

Client: Sanofi Aventis

## **MyDocOnline Pleases Physicians and Patients**

Wouldn't it be nice to obtain healthcare information instantly... to schedule a doctor's appointment... view lab test results... get a referral... refill prescriptions... receive answers to medical and billing questions... and be treated for minor ailments – all without leaving your home or office? Thousands of patients are enjoying these conveniences thanks to the Internet-based communications tool provided by MyDocOnline, an Aventis subsidiary based in Austin, TX.

“We created MyDocOnline in response to the demand for personalized, Internet-based applications to better serve patients and physicians,” explains Kirk Schueler, Chief Executive Officer of MyDocOnline and Senior Vice President of Aventis. “MyDocOnline enables two-way, secure communications and provides patients with easy access to information and services.”

### **A Wealth of Information... *Instantly***

Once enrolled, families can access a wealth of information. A patient education feature offers information on health and health care topics. A medical news feature delivers personalized health information from Reuters news service. And a patient self-help feature is based on the *Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide*.

But there's more. Using MyDocOnline allows the “Smith” family to easily connect with their internist, gynecologist and pediatrician – all within the same clinic and all linked to the Smith's private web page. The Smiths can then schedule appointments online, get basic health questions answered and contact the doctor

if they have more serious questions. After an appointment, the Smiths can view lab results on their secure page.

### **Visit Your Doctor Online**

The Online Doctor Visit feature has been particularly popular. This capability enables patients to consult, via the Internet, with their personal physicians for non-urgent medical conditions, such as allergies, upper respiratory infections or sore throats. Patients also use the Online Doctor Visit to follow up with their physician regarding chronic conditions – high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc. – for which they have been under long-term treatment.

During an Online Doctor Visit, the patient is led through a series of questions, such as medication taken, how long symptoms have persisted, and specific requests to the doctor. Patient responses are submitted to the physician's office, where a nurse reviews them before forwarding to the doctor. The doctor then responds to the patient with comprehensive written treatment instructions, and the patient pays for the service through online credit card processing. At the Medical Clinic of North Texas (MCNT), for example, the cost to the patient is \$30 per Online Doctor Visit, and all other services provided by MyDocOnline are free.

### **Promoting Affordable Healthcare**

“The Online Doctor Visit capability addresses the growing demand by patients and employers for convenient, affordable, high quality medical care,” says Schueler. “At the same time, it helps minimize inappropriate use of hospital emergency rooms and urgent care medical resources.”

Keith Argenbright, M.D. and Vice President of Methods Integration for MyDocOnline, recognized multiple needs for MyDocOnline before he co-founded the company. “As a family practitioner, I practiced for about 10 years in a very

busy family practice and then was a medical director of a large health system for three years. This experience inspired me to build the tools that I knew physicians needed.”

Argenbright’s inspiration was on target. Since its introduction in 2001, MyDocOnline has been well received by physicians and their patients. “We adopted MyDocOnline to give our patients another means of communicating with us,” says Karen Kennedy, Executive Director at MCNT. “MyDocOnline helps us delight our patients by providing better healthcare in a convenient, cost effective way.”

### **Physicians are More Accessible**

Molly Boggs, a Physician Assistant at MCNT, agrees. “We’re a very busy practice. We wanted to be more accessible to patients, especially for those who had trouble reaching us on the phone and might be frustrated waiting on hold.”

According to Boggs, patients appreciate the convenience of MyDocOnline. “They can e-mail us to get an appointment or referral or to ask questions,” she says. “And the Online Doctor Visit is helpful for people who have trouble getting away from home or work. I especially recommend it for teachers and small business owners who can’t get away and for people who have nausea or diarrhea and can’t leave the house easily.”

Since implementing MyDocOnline at MCNT last October, phone calls to the practice have decreased significantly. “Patients e-mail instead of calling,” says Boggs. “It boosts our efficiency and pleases our patients.”

Physicians and patients are likely to be even more pleased as MyDocOnline evolves. Planned enhancements include doubling the number of conditions eligible for Online Doctor Visits, introducing clinical information modules for

conditions such as osteoporosis or diabetes, adding automated delivery of lab results and employing voicemail activation for those who don't have Internet access.

"We're working on enhancements all the time," says Argenbright.

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