

Medication MANAGEMENT

SUPPORTING PLAN MEMBERS' AND EMPLOYERS' BOTTOM LINES

ABOUT

Medication Management is an educational series that takes a closer look at maximizing plan sponsors' investment in drug benefits plans, which includes supporting plan members to be healthy while continuing to protect plan sponsors' bottom lines.

Specialty medications can significantly improve plan members' health, but they may also have a large impact on private drug plan budgets. As more of these medications become available for a wider variety of chronic conditions, the balance between appropriate access and appropriate coverage becomes more challenging. Through insurer case management and patient support programs, insurers and pharmaceutical manufacturers seek to maintain that balance while focusing on improving patient health outcomes.

This installment of *Medication Management* will help readers understand a new digital tool that can help to support plan members to manage the complexity of healthcare self-management, and to engage and empower them—as patients or as caregivers—to better manage their healthcare and improve their health outcomes.



Kristy Dickinson (left) developed the *Chronically Simple* mobile app and web-based platform for individuals with chronic diseases, like herself, to help make the experience easier and to help individuals engage more actively in their treatment plans.

Chronically Simple: Empowering plan members to better manage their healthcare to improve health outcomes

Introduction

It's well understood that individuals with chronic diseases benefit from being engaged and actively involved in their healthcare in terms of the potential for improved health outcomes and patient adherence.^{1,2,3} However, the ability of patients and their caregivers to be engaged is often impacted by the complexity of managing a chronic disease, including the co-ordination of multiple medications, healthcare professional appointments, test results, and expenses, to name a few. On top

of all this, patients often feel overwhelmed and vulnerable.

Kristy Dickinson was diagnosed with a chronic illness in 2013, after a seven-year journey to diagnosis, and faced the extreme challenge of managing and taking control of her own care. As a result of her journey, Kristy was determined to find a solution to make the experience easier and to eliminate the pain points for others so they can become more empowered and actively engaged in their treatment plans. Thus, *Chronically Simple* was born.

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 chronicallysimple

Empower patients and caregivers to manage the complexity of chronic disease

ABOUT

Chronically Simple

Chronically Simple is a digital tool designed to keep medical information at your fingertips, whether you're a patient living with a chronic illness or disability, or a caregiver.

Designed by patients and caregivers, for patients and caregivers.

This easy-to-use, shareable tool was designed specifically for patients to keep all their medical information in one place and to manage all aspects of their healthcare.

PATIENTS

Chronically Simple is designed to empower patients. It enables them to take control of their own healthcare as they seek to manage the daily administrative tasks of living with a chronic illness or disability.

CAREGIVERS

Chronically Simple provides caregivers with the platform to manage the healthcare of their loved ones who are enduring the challenges of living with a chronic illness or disability.

Having a chronic disease may result in a profound change to a person's health-related quality of life, including their ability to complete tasks of daily living, to work productively, and to manage their mental health. But, on top of that, they must navigate the Canadian healthcare system, much of which may be foreign to them, and attempt to champion their own care. Caregivers, too, can find themselves in an emotionally demanding situation, often with the need to take time off work to manage the complexity and continuity of care required.

Kristy's own experience with navigating the healthcare system during her path to a diagnosis and ultimate treatment for a rare chronic disease included meeting a variety of specialists, attending many appointments and making hospital visits across three different healthcare jurisdictions, undergoing numerous diagnostic tests, and taking a host of medications. Interaction with any new healthcare professional required her to communicate a complex history that doesn't reside on a common database and that isn't shared between specialties. At times, Kristy has been too ill to effectively communicate. "There are times when I'm not well enough to remember the questions I want to ask my doctor, or my latest symptoms, or the medication that didn't work in the past," she says. Only when Kristy started to assemble and carry all her health information and notes to every physician and hospital visit did she feel she was empowered and could be actively involved in her treatment plan.

Caregivers are equally challenged with the complexity of managing a chronic debilitating illness or disability on behalf of their loved ones as they navigate their own daily lives. The progression of her mother's Parkinson's disease necessitated Alisa Foster to take on the role of caregiver for her mother.

"Along with being a mother and having a full-time job, I was responsible for a lot of [my mother's] care, including managing and attending multiple appointments, reporting any changes in her symptoms and behaviour to her neurologist, recording the length of time her medication helped and lasted before wearing off, co-ordinating all of her medication and renewals, and making sure she took her medication, because she didn't always see the benefit of taking it," says Alisa. "I had to take time off work to provide the time, attention, and care she really needed."

Chronically Simple

Chronically Simple is a digital tool that was borne from the need to make the patient experience easier and less stressful, and to empower individuals to take control of their healthcare and to be fully engaged in their care plans. To facilitate these needs, Kristy developed the *Chronically Simple* mobile app and web-based platform to store health information, appointments, medication usage and reminders, notes, and more in the easy-to-use format, providing a holistic view of a patient's health and health records.

Chronically Simple was developed by a patient, for patients, and all features of the app were developed from the input of patients and caregivers along their journeys. While other healthcare apps exist and can complement the *Chronically Simple* app, Kristy felt they weren't comprehensive, and no one app met all the needs of a person with a chronic disease or disability and the need for self-management, including privacy of a person's data. According to Kristy, "Patient privacy is protected with *Chronically Simple*. That way, people will be more honest about what they report and will have a more full-some view of their own information."

Chronically Simple for Payers and Plan Sponsors

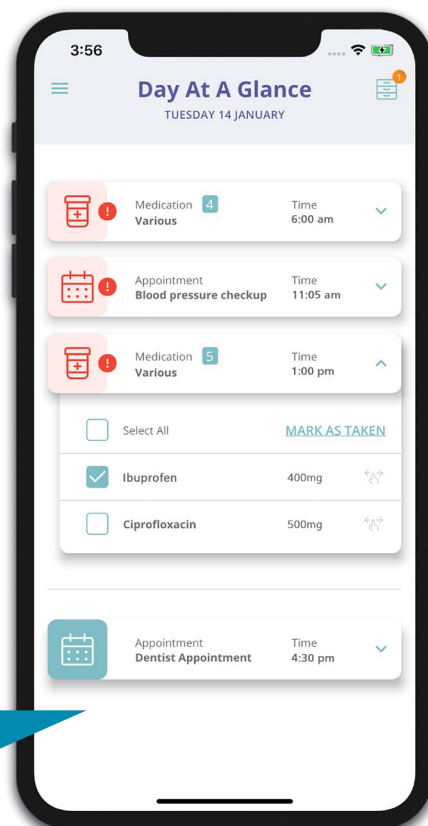
According to the Health Council of Canada report on self-management support for Canadians with chronic health conditions, "Patients feel better and use healthcare services differently when they have the information, skills, and confidence to manage the physical and emotional impacts of their diseases."⁴ *Chronically Simple* can be an important addition for payers and plan sponsors to support patient engagement and the chronic disease self-management of their clients and employees, either alone or as part of an insurer case management program, or to support engagement of currently healthy members. Proactively encouraging increased participation in healthcare and planning of patients' treatment, and more effective management of their health information and health records, could result in better patient outcomes and more productive plan members, both of which help to improve the cost-effectiveness of the plan for employers.

Additionally, *Chronically Simple* provides the ability to view and analyze trends

relating to patient adherence, symptoms, and overall wellness to help demonstrate if treatment plans are working or, conversely, if changes to treatments or medications are needed. Insights can be shared with payers as aggregate data, and the individual's privacy is protected: plan members can always be confident in the integrity of their data, and that their data won't be shared.

Supporting plan members with tools to manage the complexity of healthcare self-management can be an important step for insurers and plan sponsors to engage and empower plan members, as patients or as caregivers, to better manage their healthcare and to improve their health outcomes.

Subscribe to *Chronically Simple* services online at ChronicallySimple.com or download the application through the App Store or Google Play.



Features of Chronically Simple

DAY AT A GLANCE

- Shows what's in store for the patient (each day) on one screen, including medications to take and appointments to attend.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Stores all healthcare providers' details and associates them with appointments, prescriptions, and medical records.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTS

- Keeps all medical records, diagnostic images, and test results in one secure place.
- Enables a patient to take past results to new appointments to ensure continuity of care.

APPOINTMENT & MEDICATION REMINDERS

- Sends timely appointment and medication reminders. Medication reminders include a feature to indicate when the medication is taken; if ignored, it will prompt the patient's caregiver(s) that the dose wasn't taken.

- Records pre- and post-appointment notes to have efficient appointments and records reminders for subsequent appointments.

EXPENSES

- Maintains medical-related expenses, making doing taxes much less stressful.

MEDICATION TRACKER

- Stores all current and previous medications used.
- Sends reminders when it's time for a refill, ensuring the patient never runs out of medication.

SYMPTOM TRACKER

- Patients can see how far they've come when adhering to treatment (e.g., tracks seizures, pain, mood, nausea, falls, blood sugar levels).
- Sends subtle adherence reinforcement messages to patient (e.g., "Three months ago your pain was an 8; now it's a 2. Congratulations!").

REFERENCES

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