

## The iPad and Tablet Technology Advance Healthcare

Search the phrase “[iPad in Healthcare](#)” and the results are numerous. The [Apple iPad](#), along with other tablet computers, is changing the face of healthcare. Dr. Jason Myers, who specializes in Family Medicine and Urgent Care at [Holland Hospital's](#) new Lakeshore facility in Zeeland, Mich., discusses how tablet technology helps to positively maintain the doctor/patient relationship by replacing the bulky computers that took the place of paper charts in the 90's.

Patient interaction is only one way in which the [post-PC era](#) is invading the healthcare industry. The application of tablet technology in healthcare is only as limited as the mind's creativity. iPad's are being used by residents to document research while surgeons are using them as reference tools during surgeries and much more. Daily use of tablet technologies includes updating medical records, bedside charting and administering various therapies and patient teaching.

However, given the portability of the iPad along with other “smart” technologies, a little trepidation is natural regarding patient privacy. Dr. Myer uses tablet PCs throughout his practice, along with a personal iPad, and agrees that having access to patient records remotely via tablets will be a great benefit. “The technology to access patient records via iPad's is available, the question comes down to security and privacy of patient information.” Once that question is confidently resolved, use of the tablet technology in healthcare will expand exponentially. It's a good question: while it may be helpful to physicians to have access to all medical records while on-call or out of the office, who else may have the opportunity to gain access to those records as well?

A recent article, “[Can the iPad cure what ails us?](#)” discusses how Texas Health is positively embracing iPad's to boost patient care. It wisely suggests implementing a mobile health strategy. Yes, it's true, among all the other strategies needed to run a viable organization, mobile health should now be included. Between tablets and smartphones, knowing and managing all of these apps as well as the support equipment requires a strategy — not to mention the patient privacy issues and budgeting component.

Healthcare organizations would be wise to consider this up-front when investing in new or updated facilities. In fact, Holland Hospital did just that when evaluating the right furnishings for its patient care and waiting rooms.

It is obvious that having information at a moment's notice has significant advantages. We're still learning about the positive impact of these new technologies on patient centered care, including patient interactions and therapies, and the outcomes look promising. Although it is not possible for the iPad to cure ALL that ails us, they definitely are advancing healthcare.

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