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Providing citizen-centered health care

The Palestinian Ministry of Health is using a USAID-funded health information system to provide quicker, personalized health care to its citizens.



Photo: Bassam AlMohor/Chemonics International

The new e-health system has a big impact on our lives.

— Medhat Ishtayeh, diabetic patient

Over the past year, 38-year old Medhat Ishtayeh has seen many big changes at his local government clinic, after it began using a USAID-funded e-health system to manage patient care information.

“The first thing I noticed was that I have my turn reserved and nobody can jump in front of me,” said Medhat Ishtayeh, a Palestinian teacher and diabetic.

Medhat’s local clinic is one of 13 clinics and hospitals in the West Bank linked through the automated system, as part of a national roll-out by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Over half a million citizens now have individual patient records stored on the new health information system.

Each patient’s full medical history is available at the click of a mouse, eliminating the need for paper records and creating a more efficient means to access vital information. “The system recognizes me with only my ID card number,” said Medhat, “so if I forget my ID, there is no need to go back home.”

Medhat receives care more quickly now that his medical details are accessible through the system. Medical staff can instantly access a patient’s medical history, removing the need to search through often illegible paper files. “The doctor doesn’t need to leaf through my old paper report and waste time asking me about my medical history,” explained Medhat.

Patients requiring additional care can be referred through the system, which transmits the patient’s records, including prescriptions and lab results, directly to the next physician to examine the patient. “I feel that my file goes wherever I go,” said Medhat. “If I need to visit the doctor in another town, I don’t need to carry all the papers from here or explain to the doctor what’s wrong with me.”

Clinic staff describe the automated system as a technological break-through. Medhat agrees, “It is very helpful. The new health information system has a big impact on our lives.”

Telling Our Story

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