



## Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report

Tuesday, October 14, 2008

### Coverage & Access

## New Health Care Information Technology Tools Aim To Help Patients Manage Health Conditions

The *New York Times* on Sunday examined new tools "being developed that may help harried patients, including those with chronic health conditions, monitor their medications, home tests and other details" and allow the information to "be posted to a Web page that the patient can choose to share with a doctor, pharmacist, friend or caregiver."

The article examined the Zuri, a small handheld device developed by Zume Life that reminds patients to take medications; tracks their exercise, weight and diet; and posts their medical information to an online portal that allows health care professionals to access the data. The Zuri, which Zume Life plans to release in the spring, will cost about \$200 with an additional \$40 to \$50 monthly fee for online services. Rajiv Mehta, CEO of Zume Life, said, "We're going after users who are mobile, social, active people" who need to follow a medical regimen.

In addition, the article examined HealthVault, an online service offered by Microsoft that allows patients to post information to their account from about 50 medical devices -- such as blood glucose meters and blood pressure and heart rate monitors -- and allows health care professionals to access the data. HealthVault also can help complete medical forms for patients, match them to clinical trials, and have their laboratory results and immunization records faxed to their accounts, among other functions. Sean Nolan, a computer scientist and chief architect of the Microsoft Health Solutions Group, said that, with HealthVault, "you, the account holder, control your health information" and can decide whether and which data to share. David Lansky, president and CEO of the Pacific Business Group on Health, said, "This is part of a shift toward a medical system that is more centered on and directed by patients themselves" (Eisenberg, *New York Times*, 10/12).

### Cigna Launches Online Tools

In related news, Cigna last week launched a series of no-cost, online courses, games and podcasts through Facebook, iTunes and the Web site <http://itstimetofeelbetter.com> to help educate users about health issues, the *Washington Post* reports.

Users can access a number of online tools, such as a calculator that can determine the most fertile day of the month for women, and take quizzes that help determine their risk for osteoporosis, gum disease, heart disease and other conditions. In addition, users can access interactive charts that outline the health care proposals of the major presidential candidates.

Karen Kocher, chief learning officer at Cigna, said that the company hopes that the effort will educate users and help them make informed health care decisions (Bhanoo, *Washington Post*, 10/14).