

## INSIDE TODAY

A Web-based Norman service could bring to an end long medical delays. Randall Turk has the story.

IN BUSINESS



# Hurry up and wait:

## New Norman service could end medical delays

By Randall Turk  
Transcript Business Editor

### On the Net

[www.onlinemedsource.org](http://www.onlinemedsource.org)

Health care professionals may be at odds about some issues, but on one topic they agree: The waiting room is an obstacle course.

Patients are inconvenienced by long delays in the waiting room before seeing a physician or other practitioner. Often the bottleneck is worsened by the necessity of filling out forms, checking on insurance, locating records, incoming phone calls and other front office details. Two Norman women believe they have the solution.

Agi Lurtz and Mary Stephens have introduced a Web-based medical service, [www.onlinemedsource.org](http://www.onlinemedsource.org), that could empty waiting rooms much faster and give patients better access to health care. The new service enables patients to complete forms, find answers to basic questions, get free access to medical resources, and even view videos of actual procedures before seeing a doctor or dentist. Eventually, [onlinemedsource.org](http://onlinemedsource.org) could benefit patients and providers nation-

wide, its organizers say.

"We're working with doctors, hospitals and surgery centers in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas," Lurtz said. "We're looking for qualified sales reps throughout the country to help us sell this service. Everybody stands to benefit."

Lurtz, who has owned Compute This!, a computer hardware and software business in Norman since 1981, said personal experience in waiting rooms led her search for a better way to handle administrative details for patients.

She was sole medical caregiver for her elderly father, who died of a long illness several years ago. "During his last few years, it was the same routine for every physician's office we visited," she said.

"I drove my father to each appointment with his medications and vitamins in tow. We would sit while I completed his health history form. Our wait would generally be upwards of an hour or more for new visits,

and at least 30 to 45 minutes on reoccurring visits. My father, who was in his 80s, had neither the patience nor the stamina to handle the wait very well. During those many hours of wait time, I felt there had to be a better way, some way to integrate technology with compassion."

Lurtz and longtime friend Mary Stephens, who has 25 years' experience as a medical office manager began to develop [onlinemedsource.org](http://onlinemedsource.org) in 2001. They have spent the past three years streamlining and testing the concept. "It's a medical service available to anyone with Internet access," Lurtz said.

[Onlinemedsource.org](http://Onlinemedsource.org) provides access to free medical resources, including a directory of physicians and other health care providers; a dictionary of medical terminology; information about drug interaction; and even help in finding free or reduced cost medications.

For each care provider joining the system, Lurtz and Stephens design a Web site, purchase a domain name and input information like medical forms, biographies and photos



Transcript Photo by Kevin Ellis

Agi Lurtz, left, and Mary Stephens, here in their offices at Robinson Crossing Shopping Center, say their new nationwide service will benefit doctors, patients and anybody else involved in healthcare.

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## Service: Online program benefits everyone in health care

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of doctors and their staffs. A doctor subscribing to the service pays \$1,495 for the first year and \$695 annually for subsequent years.

Patients can log on at home to receive all paperwork in advance and fill out all the forms before showing up for an appointment," Lurtz said. This reduces wait time not only for patients, but for doctors, as well. "Doctors say

the service pays for itself in two or three months."

She said patients accessing a doctor's Web site can send their completed forms with the assurance their information is confidential and secure. Once the forms are received, they are encrypted and sent to the designated doctor, hospital or surgery center. Only the recipient has the encryption key needed to read the medical forms.

Patients also can receive doctors' pre- and post-operation instructions, lab results, admission and release forms, and even appointment reminders.

Lurtz said the online service results in better patient compliance with advice from their doctors. "When you're in the examination room, naked, you don't hear or remember 60 percent of what the doctor tells you," she said.

Doctors and other care providers

also stand to benefit substantially from the new service. "Doctors tell me it helps them see more patients," Lurtz said. "And pays for itself in two or three months."

Were there unanswered questions in this article? Are there other articles you would like to see in the Business Section? Contact Business Editor Randall Turk at 360-3547 or e-mail: [rturk@normantranscript.com](mailto:rturk@normantranscript.com).