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# Medical services by cell phone surge in popularity

*Patients can now access records, find health info, book doctor appointments*

**S**ervices that allow patients and family members to access medical records, book doctors' appointments and obtain health information through their mobile phones are rapidly expanding.

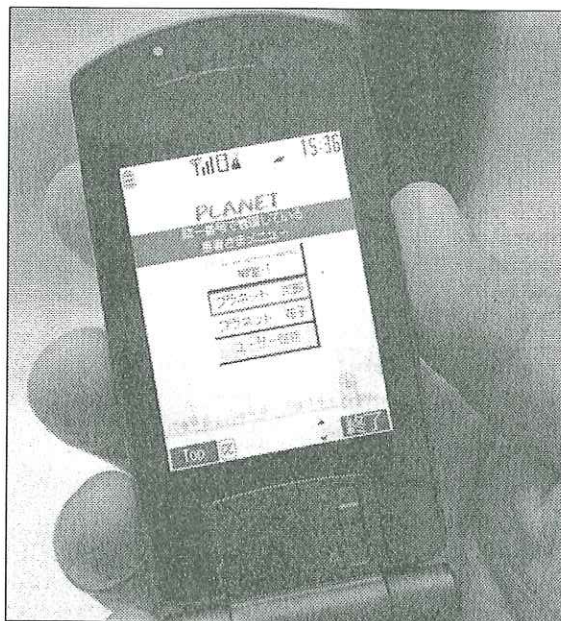
Kameda Medical Center in Chiba Prefecture and mobile phone service provider NTT DoCoMo Inc. in 2002 introduced a system, Planet, that allows patients to access electronic medical records using a personal computer and smart card.

Based on the system, they made electronic medical records more compatible with DoCoMo's 3G Foma cell phones in 2005.

## No waiting

Overall, the service boasts 3,000 members, including about 30 who access the network using their mobile phones.

Currently, patients have to wait until the day after their hospital visit to



**Kameda Medical Center uses a medical-service system compatible with NTT DoCoMo's Foma.**

access information, to avoid overloading computer systems. In addition, the hospital translates the medical records

into plain language to make medical information easier for patients to read and to understand.

Kameda is slated to complete an upgrade of its computer systems and server capacity by this fall that will make translation unnecessary and will allow patients to access information about past exams as well as prescriptions.

Moreover, to improve patient convenience, the medical center plans to make X-rays, currently accessible only through PCs, available via cell phones in two to three years, according to officials.

Medical information start-up iTicket Corp., meanwhile, offers a service that allows patients to book doctor's appoint-

ments through their PCs or cell phones.

The service is proving popular with patients who find it difficult to wait at the doctor's office, such as those with children. By April, some 520 medical facilities, mainly pediatricians' offices, were using the system.

Link & Communication Inc., in which the major trading firm Mitsubishi Corp. has a stake, plans to launch a service by the end of summer that allows patients with conditions that can be improved through lifestyle changes to access low-calorie menus and other useful medical information.