

New App Makes Diabetes Care Delivery a Whole New Ballgame

Nathan Sheon, Intern, Real World Health Care | September 7, 2014

A father brings his son to a baseball game. The day is nice, the weather is good, but there's one problem: the boy has Type 1 diabetes, and they forgot his test strips. Do they leave the game for home or a pharmacy? Do they wing it, risking the boy's health and trying to manage his blood sugar with his diet?

Actually, they opt for the third choice: [HelpAround](#), a mobile safety net for people with diabetes. The man can pull out his phone, see that there is another diabetes patient two sections down, and ask for the supplies his son needs. With that, the day is saved.

A story like that is how HelpAround began. Established in 2013, HelpAround was designed to bring people with diabetes together in a common space to provide not just peer-to-peer support, but peer-to-peer care as well. Using new mobile technology, the app provides a highly personalized account of treatment needs and matches patients accordingly with other patients who have similar needs.



According to Yishai Knobel, CEO and co-founder of HelpAround, the service fills in what is otherwise a gray area of diabetes treatment. People with diabetes face a large spectrum of constant health concerns that vary widely in severity. Not having test strips, for instance, might not warrant going to the hospital, but can be very serious for patients who need to constantly monitor their health. With an app like this to fall back on, according to Knobel, people with diabetes are able to live more normal lives knowing that they can get the help they need whenever they need it. "People with chronic conditions have so much going on, on top of their everyday lives," he said. "Creating this social safety net is really something valuable."

Nathan Sheon

HelpAround also provides a less tangible but equally important factor for its patients: a sense of belonging to a community. Though he did not want to disclose numbers, Knobel said that in the early stages of the app's launch, 85% of requests for help

received a response. For people with chronic conditions, knowing that there is a dedicated support base by patients and for patients is invaluable.

"Connecting the right people at the right time in a system can create a wonderful moment of empowerment, support and comradery," Knobel said.

With use of the app growing, patient groups for other chronic diseases have also begun to discuss using technology like this. With communication technology advancing and a growing call for more patient-centered solutions to health issues, Knobel believes that technologies like HelpAround will allow patients to manage their own health needs more efficiently. Perhaps most important, the app helps patients stay compliant with their treatment schedule.

"We want to really give the patient a full support system, (helping them) on the go, focusing on their needs, to better manage their health care," Knobel said.

Have you ever used HelpAround or a similar technology? What was your experience? What does this mean for the future of care-delivery and treatment compliance? Let us know in the comment section!

To read this post on RWHC blog, [click here](#).