

SELF-SERVE PATIENT CHECK-IN AND PREVENTIVE SERVICES KIOSK

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is an application filed under 35 U.S.C. § 111(a) claiming benefit pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 119(e)(1) of the filing date of the Provisional Application 60/572,480 filed on May 20, 2004 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 111 (b).

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to technology for stream-lining patient check-in procedures and personal patient data updating at a medical facility. In particular, the present invention relates to a method and associated system for efficiently checking-in patients at a healthcare facility and efficiently providing up-to-date information to both the patients as well as any related healthcare records systems.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] In accordance with conventional healthcare check-in methods and systems, patients desiring a personal consultation with a medical practitioner, either pursuant to a prior appointment or otherwise, are required to wait in a queue before being afforded the opportunity to be personally "checked-in" by a receptionist or other medical facility personnel. In addition to relaying the reason for the visit, the typical check-in process also consists of verification of the patient's demographical information, e.g., name, address, phone number, social security number, etc., and verification of the patient's current medical insurance information or any other third party payer information. Typically, patients must wait their respective turn while other patients complete paperwork or otherwise are occupying the facility personnel. Accordingly, the check-in process can take an extremely long time, depending primarily on the number of other patients waiting to check-in and the speed by which each patient is able to check-in.

[0004] Additionally, to obtain information about future appointments, such as date, time and location of the appointment(s), the patient typically has to request that the receptionist provide documentation regarding the appointment information (e.g., hand-writing the appointments on appointment cards). Thus, the conventional medical check-in procedure is not centralized and does not readily provide the patient with efficient access to his or her medical information. The present invention addresses these and other issues with respect to conventional medical facility check-in and data verification systems.

[0005] In accordance with certain exemplary embodiments of the invention, described in detail below, various medical databases and legacy systems are interfaced to provide medical data. A brief description of a few exemplary existing databases and systems is provided below. However, it is recognized that various other databases and systems can be interfaced in accordance with the present invention to provide additional access to other data when necessary.

[0006] For example, the Composite Health Care System (CHCS) is a DoD Health System that provides ability to

appoint patients, order and track results of laboratory and radiology studies, and order and track prescription data. CHCS maintains vast medical records for over four million DoD beneficiaries.

[0007] CHCS II is an enterprise level computer-based patient record (CPR) system for the DoD Military Health System. It provides anytime, anywhere delivery of patient records to the point of care. CHCS II combines structured documentation with automated coding compliance.

[0008] Additionally, the Integrated Clinical Database (ICDB) technology platform is also a development of the DoD Military Health System (MHS) and supports healthcare delivery. Using web technologies, ICDB leverages existing legacy systems and Internet-based capabilities to deliver real-time, efficient and cost-effective information tailored to the needs of providers and their patients. Along with physician, nurse and technician-focused tools, the ICDB enables the MHS to go beyond episodic care and into the realm of prevention and population health management by helping to identify and target "at-risk" members for early intervention.

[0009] Working as a force multiplier for existing clinical information systems, ICDB enables the vision of a seamless, integrated, and worldwide healthcare delivery environment that supports the worldwide operations of the Air Force Medical Service (AFMS) and the MHS. It also provides an easily accessible conduit to the clinical information necessary to improve readiness and support early detection and monitoring of chemical and biological attacks.

[0010] These databases, and more, can be accessed in accordance with the present invention to provide efficient and informative data to the patient each time the patient checks-in to a medical facility equipped with a medical kiosk, as described below.

[0011] In view of the exemplary databases and systems mentioned above, it should be recognized that the present invention can interface with both civilian and military databases and can be adapted to interface with virtually any compatible database to provide access to needed data.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] Illustrative, non-limiting embodiments of the present invention overcome the aforementioned and other disadvantages associated with conventional medical check-in methods and associated devices.

[0013] In view of the aforementioned problems with the conventional approach to medical check-in procedures, one inventive aspect of the present invention lies in providing a patient self-service medical check-in system embodied, for example, in a self-service kiosk that is connected to various databases and other legacy systems. Another inventive aspect of the present invention is the synergy that results from the use of such a medical kiosk in the workflow of patient registration for a medical visit (or encounter) and the verification of information as part of the registration process without requiring the personal assistance of hospital personnel. A self-service check-in procedure and its respective system, especially in the health care field, is believed to be novel.

[0014] Although efficient patient check-in is one valuable application for the invention, a skilled artisan would under-