

## Portable Profiles

Even as electronic medical records are becoming widely used throughout the health care industry, individuals are encouraged to keep track of their own medical information with “portable profiles” to reduce risk and be more involved with their health care decisions.

Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers has recently introduced a program to assist its clients with setting up their own portable profiles for the client’s personal use after discharge or when served in the home.

A portable profile is, at the most basic level, a medical reference file kept by the patient to assist multiple caregivers with their ongoing quality health care. It provides a central point of reference for their health care information in an often complex and disparate health system.

Typical profiles include basic health information such as:

- Allergies
- Advanced directives
- Emergency contact information
- Equipment and devices used
- Functioning level
- Health care providers involved in care
- Hospital preference
- Insurance information
- Immunization status
- Medical diagnoses and conditions
- Current medications
- Risk factors
- Swallowing, vision and hearing conditions
- History of medical services, components and dates of service

Individuals with brain injuries often have multiple caregivers – physicians, therapists, hospital personnel and direct caregivers, all of whom need access to their current health and personal information on a regular basis. Because of this, having a portable, easily accessible document means that patients will have the appropriate information at each health encounter, and health providers can be informed with complete and accurate information. Rainbow believes that this will benefit its clients, help reduce medical errors, lessen fragmentation among visits and speed up health care visits.

It is also important to note that nearly 100,000 people die

each year from hospital errors, with another 1.5 million seriously injured, according to a 2006 report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Many of these deaths are the result of drug interactions or issues arising from unknown medical conditions.

With a portable profile, patients may reduce the risk of doctors acting without full information, thus reducing the possibility of medical complications.

Portable profiles allow clients more personal control over their care, and it also requires increased responsibility for recording current health information. Health and rehabilitation providers, including Rainbow, are now teaching clients and family members how to keep one’s own individual information up-to-date.

The names and formats of portable profiles vary widely, depending on the organization using the profile and personal preferences. As a result, portable profiles can be many things and called by many titles: Medical passport, patient care notebook, shared care plan, smart card and health care folder are among the common names, according to the CARF 2009 Medical Rehabilitation Standards Manual.

Profile formats will vary from the high-tech to simple paper files. These include:

- Index cards
- USB flash drives
- CDs
- Bracelets with information
- Notebooks
- Folders

Organizations and individual patients may also choose from a variety of online tools and subscription services. Some include: **www.medictag.com:** MedicTag is a personal medical alert and information USB flash device that keeps your medical history and medical alerts in one location.

**www.icePHR.com:** icePHR (In Case of Emergency Personal Health Record) allows you to store, update and access health



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information online. You can also print out an emergency wallet-sized card.

**www.onfile.com:** A yearly subscription service ranging in price from \$35–\$120, OnFile allows you to store documents and information online.

**www.Google.com/health:** Google Health stores your personal health information online, free of charge, allowing you to share it with others via e-mail or online access.

**www.nomoreclipboard.com:** Print and update your health records online as needed with NoMoreClipboard.com.

For an annual subscription, NoMoreClipboard.com also allows users to print their personal information on the specific forms used by physicians and health care facilities.

**www.portablehealthprofile.com:** A USB flash drive and software is included with this. The Portable Health Profile allows you to create five separate profiles that work on any Microsoft Windows-based computer.

Rainbow serves people with traumatic brain injury who have a wide range of functioning ability. As a result, Rainbow is individualizing the way profiles are being developed. Some clients may want their information on a USB flash drive; others may be more comfortable with a card in their wallet. Rainbow has a paper form that clients may fill out and also has an electronic version of the document on a USB flash drive. Clients may also fill out a Microsoft Word document electronically. The key is to develop an approach that works for each person, and it works when the client is able to update it and remember to use it. ❖

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