

Physician Referral & Telephone Triage TIMES

The National Publication for the Physician Referral,
Health Information and Telephone Nursing Professional

Vol. 10, No. 3

March 2010

iTriage From Healthagen Making Its Mark

LAKEWOOD, CO—In our September 2009 issue, we featured a story about Symptom MD, an iPhone application from Self Care Decisions, LLC (“iPhone and iTouch Users Can Now Access Symptom Checker”). This isn’t the only entry that guides users through a course of care.

One of the others getting involved in this emerging arena is Healthagen, a Lakewood, Colorado-based company that debuted iTriage this past March. It enters the fast growing world of applications for smart phones, a category of phone products that has increased in popularity by leaps and bounds in the last few years. “This is the way people will be getting information in the future,” says Peter Hudson, MD, CEO and Co-Founder.”

To support this notion, he says that smart phone users are way beyond the younger generation and are now well divided in all age groups from the younger generation to folks into their

60’s. He points to data from Nielsen Mobile that says 10 percent of smart phone users are 18-24 years old; 29 percent are 25-34; 25 percent, 35-44; 18 percent, 45-54; 13 percent, 55-64 and 5 percent, 65+.

A consumer can use their smart phone to download this application, which is free, and use it to evaluate their symptoms. Explanations are short so they can be displayed on the screen. There are also links to other online features that can assist the user in understanding their situation.

The symptom section includes a recommendation as to what level of care is needed for the situation at hand (emergency, urgent care or retail clinic). It can be one or more of these. For example, urinary tract infection has all three checked as appropriate care settings, while appendicitis has only emergency room checked. However, this isn’t the end of the service the company provides. The company also

has sections to help users understand diseases and procedures as well as select a provider.

For those who need care quickly, the “GPS tracker can tell people the closest hospital, urgent care center, or retail clinic and provide directions,” he says.

Within this application are several optional features. If the user wants to access a HealthGrades report on the hospital this information can be accessed for a fee, unless the hospital has signed up with HealthGrades to pay for the reports to be made available to anyone who wants them.

Then there’s the telephone triage angle. The company has struck a relationship with Teladoc (a company that uses physicians to directly communicate with patients about their



situation) for users to access this service if so desired. Also, for certain health plan users there is a link to the phone number for the telephone nurse advice line.

While iTriage is a free service to users, the company’s business model calls for revenue from hospitals, urgent care clinics and retail clinics, who all

purchase space on the application for promoting their own expertise. This can also include real time wait times in the ER, if available, he says. Additionally, there are relationships with health plans where the iTriage application is placed as a private label offering within the online doctor selection section.

In the first six months of it being available, there have been one million page views on mobile technology alone, he says, with added numbers from users who access the application through their desktop or laptop. During this time, more than 30,000 providers have been found through this process. ■