

# THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2008 • "Were the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" II COR. 3:17 • 75 CENTS • CITY FINAL

## MyMedSchedule latest online service from local health providers

MyMedSchedule, which helps patients track their medical dosages, is latest of online services from local health providers

By Shari Rudavsky

Organ-transplant patients often have to take multiple drugs to prevent their bodies from rejecting the new organ.

An online medicine-tracking service, MyMedSchedule, once offered only to hospitals, is now available to anyone, and it likely has prevented Lynn and Dave Livingston from making medication mistakes.

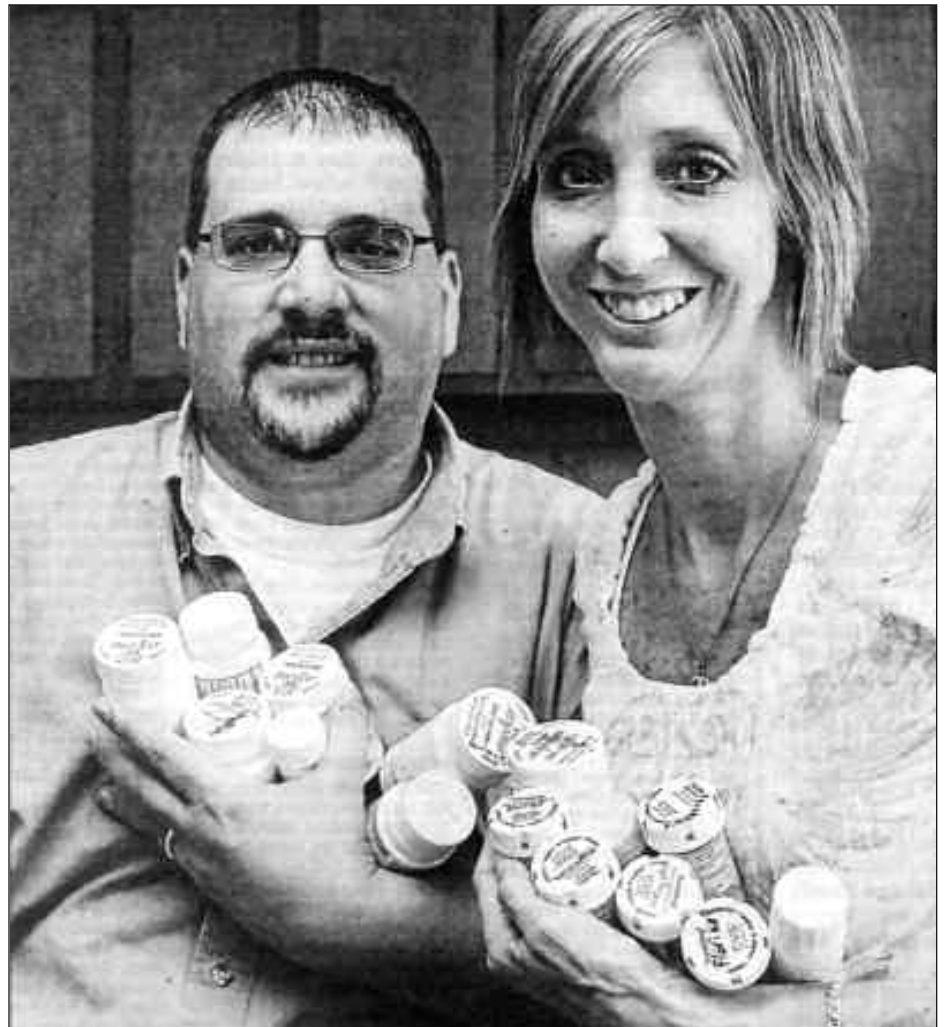
Lynn had a liver transplant at Indiana University Hospital in May. Since then, Dave has relied on the MyMedSchedule Web site to sort out her weekly dosages of medicines.

The Plainfield woman is on 13 different drugs and takes about three dozen pills a day.

"The mistakes part -- I can see that happening very easily," Dave said.

The service is among several computerized efforts being used by hospitals in the competitive Indianapolis market and elsewhere to help patients keep track of their health care.

Community Health Network, for example, recently launched a secure online personal health record for patients to maintain and access their own health information, such as information about allergies, doctors they're seeing and medications they're taking.



**JUGGLING ACT:** A Web site called MyMedSchedule.com helps Plainfield resident Dave Livingston sort out daily pill dosages for his wife, Lynn, after her liver transplant in May. She takes 13 medications.

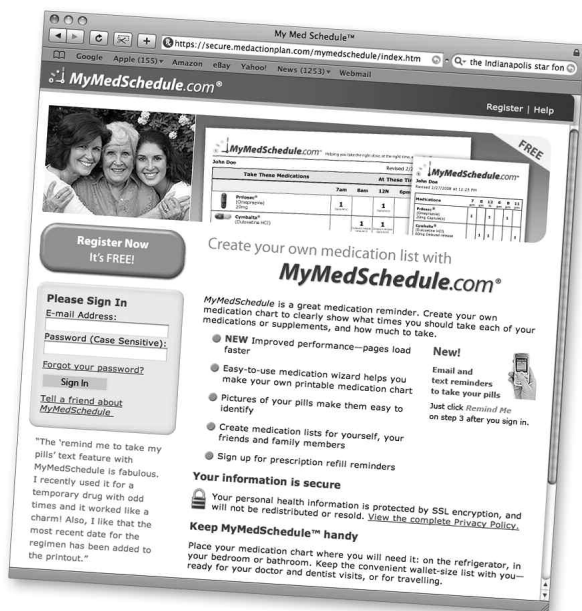
They also can use Web-enabled cell phones to order prescription refills or get directions to a doctor's office.

Since Clarian began using the MyMedSchedule program four years ago, it has helped more than 2,000

organ-transplant patients, said Mary Jo Burton, clinical manager on the organ-transplant service at IU Hospital.

"The system is beautiful," Burton said. "It's more convenient and a whole lot faster for the nursing staff."

Story continues on other side



Health Sciences at Purdue University.

"Compliance is a major problem," Svensson said. "Any tool that can help people remember how and when to take their medications is a good thing."

Online systems, however, may fall short when a person cannot remember if he or she took their dose, he added.

Purdue pharmacists currently are studying another medication reminder tool: DailyMed. For a monthly fee, DailyMed

provides a pill dispenser that dispenses medication in individual plastic packets. The packets are marked with a time and date to ensure patients take them only at the appropriate hour.

MyMedSchedule is an outgrowth of MedActionPlan, a free online service developed in 2001 to help hospitals manage patient treatment plans. It's geared toward patients with serious illnesses, such as HIV or heart failure. Pharmaceutical company grants allow MedActionPlan, part of a for-profit company based in Peapack, N.J., to offer the service free.

"Particularly for a chronic or serious illness, it's important for patients to understand what they need to take and important for them to take it," said Donna Brooten, director of client relations for MedActionPlan. "The best way for them to get healthy is to avoid medication errors."

Nurses used to simply write out patient medication lists by hand, Burton said. Now, they can go online, update the list, and print it out for the patient to take home. If the patient has left his or her list at home, nurses at IU Hospital, or for that matter in any doctor's office, can go online and access the list there.

Caregiver Donna Hargett has used MyMedSchedule since February, when her husband Jimmie had a liver transplant at IU Hospital. Now the Hargetts keep a copy of his list on their refrigerator.

She finds particularly reassuring a feature that includes a picture of the pill that Jimmie needs to take along with the exact time he should take it.

"You have a double safety net there, so you couldn't mess up," said the Greencastle woman.

The program, which allows users to go online to create a customized list complete with photos of each medicine, will send e-mail or text reminders when it's time to pop a pill.

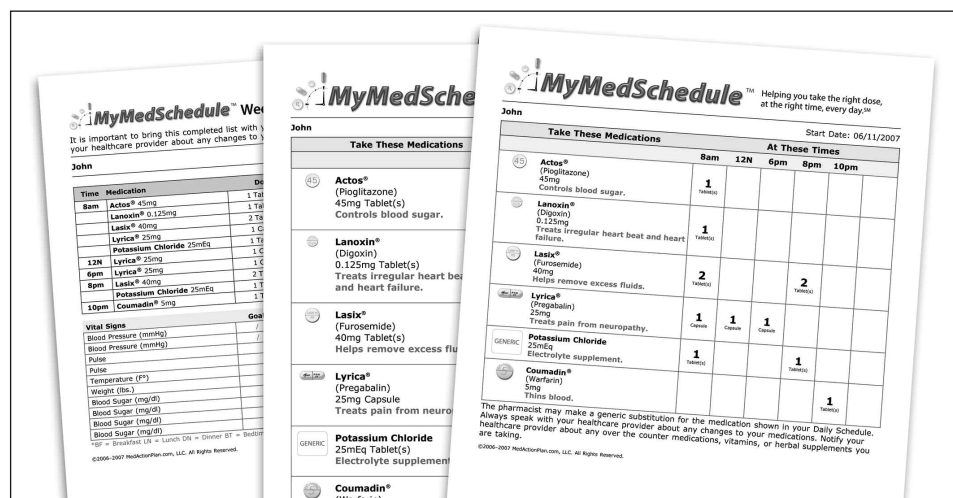
The e-mails also make sure the Livingstons keep up on mail-order refills.

The medicines combined with her new liver have given Lynn Livingston, 43, her life back.

"I feel like I'm 23," said the mother of two daughters, who suffered from a chronic liver disease known as primary sclerosing cholangitis that necessitated the transplant. "I don't remember having this much energy ever."

Other entities, such as the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, also offer free online tools for medicine management. (For their system, visit [www.safemedication.com](http://www.safemedication.com).)

About half or more of all patients do not take their medicines as prescribed. About 11 percent of all hospital admissions and 23 percent of nursing homes admissions are associated with patients failing to comply with drug regimens, said Craig D. Svensson, dean of the College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and



Print and save your own medication list! [www.MyMedSchedule.com](http://www.MyMedSchedule.com)

