

Health Information Compliance Alert

Ventures: Docs Get New Online Profile Platform

Companies tout new direct-to-doctor patient gateway custom profile.

What if patients could look up doctors online like people look up their friends and colleagues on social network like Facebook and LinkedIn?

One step in this direction is UCompareHealthCare.com, a Web site that currently lists more than 627,000 physicians in the United States in its database. Founded in 2004, UCompareHealthCare.com was acquired by About.com, a part of The New York Times Company, in March 2007.

Tool: UCHC provides Web-based interactive tools to consumers that enable them to measure the quality of healthcare services available. It's not the Web site's goal to "rate" or "grade" these providers. "We allow the user to select information based on personal and specific interests, then we present the data in a visually descriptive manner through annotated charts and graphs for ease of interpretation," according to UCHC.

The Web site attracts more than 4 million unique users each month, the company added.

The new patient gateway custom profile feature on its Web site allows doctors to update their online profiles with photos, videos, and other information to better promote their practice and reach patients.

On top of its doctor database, UCompareHealthCare.com provides quality reports for hospitals, nursing homes, dialysis centers, and fertility clinics for consumers. NYTimes.com is also linking to UCHC on its Health Guide (nytimes.com/health) topic pages for 10 of the most prevalent life-threatening conditions, chronic ailments, and disorders such as, heart disease, cancer, stroke, obstructive pulmonary disorders, diabetes, Alzheimer's, obesity, back pain, headaches, and arthritis.

For information on creating a patient gateway custom profile feature, providers may contact **Jeff Groom** at jgroom@ucomparehealthcare.com.