

Searching symptoms online could be thing of the past



JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

Epic Systems Corp.'s upcoming developments include further integrating artificial intelligence into the patient experience and saving clinicians time from doing tedious tasks. In the exam room, that'll mean AI will do more than just listen in and transcribe; it'll make suggestions on diagnoses and medications, and check insurance authorizations in real time.

Epic wants to give personalized response in MyChart

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Epic Systems Corp. would like you to stop WebMD-ing your symptoms and sending yourself down a psychosomatic rabbit hole.

Instead, in the coming years, it wants you to turn to its MyChart virtual assistant, Emmie, who can answer questions about how to eat better or how to handle medication side effects — while simultaneously scraping your medical record — to give you a personalized response.

Epic's virtual assistant will also remind patients they're due for a physical or new tests, based on existing conditions. During pre-visit online check-ins, Emmie will ask patients if there's anything else they want to talk to doctors about, preempting that, "Oh, doc, one more thing" at the end of a visit.

And no more running to Google to understand your latest test results. Emmie will break it down for you with context from your previous test results and other information from your medical record.

It's just a taste of how the Verona-based medical records giant plans to vastly reshape the patient and clinician experience

both inside and out of the exam room through artificial intelligence by eliminating much of the guesswork.

Epic leaders on Tuesday announced those and dozens of other new software updates, scheduled for release between now and May 2027, during their annual User Group Meeting, a convergence of approximately 7,200 hospital administrators and staff who use Epic software. Thousands more, including Epic staff, watched online.

Already, Epic has at least 160 projects underway to further integrate artificial intelligence into every aspect of health care.

Founder Judy Faulkner, donning a bright lavender wig, an astronaut-style suit and lime green tennis shoes to match the conference's sci-fi theme, likened the company's advancements in artificial intelligence to novels where the technology seemed impossible until it wasn't.

"We at Epic continually think about the future. And so much of sci-fi comes true. What sci-fi dreamt up for the last couple hundred years is now reality," Faulkner said. "You've got X-rays, CAT scans, MRIs, DNA sequencing, blood transfusions, organ transplants, meds for medical

problems that used to be fatal."

Since ChatGPT launched nearly three years ago, Epic has been focused on integrating AI technology into MyChart and other platforms used by clinicians. It's been largely the focus of the two prior years' conferences and software releases. But machine learning has long been a part of Epic software prior to the rise of generative AI.

Digital assistance

For clinicians, the company's virtual assistant, Art, will go from a passive notetaker in exam rooms — a revolutionary software development just two years ago — to a digital assistant. As it listens, it'll search Cosmos, Epic's vast patient record network of more than 300 million de-identified records, to suggest a potential diagnosis, recommend medications and get prior authorizations for medications and treatments — all in real time.

Doctors will be able to ask the chatbot questions about patients, such as when they started taking a medication, or why, according to their records, one didn't

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Fed Chair Powell to give last Jackson Hole speech

Wall Street, White House watchful as concerns over jobs, inflation raise stakes

CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just three weeks ago, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell spoke to reporters after the central bank kept its key interest rate unchanged for a fifth straight meeting and said the job market was "solid."

His assessment was important because if the job market is healthy, there is less need for the Fed to cut its key interest rate,

as President Donald Trump demands. Two days later, the Labor Department issued a report that cast doubt on that assessment, showing hiring was weak in July and much lower than previously estimated in May and June.

So there will be a lot of attention paid by Wall Street and the White House to Powell's high-profile speech Friday at the Fed's annual economic symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. If the famously data-dependent Powell shifts gears and takes a gloomier view of the job market, that could open the door for a rate cut at the Fed's next meeting in September.

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Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell speaks July 30 during a news conference following the Federal Open Market Committee meeting in Washington.