Section 4
Patient-Centered Technologies

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Now that planning, implementation, and transformation have occurred, the focus shifts to the continuum of care, the stops along that continuum, and the support that information technologies lend along the way. At the forefront are issues that promise to shape the future of the industry. Creating a new delivery system encompasses topics such as outcomes management, the electronic medical record, physician practices, nursing, patient safety and medical errors, pharmacy delivery systems, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Technology is the driver, but the message of this section is that the healthcare delivery system will always be patient centric. Technology and patients can coexist and collaborate to enhance both sides of the equation. One chapter, in particular, in this section introduces a new concept to this ever-changing equation—the consumer as owner of his or her health information and what this will portend for the healthcare delivery system. Another chapter focuses on how consumerism is enhancing efficiencies at the physician practice setting and truly creating a new method of outpatient healthcare delivery. As throughout the rest of this book, the domestic and international examples instill confidence that these concepts can be implemented and go from theory to practice.