

Report of 1st International mHealth Networking Conference

Close to 300 representatives from health plans, provider organizations joined nurses, government officials, investment bankers and industry representatives at the mHealth Networking Conference in the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington DC, February 3-4, 2010. While most registrants came from the US, the meeting also drew several attendees from Asia and Europe.

The opening plenary session was especially well received, where the comprehensive vision of mHealth was explored by mHealth Initiative leaders C. Peter Waegemann and Claudia Tessier. Other keynote presentations included an update by Dr. Mohit Kaushal of the FCC on its plans for mHealth; and Dr. Andy Barbash, a neurologist, described how he uses simple networking solutions to improve the quality of care and enhance his role as a caregiver, emphasizing the ease with which they can be adopted by other healthcare providers. Adam Bosworth of Keas (formerly of Google Health) described the Keas approach to personal health records and announced its plans for mobility.

In breakout sessions, speakers noted that low-cost solutions exist today to create medical networks, implement new communication patterns with patients, colleagues, and others such as pharmacies, labs, payers, etc. Many focused on the use of apps on smartphones and the changing healthcare decision making processes for patients and healthcare professionals. The need for a restructuring of the healthcare system was also emphasized, including a payment system that reimburses a caregiver for researching and for communications outside of the traditional encounter. Fitness and healthy-living programs were also a focus. Participatory health, as a necessary element of mHealth, will change our healthcare system dramatically. Yet, while these systems promise to cost savings and improved quality of life, they remain to be integrated into the wellness and healthcare process.

It was acknowledged that the field is so vast and there are so many developments that it is difficult to conduct a comprehensive analysis. However, the benefits of mHealth are clear to those practices, clinics, hospitals, and health plans that are experimenting with a variety of implementations.

In response to the growing level of interest and the rapid pace of developments in mHealth, mHealth Initiative has scheduled its next mHealth Networking Conference for September 8-9, 2010 in San Diego, CA, where attendance is expected to double. [An early bird registration rate of \\$395 is offered through April 8.](#)