

EM Physicians Replaced by Self-Service Kiosks

COLUMBUS, OH - In a recent move aimed at curbing health care costs and improving [patient satisfaction](#), Northland Hospital has installed self-service kiosks in their 30-bed emergency room (ER).

The kiosks replaced physicians, whom for years have been known by specialists to be glorified phone books. "Let's get real here, EM docs don't treat much. They just have to know who to refer a patient to and whether or not to admit," said Dr. Jeffery Warren, Chief Medical Officer of Northland Hospital. "Maybe an occasional trauma too, but usually only the first minute until help arrives."

"With medicine becoming more cookie-cutter with order sets and protocols, we decided to hire the kiosk company that is replacing fast-food workers around the country to make [algorithms](#) appropriate for healthcare."

With the new system, patients are roomed by a nurse and have vital signs taken. They will then push a button on the kiosk such as "back pain," "chest pain," "unresponsive," or whatever the chief complaint may be. From there, the computer will ask many of the same questions physicians do, but with 100% repeat-ability, free of bias and human error.

The computer then determines the best medication based on allergies and customer reviews and refers patients to the appropriate specialist or primary care provider for follow-up. Sick patients are even admitted to the hospital with the help of the computer. Automated voice software gives report to admitting hospitalists and surgicalists, saving them the hassle of dealing with other people.

"I love the new robocalls," commented general surgeon Dr. Tim Cushing. "The voice sounds like Siri on my [iPhone](#), and when I sigh or swear, I don't get push-back. She just keeps right on talking."

Patients love being able to have more control over their healthcare as well. With a kiosk in each room, there is no more waiting an hour for the doctor to come in just to leave as fast as possible. Patients can take their time inputting their information. Google is available on the computer with WebMD for patients to do

their research.

“It is nice,” one first-time kiosk user remarked. “But there are glitches. I am 49-years old, have COPD, CHF, CAD, high blood pressure, AAA, diabetes, stroke, 7 heart surgeries, and take 22 medications throughout the day. The kiosk keeps trying to discharge me to palliative care. Something is wrong with the machine.”

With America’s healthcare costs expected to rise once again in the next year, expect more hospitals to implement innovations to save money.