

Patient and Health Provider Perceptions of an Online Patient Application:

An evaluation of Noona app in cancer care

Overview

An electronic patient portal solution (Noona) was implemented by the Provincial Cancer Care Program to help enhance the level of care provided to patients. COVID-19 had a major influence on our method of gathering data on distress screening and patient reported outcomes. Implementing an electronic patient portal would enable continued access for patients and completion of essential questionnaires, maintaining a high standard of care. The adoption of this mobile app aligns with NL Health Services' strategic goals of Access and Quality as well as with broader aims of better care, better outcomes and improved experience for our patients.

Goals

Enhance Patient Engagement and Empowerment

Patients managing their appointments and completing necessary screening assessments from home can have an enhanced sense of empowerment.

Strengthen Care Coordination

In line with Health Accord NL's emphasis on patient-centred care, providing the health-care team with patient-reported information prior to appointments allows for a more focused discussion.

Improve Patient Outcomes

The patient portal allows collection and monitoring of patient reported outcomes and oncology specific questionnaires for remote symptom management.

Increase Operational Efficiencies

Automating patient's access to their schedules helps streamline processes, reduce missed appointments, and lower costs, supporting the goal of reducing health-care deficits while enhancing outcomes.

Activities

The Project Team:

- Engaged the Provincial Cancer Care Program's Patient and Family Advisory Committee to review concept and materials. This provided an opportunity to improve the experience from the patient's perspective.
- Completed public outreach using various communications tools, distributed patient brochures in St. John's clinics and displayed posters in clinical and waiting areas.
- Partnered with the Cancer Care Foundation to promote on social media.
- Introduced Noona through YouTube, featuring it on the website with patient support section, including a list of frequently asked questions.
- Clerical staff assisted with follow-up calls to new patients, increasing participation.

Indicator: As of February 2024, over 900 patients activated an account on the portal.



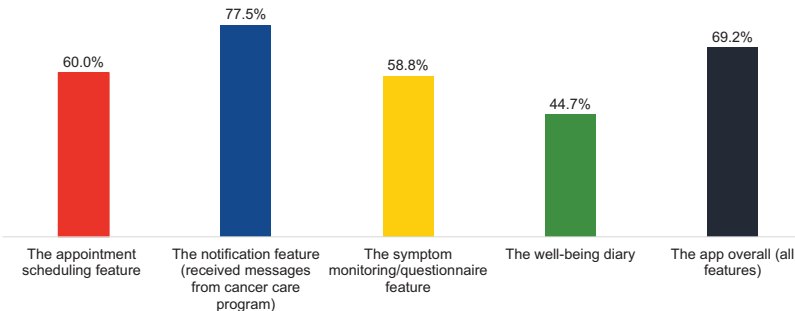
Outcomes/Progress

- The electronic application was **well received by patients**, with users reporting it to be easy to use, with the **notification and appointment scheduling features** considered among **most helpful**.
- Over a third indicated they felt **more engaged** in their care, that they could **self-manage their care better**, and **monitor their symptoms more easily** using the app.
- Key informant interviews suggested health-care providers believe the technology could be beneficial but want to be kept up-to-date with information about usage and benefits.

Table: Ease of use, confidence, engagement, self-management and communication

	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Neutral %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Noona is easy to use. (n=159)	-	-	21.4	52.2	22.6
I found it hard to learn how to use Noona (n=159)	29.6	41.5	19.5	-	-
I am confident using Noona.(n=157)	-	-	24.2	46.5	24.8
Since using Noona, I feel I am more engaged in my care.(n=160)	3.1	8.1	52.5	29.4	6.9
I can self-manage my care better when using Noona.(n=159)	3.8	8.8	54.7	27.0	5.7
I can monitor my symptoms more easily when using Noona.(n=160)	3.8	10.6	53.1	27.5	5.0
I can communicate with my care team more easily because of Noona.(n=160)	5.0	10.6	48.1	29.4	6.9

Patient satisfaction with Noona features



“ I think it's good in the sense that it probably gives them an idea of what our assessment will be so that they can better monitor and document that at home themselves. ”

- Health-Care Provider

“ It is very helpful in keeping appointments and helped me feel connected with the cancer centre and gave a sense of caring about me and my treatment. I found it excellent. ”

- Cancer Patient

Next Steps

- Sharing patient experiences through 'testimonials' can effectively communicate the benefits, enhance sustainability, and increase interest among new patients and staff.
- Prioritizing and addressing technological barriers, enhancing cultural competence, and ensuring strong data security measures are crucial steps towards improving adoption and usage rates.
- Evaluating the patient portal provides valuable insights to inform the change management process to a new digital health information system.