The Page Is the Rage

Electronic busybody for chronic busy bodies

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How best to remind forgetful clients that it's time to pop a pill? Beep 'em. One hundred participants at Los Angeles' AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) were recently provided with pagers as part of a trial program developed by prez Michael Weinstein. "We send out a morning message reminding clients to take their meds, another at midday, and one at 8 pm," he said. "Our clinic staff also page people to remind them about doctors' appointments and follow-up visits."

The trial group includes hard-to-reach homeless clients and those who have chronic problems with nonadherence. Pager pluses include a low $60-a-year operating cost and -- for those who are phoneless -- a sense that somebody out there cares. "When you compare the $60 price tag to the cost of medicine for people who are nonadherent, it's a bargain," Weinstein said. There is no fee for participants, who can also use the pager for personal calls. If the beepers create a buzz, AHF plans to document results for wider use.

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