



## Sharp Healthcare Patient Portal

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## **Patient Portal User Adoption Rate: 23,000 Registered Users in Only 4 Months**

Sharp Healthcare is a 2007 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient and one of Southern California's most comprehensive healthcare delivery system. The Sharp Healthcare umbrella consists of four acute-care hospitals, three specialty hospitals and two affiliated medical groups. As part of a continuing effort to transform the healthcare experience for patients, Sharp Healthcare developed a state of the art patient web portal called mySharp. The mySharp portal gives patients the ability to access and manage their health record information via the internet. Patients are able to schedule appointments, pay their bill, send secure email messages to their Physician's office, track their medical record, view lab results, and refill prescriptions.

The strategy behind the development and implementation of the mySharp portal was based on several key factors. The first was to continue the tradition of providing patients with world class healthcare using innovative and cutting edge technologies. Second, the goal was to empower and encourage patients to monitor their personal health information through the mySharp patient portal adding another layer of accountability. As a result, Sharp Healthcare experienced a vast reduction in administrative costs, due to a decreased volume in onsite visits and phone calls. This benefit was due to the self service model of the mySharp portal. Sharp Healthcare's new patient portal user adoption rate sky rocketed to 23,000 registered users in the timeframe of 4 months. This is equivalent to an unprecedented 14% user adoption rate. Once registered, patients visited the mySharp portal over a quarter of a million times checking on appointments, test results and prescriptions during the same 4 month period. Current user adoption rates are up to 42,000 through the end of 2010.

The implementation of the mySharp patient portal was not without its challenges. Sharp Healthcare needed to find a way to offer patients secure HIPAA-compliant access to the mySharp patient portal. In order to do this Sharp Healthcare needed to solve three major challenges:

- The ability to accurately verify that the person who presented their credentials during the mySharp patient portal registration process was in fact the real "John Smith", who was born in Virginia and currently resides in San Diego, CA, for example.
- The ability to securely verify patients and register them online. Without this ability, Sharp Healthcare would have to place the additional burden on their administrative staff to register patients in person.
- The ability to authenticate patient identities whenever they log in to the mySharp patient portal.

Traditional first (or single factor methods) were not an option due to the sensitive nature of the medical information housed within the mySharp patient portal. Sharp Healthcare technologists began searching for a strong authentication solution — one which would have the ability to progressively identify and authenticate users based on the changing needs of their organization as well as the industry as a whole.

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Sharp Healthcare selected Anakam Identity Services solutions to deliver a tokenless integrated identity proofing and two-factor authentication solution. “At Sharp we are always striving to provide our patient community the best healthcare service and information. The Sharp portal will allow our patients to access their information and perform key healthcare functions anytime and anywhere. Because the nature of the information is sensitive, Sharp strives to assure our patients that their information is secure on the portal. With Anakam solutions, we are able to provide that level of trust while complying with key federal requirements like HIPAA,” stated Ken Szymanski, Sharp Healthcare Vice President of Business Systems.

Sharp clearly recognized the value of building a Patient Portal both for its constituents for better healthcare delivery and for its own internal process efficiencies. Despite the value derived from improved service and lower costs, there were significant consequences if an unauthorized access to online, namely, a data breach occurs- sensitive information exposed, patient safety, privacy and confidentiality compromised, and, medical fraud be potentially realized. Not only would it impact the patient significantly from the aspect of privacy, confidentiality and perspective of safety but such an occurrence potentially also undermines the environment of trust established by Sharp with its clinician and patient constituency. Sharp and its clinician constituency potentially would have to contend with significant levels of indemnification (punitive and direct costs) under HIPAA regulations. In addition, breach events would have potentially dire consequences on Sharp’s ability to reach the patient through these innovative initiatives that “turn on” additional healthcare functionality online.

Sharp Healthcare launched Anakam’s progressive authentication solution seamlessly using the existing mySharp patient portal login screens. This solution gave Sharp Healthcare the flexibility to match convenience with security while complying with State, Federal and HIPAA requirements. According to Anakam’s Chief Medical Officer, William R. “Bill” Braithwaite, MD, PhD, “Anakam solutions help healthcare institutions improve their service delivery and prevent medical identity theft and fraud. This is accomplished by enabling secure remote access to confidential health information in a cost-effective and scalable manner, without disrupting patient and provider workflow.”

Sharp Healthcare has joined the growing list of healthcare and Fortune 500 organizations which rely on Anakam Identity Services solutions to help protect their organizations from fraudulent users by using state-of-the-art identity proofing and multifactor authentication solutions.