

parties (referred to as members in data segment 210 shown in FIG. 9) interested in receiving data regarding that particular patient.

If there is another destination, the program branches to step 396 where the system address for the destination is retrieved from the system addresses table 166 (which cross references each member identification number with its corresponding system address). At step 398, if the data collector 38 or 58 is located at the metropolitan area data system 14, the program branches to steps 402–404, where it writes a queue record for each destination to which the data record needs to be sent. Each queue record written at step 404 contains the contents of the inbound data record and the system address for one of the intended destinations. The queue records are stored locally in memory, and as described below, the data transporters 36, 56 cause the data records specified by the queue records to be transmitted to their intended destinations.

If the data collector 38 or 58 is not located at the metropolitan area data system 14 as determined at step 398, the program branches to step 400, where it writes and locally stores a queue record containing the contents of the inbound data record and the system address for the metropolitan area data system 14 to which the patient is assigned.

FIG. 18 is a flowchart of a computer program performed by each of the data transporters 36, 56 shown in FIGS. 2 and 3. The data transporters 36, 56 transmit data records to various locations within the system based on the queue records described above in connection with FIG. 17. Referring to FIG. 18, if there is another stored queue record as determined at step 410, the program branches to step 412, where a data record corresponding to the queue record is generated. At step 414, the data record is transmitted to the system address set forth in the queue record, and at step 416 the queue record is deleted from memory.

Numerous modifications and alternative embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art in view of the foregoing description. This description is to be construed as illustrative only, and is for the purpose of teaching those skilled in the art the best mode of carrying out the invention. The details of the structure and method may be varied substantially without departing from the spirit of the invention, and the exclusive use of all modifications which come within the scope of the appended claims is reserved.

What is claimed is:

1. An outpatient care data system, comprising:

- a data storage system located at a hospital and which stores outpatient data in the form of a plurality of medical records for a plurality of outpatients associated with said outpatient care data system, said medical records including, for each outpatient, an identification of the outpatient and data relating to the medical history of the outpatient;
- a data receiver coupled to said data storage system, said data receiver being adapted to receive outpatient data from a first outpatient system situated at a first location remote from said hospital and being adapted to receive outpatient data from a second outpatient system situated at a second location remote from said hospital; and
- a monitor for checking outpatient data stored in said data storage system and generating messages relating to said outpatients, said monitor being programmed to determine whether a deliverable medical device was delivered to an outpatient home in accordance with a scheduled delivery time and to generate a message relating to whether said deliverable medical device was delivered in accordance with said scheduled delivery time.

2. A system as defined in claim 1 additionally comprising a data transmitter coupled to said data storage system, said data transmitter being adapted to transmit data from said medical records to a plurality of interactive computer terminals disposed at different terminal locations on a real-time basis.

3. A system as defined in claim 1 additionally comprising:

a first outpatient system operatively coupled to said data storage system on a real-time basis, said first outpatient system being situated at a first location remote from said hospital, said first remote location being a non-hospital location, said first outpatient system including a medical device associated with an outpatient present at said first remote location; and

a second outpatient system operatively coupled to said data storage system on a real-time basis, said second outpatient system being situated at a second location remote from said hospital, said second remote location being a non-hospital location, said second outpatient system including a medical device associated with an outpatient present at said second remote location.

4. A system as defined in claim 3 wherein said first outpatient system is a skilled care facility system comprising:

at least one medical device for administering medical treatment to an outpatient at said first remote location;

at least one medical device for sensing a medical condition of an outpatient at said first remote location and generating outpatient condition data relating to said medical condition; and

a transmitter that transmits said outpatient condition data from said first remote location to said data storage system on a real-time basis.

5. A system as defined in claim 3 wherein said second outpatient system comprises:

at least one medical device located at an outpatient home; and

a transmitter that transmits outpatient data from said outpatient home to said data storage system on a real-time basis.

6. A system as defined in claim 1 additionally comprising a monitor programmed to compare outpatient data representing a clinical condition of an outpatient with a predetermined limit and to generate a message relating to whether said outpatient data is within said predetermined limit.

7. An outpatient care data system, comprising:

a data storage system located at a hospital and which stores outpatient data in the form of a plurality of medical records for a plurality of outpatients associated with said outpatient care data system, said medical records including, for each outpatient, an identification of the outpatient and data relating to the medical history of the outpatient;

a data receiver coupled to said data storage system, said data receiver being adapted to receive outpatient data from a first outpatient system situated at a first location remote from said hospital and being adapted to receive outpatient data from a second outpatient system situated at a second location remote from said hospital; and

a monitor for checking outpatient data stored in said data storage system and generating messages relating to said outpatients, said monitor being programmed to determine whether a medical clinician checked into an outpatient home in accordance with a scheduled check-in time and to generate a message relating to whether