

Mobile printer advances increase value for home healthcare

No question, mobile devices have transformed home health care delivery. Highly portable laptops, tablets and smartphones make it simple and convenient for nurses, therapists and other clinicians to document vital data, access patient records and check drug interactions – right in patient homes.

At the same time, advances in compact, lightweight mobile printers make it not only possible, but easy, to print critical documents at a patient's home. The ability to quickly print full-page 8½" x 11" hard copies and immediately hand them to patients and/or family members and caregivers during a home visit saves harried clinicians valuable time, boosts patient safety and ensures compliance with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) rules.



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Enable clinicians to comply with CMS mandates

For example, CMS mandates that hospice and home health care workers leave a detailed medication list at the patient's residence. Handwriting lists is both time-consuming and prone to error, given how difficult some handwritten materials can be to read coupled with the possibility that hurried clinicians may copy down information inaccurately. With a mobile printer, clinicians can easily print updated and personalized medication lists, along with helpful administration instructions and drug interaction data.

In addition to current CMS mandates, proposed Home Health Agency (HHA) rules call for home health providers to furnish patients with an individualized written plan of care. Proposed § 484.60(a)(1), the Plan of Care, states that all health services provided to patients would follow an individualized written plan of care. The plan of care would set out, among other things, the frequency and duration of therapeutic interventions. In accordance with proposed §484.50(c)(4)(iii), each patient would also have the right to receive a copy of his or her individualized HHA plan of care to be kept in the home.

These new mandates, when approved, will further solidify the need for home health providers to add convenient mobile printers to their field toolkit.

Enhance clinician productivity and quality of patient care

Mobile printers can save valuable time and speed proper treatment by enabling clinicians to print consent, waiver and refusal of service forms and get the required signatures on the spot. Clinicians can also print teaching guides, point of care treatment plans and patient master demographics. This ability to educate family and caregivers about patient conditions and convey complex information about patient care in what may be an emotionally charged situation can prove crucial to avoiding hospital readmissions and the resulting Medicare reimbursement penalties for providers.

High performance, low maintenance

Thermal mobile printers have no inks or toners to maintain or replace, making them reliable performers day after day even in extremely hot or freezing cold environments. The only consumable they require is thermal paper, which can be cut-sheet, fanfold or continuous roll, up to 8.5" wide. Obviously, long battery life is a must for clinicians on the go, while a variety of mounting and power options ensure the printers adapt to almost any vehicle as well.

Today's mobile printers – roughly the size and weight of a small box of spaghetti – fit easily in field bags, backpacks and large purses, making them ideal for clinicians constantly on the move. The current generation can print as fast as six pages per minute, with high resolution text, graphics and pictures. They connect directly and seamlessly to laptops, tablets or smartphones via USB Bluetooth or WiFi technology, and compatible models are available for iOS and Android operating systems.

As a result, mobile printers are proving a valuable addition to the mobile tools home health providers now have at their disposal to enhance the quality and efficiency of the care they deliver.

