

documents as requested, and intakes identification information and other user provided information. According to one embodiment, the stand also houses a printer (not illustrated) and supports a monitor **13** that can be a touch-screen or a regular monitor with keyboard or other data entry device connected, and a card reader **14**, or other information reader such as a magnetic pad, with each of these components connected to the computer **12** located at the kiosk. The computer executes software to implement the system, as discussed above, and to interact with the patient, medical database(s), and medical staff.

[0043] Exemplary advantages of a system in accordance with the present invention include allowing individuals to avoid long check-in lines at medical facilities such as clinics or hospitals, preventing or minimizing inconsistencies in medical insurance information, improving accuracy of medical prescriptions, and improving efficiency by allowing appropriate utilization of nursing staff.

[0044] The invention also addresses a variety of metrics that are to be met by medical centers. The system is capable of improving the quality of care by increasing awareness of patients in offered preventive services and issues that need to be discussed/addressed during the visit, improving the efficient operation of patient care by better utilizing nursing staff and increasing the overall breadth of medical issues that may be addressed during a patient encounter, significantly decreasing provider encounter times, decreasing the number of clerks needed to staff the check-in window, thus, freeing the clerks up to do other activities, increasing the number of check-in points available to patients in addition to the check-in window, thus, reducing check-in time by up to ten minutes during peak hours, increasing third party collections because of the improved collection of third party payers including health insurance companies, increasing the participation of the patient in the process and verification of information, and the interface is easily understood by first-time users.

[0045] The invention could also be utilized to interact with medical databases. According to a further embodiment, on-line service performance surveys are also provided. For example, the patient returns to the kiosk immediately after attending his or her scheduled appointment and completes a survey querying the patient about various satisfaction levels with respect to the patient's visit. In this manner, the facility is able to collect patient satisfaction data in a simple manner contemporaneously with the patient's visit and the patient does not need to wait in a line in order to obtain the survey questions.

[0046] While various aspects of the present invention have been particularly shown and described with reference to the exemplary, non-limiting, embodiments above, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various additional aspects and embodiments may be contemplated without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0047] Other aspects, objects and advantages of the present invention can be obtained from a study of the drawings, the disclosure and the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for providing efficient access to patient data at a medical facility, the system comprising:

a self-service kiosk including an input device operable to input data from a user, a processor and a display device for visually providing data to a user; and

a server in communication with the processor and operable to store data and selectively access data from at least one external database,

wherein relevant data with respect to a patient is downloaded from one or more of the external databases via the server and provided to the user via the kiosk.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said kiosk comprises a card reader operable to read personal identifying indicia from an identification card presented by the user at the kiosk, wherein the personal identifying indicia uniquely identifies the user and is used to authorize access to personal medical data corresponding to the patient from the databases.

3. The system according to claim 1, further comprising a print device operable to print medical information corresponding to the patient.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the personal medical data includes one or more of, demographics information related to the patient, insurance information, medical appointment information and preventive health action information.

5. The system according to claim 1, wherein said kiosk further comprises a notification device operable to notify facility personnel of the user's arrival to the facility.

6. The system according to claim 5, wherein the notification device comprises a wireless paging device.

7. The system according to claim 1, wherein said display device is operable to solicit patient service-satisfaction data from the patient.

8. A method of efficiently exchanging data with a patient at a medical facility, the method comprising:

providing one or more individual self-service kiosks operable to communicate with the patient either visually, audibly or both visually and audibly, wherein the kiosks are controlled via a processor;

presenting an identification card at one of the kiosks, wherein the identification card uniquely identifies the patient;

requesting via one of the kiosks, verification of certain personal information from the patient;

accessing one or more databases external to the medical facility to obtain medical data corresponding to the patient.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising, providing the patient with information regarding scheduled medical appointments.

10. The method according to claim 8, further comprising, providing the patient with a medical report card including one or more of up-to-date personal health information and preventive healthcare actions corresponding specifically to the patient.

11. The method according to claim 8, further comprising requesting verification from the patient of insurance or other payer information.