

# Researchers find a web-based patient-centered toolkit helps improve patient-provider communication

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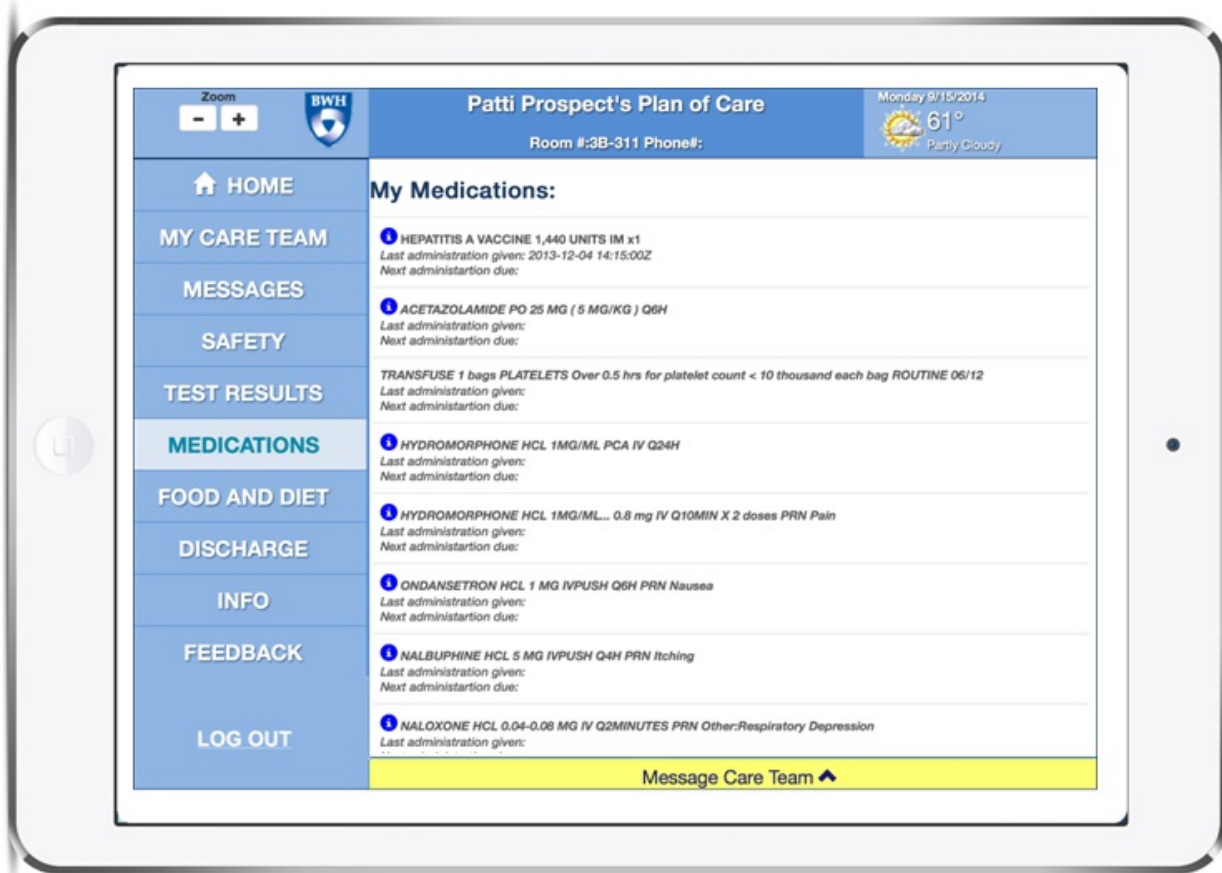
Health care organizations have been implementing health information technology at increasing rates in an effort to engage patients and caregivers improve patient satisfaction, and favorably impact outcomes. A new study led by researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) finds that a novel web-based, patient-centered toolkit (PCTK) used by patients and/or their healthcare proxys in the hospital setting helped them to engage in understanding and developing their plan of care, and has the potential to improve communication with providers. The results of the study are published in the *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* and appear online August 3.

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"Doctors and nurses oversee the plan of care, but the patients' goals, priorities, and preferences may not always be effectively conveyed to the clinical care team. Decision-making should be shared among patients, families and [healthcare providers](#). We found that this tool widened communication, helping patients and family members partner with healthcare providers to improve the quality and safety of their care," says lead author Anuj Dalal, MD, and a hospitalist in BWH's Division of General Medicine and Primary Care."

Specifically, researchers report that non-critically ill oncology patients

were more likely to engage with the PCTK compared with critically-ill MICU patients. However, caregivers of critically-ill MICU patients often used the PCTK on the patient's behalf. They learned that patients and caregivers most often used the PCTK to establish goals, view test results and medications, and identify care team members. Additionally, patients and caregivers used the messaging functionality primarily to report health concerns, needs, or preferences, but did not overwhelm providers with too many messages or demand immediate responses.

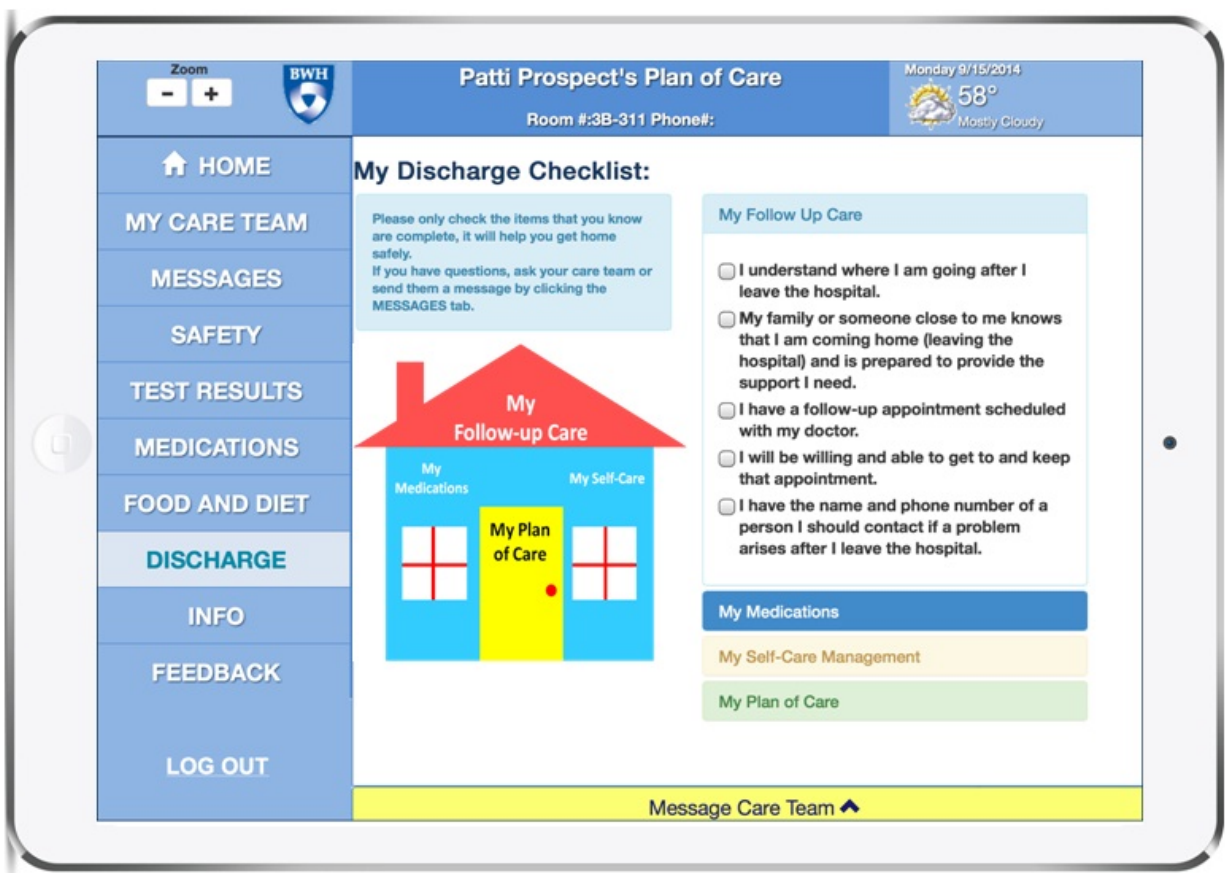


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"Our findings indicate that even with critically-ill patients, technology can serve as a helpful mediator to get the provider, patient and/or caregiver on the same page, working towards a shared goal."

Researchers indicate that more investigation is needed to better understand how to effectively implement this tool within complex hospital settings, including trouble shooting technological issues, and making the PCTK more user-friendly and accessible for [patients](#) and [caregivers](#).



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