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An open book

Dr Brian Morris' DoctorDirect.com

by DAVID ELKINS • June 2014

Montrealer Brian Morris is a urologist with a mission. He wants to put your appointment schedule online. [**DoctorDirect.com**](http://www.doctordirect.com/) and the software he developed do just that.

It’s an idea he first toyed with six years ago. “You can book an airline ticket, a hotel or a restaurant online, I saw no reason why a patient couldn’t book an appointment with a doctor in the same way.”

His motivation? Better access to medical care. By providing the appointment schedules of a large number of physicians online, patients are better able to find the doctor and time slot they need.

The best way to get a sense of how DD works is to have a look. The site is divided into two sections: one for patients and one for professionals. Videos guide you through.

In a nutshell, once you sign up, patients can make appointments with you and other doctors by entering a physician’s name or using a dropdown menu to select a specialty. A single click brings up a profile, a photo, even a map. Request an appointment, and suggested dates and times appear. Most DD doctors have a system that sends them an e-mail reminder 48 hours before each appointment. Patients can get a reminder too via a phone call. They love the convenience and some wonder why every practice doesn’t offer the service.

The benefits to you can be substantial. Physician users report an increase in patient visits. Some specialists report a boost of 25 percent, an 80 percent reduction in no-shows and lower admin costs (39 percent).

The cost of joining DD is $125 a year. An e-mail reminder is $0.10; a phone call to a patient $0.15; $0.20 for both. There’s a one-time programming fee of $75 for the reminders, which are important part of reducing no-shows.

Billing is sent to the health system almost automatically, with only a few clerical tasks necessary.

DoctorDirect.com is a stand-alone program; you don’t need to have an EMR system to use it. Doctors are enthusiastic.

“We have encouraged all patients to use this very user-friendly appointment tool and the feedback has been highly favourable,” writes Brian Gore of the Ste. Catherine Medical Group in Westmount, QC. “Our previous web-based software was no match for DoctorDirect.”

The Quebec-based DD isn’t the only online appointment system out there, but its big advantage is that it was developed by a Canadian physician with our unique health care system in mind.

*This article was accurate when it was published. Please confirm rates and details directly with the companies in question.*