

Self-Service Kiosks Provide Innovative Path to Testing and Connection to Providers

By Linda Barlow | Apr 4, 2013

The recent proliferation of affordable do-it-yourself consumer tools is one way patients are now empowered to take control of their health through prevention and wellness strategies.

One successful example is [SoloHealth Station](#) – a free, self-service kiosk offering comprehensive vision, blood pressure, weight and body mass index screenings. Currently located in select Wal-Mart, Safeway, Sam’s Club and Schnucks Markets, more than 10 million people have already used the kiosk in the past two years.

A [\\$1.2 million grant](#) from the [National Institutes of Health](#) played a major role in expanding the company’s free medical screening technology, education and wellness programs to a wider audience, including traditionally underserved communities.

“Seventy-one percent of SoloHealth Station users are at medium to high risk of hypertension and 51 percent are overweight or obese,” says Bart Foster, CEO and Founder of SoloHealth. “At the core, we believe that awareness and action can lead to preventative measures that lead to lower costs. So, consumers who realize they are at high risk of BP or BMI would be more propelled to click through to access a doctor or search and scan our database. They are now empowered with knowledge they probably never had before and they want to act on it.”

Foster shares some compelling data that illustrates how SoloHealth links patients to providers:

- Nearly 40,000 users have clicked through to one or more nearby doctors via the kiosk’s search function.

- Users with high risk of blood pressure problems are 57 percent more likely to choose a physician.
- Users with high risk of BMI problems are 97 percent more likely to select a doctor.
- Users taking the Health Risk Assessment are over seven times more likely to choose a physician.

SoloHealth Station leverages an interactive touch-screen and incorporates videos as part of a 4.5-minute process that guides about 85,000 users each day through its tests. Individuals then receive a comprehensive follow-up health assessment, view their test results, get suggestions for improvement and are given access to a vast network of accredited medical professionals.

Some urge caution about self-service health kiosks, raising concerns about patient privacy, how companies might use personal health data, the quality of their medical information, and whether advertisers and other sponsors might shape their advice and referrals for commercial reasons.

Foster points out that even with the spread of health kiosks, medical professionals remain necessary.

“Technology like the SoloHealth Station can make access to health services and tools easy, free and convenient,” he says. “We believe people will use these accessible tools to take better control of their health care. Once enlightened about a potential health problem, the majority of consumers will act. And knowing is better than not knowing, because prevention leads to better outcomes and lower costs.”

Have you used a SoloHealth Station or other self-help kiosk? Would you do it again? Why or why not? Comment below.

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