Increasing Use of Patient Generated Health Data through Patient Reminders
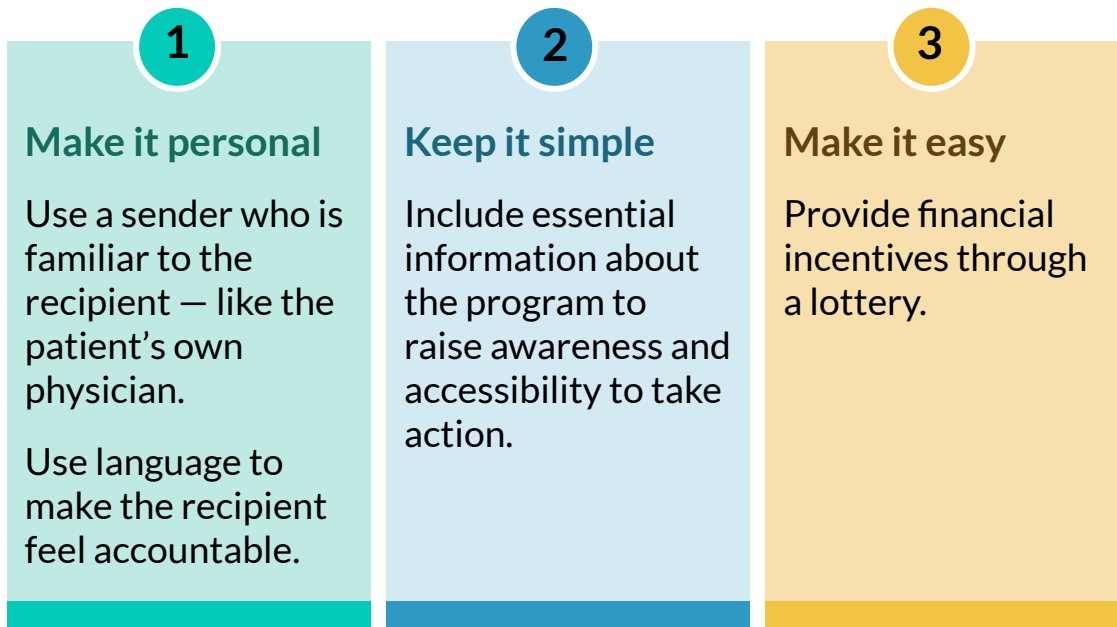
OES | GSA

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) in the Department of Health and Human Services, OES, and Inova Health Systems worked together to design and test interventions to increase the use of patient-generated health data. These interventions were specifically aimed at encouraging patients with diabetes to self-input blood glucose levels between visits to their providers, using electronic blood glucose flow sheets. This information can then be used by providers to monitor patients' glucose levels between visits with more frequency.

The evidence-based reminders were tested by assigning 2,182 patients with flow sheet orders to one of four groups based on the first letter of their last name: Basic, Provider Accountability, Gift Card, or a business-as-usual control group with no reminders. Reminders were sent out every two weeks for the 12 weeks following the initial flow sheet order period.

The message which focused on Provider Accountability increased the likelihood of a patient using the flow sheets. The Gift Card and Basic reminder groups did not yield statistically significant differences in flow sheet use compared to the no-reminder control group.

The reminders were designed with three principles in mind: *make it personal*, *keep it simple*, and *make it easy*. The way these principles were applied to the letters is described below:

1 Make it personal

Use a sender who is familiar to the recipient — like the patient's own physician.

Use language to make the recipient feel accountable.

2 Keep it simple

Include essential information about the program to raise awareness and accessibility to take action.

3 Make it easy

Provide financial incentives through a lottery.

For more information on this intervention or to start a conversation, **please contact** oes@gsa.gov.

The OES project page for this project can be accessed https://oes.gsa.gov/projects/patient-health-data-patient-reminders/.

Basic Message & Physician Accountability Message

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Basic Message

Dear [Patient],

Don't forget to track your blood glucose through MyChart!

Keeping track of your blood glucose can help you manage your diabetes and reduce your chances for developing complications like heart disease, kidney damage and eye damage.

Sincerely,

[Health System Name]

Include essential information with simple directions to raise awareness and action.

Physician Accountability

Dear [Patient],

Don't forget to track your blood glucose through MyChart! Viewing your results helps me to respond if they are out of range, and improve your diabetes treatment to help you stay healthy. We will talk about your results at your next office visit. Keeping track of your blood glucose can help you manage your diabetes and reduce your chances for developing complications like heart disease, kidney damage and eye damage.

Sincerely,

[Primary Care Physician]

Use language to make the recipient feel accountable.

Use a sender who is familiar to the recipient — like the patient's own physician.

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Gift Card

Dear [Patient],

You have been chosen for a special program to help you get started tracking your blood glucose through MyChart. For each day that you track your blood glucose on MyChart through August 2018, you will be entered to receive one of fifty $50 gift cards to Amazon.com. You'll be sent a secure message through MyChart in September 2018 if you've been selected to receive a gift card. Keeping track of your blood glucose can help you manage your diabetes and reduce your chances for developing complications like heart disease, kidney damage and eye damage.

Sincerely,

[Health System Name]

Provide financial incentives through a lottery.