual under emergency circumstances. If the patient cannot give consent to allow the third party emergency healthcare provider to have access to their medical records, the individual may receive less than ideal treatment.

[0002] Additionally, even if permission can be obtained from the patient, getting physical access to such records is not always a simple matter. Medical records of the patient are invariably spread among multiple providers who will likely use different data storage systems, each provider storing data in a different form or format. Accordingly, rapid delivery of medical records to the healthcare provider may be next to impossible without a great deal of cooperation from the patient's previous healthcare providers and perhaps a little luck.

[0003] There is therefore a need for a way to enable an authorized health care provider to have access to a patient's medical records easily and quickly.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] According to its major aspects and briefly recited, the present invention is a system for enabling an individual user to establish and maintain a self-generated medical record. That self-generated medical record will contain information the user deems necessary for a healthcare provider to provide treatment and can point to the location of other medical records pertaining to that user and that are held by other healthcare providers who previously rendered treatment to the user. The self-generated medical record is stored under the user's account in a secure database, accessible online, and to which the user may grant access to other healthcare providers, such as emergency healthcare providers. The user designates which healthcare providers may access the user's information and which portion of the self-generated medical record is to be shared and which is not.

[0005] The individual may carry a device such as a health record identification card, a modified driver's license or dog tag adapted to carry the address of the website at which the user's self-generated medical record can be found, and an identifier, such as a username and password, that can be used to gain read-only access to that medical record. In the event the individual is injured and possibly unconscious, the identifier on the device may be used by health care professionals to access the self-generated medical record and to more easily and quickly locate other medical records related to their patient. The healthcare provider treating the individual may access the user's medical records with the information on the device provided that the user has previously designated that healthcare provider as someone who may have access.

[0006] The information in the database includes administrative information (such as insurance company information, policy and group numbers, the name and address of the patient's primary care physician) in addition to data related to the users medical history (allergies to medications, hearth conditions, and previous treatments, for example), and other information important to the user in a health emergency, such as the names of family members who are to be notified of an emergency. The user may identify other healthcare providers who maintain medical records concerning the user. The user may not grant access to all of the information in his user-generated medical record but may divide it into one or more portions, and may not grant access to the medical record by all healthcare providers to more than a first portion.

[0007] A feature of the present invention is that it provides a location where individuals can establish medical records for themselves and their families that they can control and can choose to provide, or not to provide, access to.

[0008] Another feature of the present invention is that the individual can grant or deny access to the self-generated medical record in advance of need and at different threshold access levels so that some information may be kept private and other information may be shared with pre-designated healthcare providers. Because it is stored in a database linked to a website, the self-generated record is available to healthcare providers as soon as they log in to the secure website and may contain all the information an emergency healthcare provider needs. Related to this feature is the ability of the user to identify in the self-generated record where other medical records are kept and to characterize those records so that emergency health care providers can find additional, relevant information much more quickly.

[0009] Another feature of the present invention is that the self-generated medical record is the user's own medical record, not just about the user (and optionally about the user's family members). Accordingly, the record is fully customizable so that the information the user wants to maintain is in the record and available for others to see if and when the user permits.

[0010] Another feature of the present invention is that the user may permit access to the self-generated record by a HIPAA-approved hospital network or transfer network because of trust in their qualifications for the secure handling of electronic medical records.

[0011] These and other features and their advantages will be apparent to those skilled in the art of the secure management of electronic medical records from a careful reading of the Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments accompanied by the following drawings.