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AMA Launches Nation's First Comprehensive Web-Based Flu Health-Assessment Program for Patients and Physicians

Free flu Web site allows patients to assess symptoms quickly, interact with their physician, and receive advice on when to return to work or school

For immediate release

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CHICAGO — To help patients and physicians better communicate and improve care coordination, the American Medical Association (AMA) today unveils AMAfluhelp.org, the nation's first comprehensive Web-based patient flu health-assessment program. It walks patients through a series of questions to determine the severity of their flu symptoms based upon the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Patients can choose to share their information with their physician, as well as family members and loved ones. AMAfluhelp.org also provides a set of online tools to help physicians monitor their patients' symptoms, facilitate care and treatment decisions, and efficiently manage their practices' patient flow.

"With both seasonal flu and H1N1 circulating this year, physician offices are already busier than normal," said AMA Board Member [Mary Anne McCaffree, MD](#). "This resource allows patients to assess their symptoms and determine when to seek care for themselves or their loved ones. To prevent the spread of influenza, this site also helps determine when it is safe for those who have been sick to return to work or school."

AMAfluhelp.org can help patients assess their own flu symptoms, or those of a child or loved one, and offer guidance on whether they should seek care. There is also a choice for pregnant women to evaluate their need for a flu vaccination and for all patients to monitor any post-vaccine related symptoms. AMAfluhelp.org can also generate a doctor's note when it is safe to return to work or school.

"Our practice can't wait to see this great resource in action and have it at our disposal," said [James Campbell, MD](#), Denver West Pediatrics. "I have already admitted two H1N1 patients to the hospital and call volumes are reaching all time highs. I explained AMAfluhelp.org to our team and we are ready to get it up and running for our team and for our patients as soon as possible."

AMAfluhelp.org is the first application on a new AMA portal powered by HealthyCircles that supports quality of care initiatives designed to link patients, physicians and other caregivers together. As the AMA portal develops, the AMA will offer a number of applications in an environment that supports patient/physician communication, minimizes redundant testing and allows for continuous monitoring of patients with complex health conditions. The AMA is collaborating with HealthyCircles to offer these health sessions built upon its expertise in health care policy, quality, patient safety, science and public health. Personal information entered into the system is private and secured through Microsoft HealthVault®. No personal data can be accessed without consent from the user.

The AMA has collaborated with a broad-based coalition called under the Flu Information & Care System (FiCS) to promote the new Web site and subsequent others. Coalition members include: AllOne Health, BlueCross NEPA, CVS Caremark, EMSC, HealthyCircles, HERAE, Merck, MedImpact, Microsoft, Minute Clinic, Schumacher Group, Staywell/Krames, Team Health and WorldDoc.

"The mission of HealthyCircles is to bring health care into the internet age by providing

new web-based portals and tools for health care professionals, patients and their family caregivers to easily connect to each other and deliver or receive a new level of quality care" said James Mault, MD, FACS, chairman and CEO of HealthyCircles. "Our work with the AMA and the FiCS Coalition marks the official launch of the HealthyCircles Platform providing this first of its kind connected care solution set."

"We are hopeful that this new AMA tool will help reduce demands on our health care system," said Chris Lindley, director of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. "We will continue to support and share resources within Colorado which give our citizens the information they seek to make the appropriate health decisions from themselves and their loved ones, as it relates to flu."

While AMAfluhelp.org is a useful tool for those who aren't sure whether they have a cold or the flu, it does not take the place of a visit to the doctor's office if symptoms are severe. Anyone who exhibits severe symptoms, such as a very high fever or difficulty breathing should contact their physician immediately or seek urgent care. AMAfluhelp.org is a free resource for patients and physicians, but physicians may charge their patients a fee to provide online health monitoring services.

Visit and sign up at AMAfluhelp.org today. Follow AMAfluhelp.org updates on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

More AMA information on H1N1 can be found at www.AMAH1N1.org.

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About HealthyCircles

HealthyCircles aims to provide an interoperable platform for health care providers across the country to utilize in monitoring and providing care to patients. Similarly, the platform seeks to provide the necessary tools for patients and consumers to take responsibility for their health and be able to manage it. Overall, HealthyCircles strives to create a health platform that centralizes health information and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of health care in the United States.

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