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SCCM's Patient Communicator App Empowers Patients and Families During Care and Recovery

January 15, 2019: Mt. Prospect, Ill. – The Society of Critical Care Medicine, a nonprofit medical organization dedicated to improving care for the critically ill and injured, has released the Patient Communicator App. This new tool will help patients, families, and clinicians better communicate and track progress throughout a hospital stay and throughout recovery. Patients and families are increasingly considered vital members of the care team, and the Patient Communicator App aims to help them more actively participate. The app includes a diary, translation features, educational resources, and more.

The Patient Communicator App's premiere function is its diary feature. Research has shown that when patients and/or families keep a diary during a hospital stay and recovery, it can help provide clarity for patients who struggle to come to terms with their critical care experience and subsequent recovery and increase patient and family satisfaction.^{1,2} The app's diary function prompts the user to record feelings and daily activities and track key information, such as goals, challenges, and updates for loved ones. Keeping a diary can help a patient fill in memory gaps and help set realistic goals. This resource can also relieve some symptoms of post-intensive care syndrome (PICS), including feelings of confusion, depression, nightmares, memory loss, and anxiety.

The app also eases communication between caregivers by offering free text translation in 18 languages—English, Spanish, Mandarin, Dutch, Hindi, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Czech, Polish, Turkish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Arabic, German, and Japanese. These communication tools alleviate language barriers between those involved in the patient's care, from family members to hospital clinicians to long-term caregivers. In addition, the app features 30 translatable phrases to easily communicate issues such as pain, needs, and feelings, without having to type. They are especially useful during an intensive care unit (ICU) stay, when a patient may not be verbal. Mechanical ventilation, hearing and speech limitations, language barriers, and other hurdles may stand in the way of providing optimal patient-centered care.

Finally, the app offers resources to educate patients and families about the basics of care. The booklet "Understanding Your ICU Stay: Information for Patients and Families" is offered for free download. This booklet covers 13 topics in plain language from life support options to machines commonly used in the ICU. A glossary explains common terms, and a link to SCCM's PICS support group is included.

The Patient Communication App is available for free download in the Apple Store or Google Play. For more information, visit sccm.org/PatientCommunicator. During SCCM's 48th Critical Care Congress in February 2019, the Tech Lab in Room 27 of the San Diego Convention Center will feature demonstrations of the Patient Communicator App daily and upon request.

About the Society of Critical Care Medicine

The Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM) is the largest nonprofit medical organization dedicated to promoting excellence and consistency in the practice of critical care. With members in more than 100 countries, SCCM is the only organization that represents all professional components of the critical care team. The Society offers a variety of activities that ensure excellence in patient care, education, research, and advocacy. SCCM's mission is to secure the highest quality of care for all critically ill and injured patients. Visit www.sccm.org for more information. Follow [@SCCM](#) or visit us on [Facebook](#).

Supporting Research

1. Pattison N, O'Gara G, Lucas C, Gull K, Thomas K, Dolan S. [Filling the gaps: A mixed-methods study exploring the use of patient diaries in the critical care unit.](#) *Intensive Crit Care Nurs.* 2018 Dec 18. [Epub ahead of print].
2. Herrup EA, Wiczorek B, Kudchadkar SR. [Feasibility and perceptions of PICU diaries.](#) [Epub ahead of print]. *Pediatr Crit Care Med.* 2018 Nov 16.

More Information

For more information about the SCCM Patient Communicator App, visit sccm.org/PatientCommunicator.

For more information about the Society of Critical Care Medicine's 48th Critical Care Congress, visit sccm.org/Congress.

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