



# Effective Health Care

## Effectiveness of Physician Outreach via Email and Internet Networking on Patient Outcomes and Treatment Adherence Nomination Summary Document

### Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Effectiveness of physician outreach via email and internet networking is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available at this time; however, it could be considered for future research within the Effective Health Care Program.
- If this topic is developed into an EHC Program product, information on this project will be posted on the AHRQ Web site. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care Program topics are posted, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

### Topic Description

<b>Nominator:</b>	Anonymous individual
<b>Nomination Summary:</b>	The nominator questions how doctor outreach, education, and support delivered via internet communication methods (including email and social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter) compares to traditional care methods that do not involve internet communication in non-emergency situations.
<b>Key Questions from Nominator:</b>	1. Compared to traditional care approaches, how does doctor outreach, education, and support via internet networking technologies (such as Facebook, Twitter, and email) affect outcomes such as adherence to treatment program, symptom alleviation, and doctor and patient satisfaction for patients with rare diseases, or from rural communities, or those who are generally healthy and technologically savvy, or those with generally well-controlled chronic conditions?

### Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- This nomination specifically addresses the interventions of email and social networking to aid in communication between patients and providers as an adjunct to usual care. Some health care providers, such as large Health Maintenance Organizations and insurance groups as well as individual providers, have begun to offer access to web messaging through patient portals. The proliferation of

this technology has been limited to date; however, these tools are becoming more common in the health care industry. Despite the barriers and limitations of the medium, many insurers are moving towards reimbursing online consultations.

- There is very limited literature that addresses the impact of web messaging and email between patients and providers. However, due to the importance and emerging nature of this topic, it could be considered for future research within the EHC Program.