



spotlight on health

How Technology Is Preparing Your Future Physician

(NAPSA)—Medical education may not be exactly like what you watch on “Grey’s Anatomy” and “Scrubs,” but one thing is clear—tomorrow’s physicians are learning with new technologies designed to improve patient care and keep doctors informed.

Today’s medical students, accustomed to using technology in other aspects of their lives, said they expect mobile information access and record-keeping technology will help them practice better medicine, according to a recent survey conducted by Epocrates, Inc. and the Gerson Lehrman Group.

Need another antibiotic? Prefer a generic? Ask your doctor. It’s easy for them to find a suitable substitute with information found on their mobile device, such as a personal digital assistant (PDA) or smartphone. Mobile medical software, by companies such as Epocrates, offer useful information on drug interactions, alternative medicines and even health plan coverage.

To help future doctors prepare for these real-world scenarios and avoid preventable medical errors, these resources are being integrated into their training. Approximately 80 percent of medical schools require or encourage a PDA purchase and some professors have even incorporated PDA training into their core curriculum.

While many patients may have not seen their private practice physician use electronic medical records (EMRs), tomorrow’s physicians are being introduced to the technology. Nearly 90 percent of the student doctors report that



Mobile medical technology is very popular among doctors-in-training. They say it helps them practice better medicine.

they already have some experience with an EMR and the majority believe that these devices can enhance the quality of patient care. EMRs provide the ability to easily access and transfer patients’ medical history, which may speed the time it takes a physician to provide patient care.

Seventy percent of the students responding to the survey felt that EMRs would be widespread within the next five to 10 years—around the time they will be practicing physicians and health care decision makers.

In the study, doctors-in-training also noted that the availability of good health information technology will be an important factor in choosing their future practice location. Patients may also like to ask their physician what technology they are using when writing their next prescription. For more information on the survey, visit <http://insights.epocrates.com/future-physicians>.