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**August 6, 2010**

### GE Healthcare, Intel to form telehealth- and independent living-focused venture

Two of telemedicine's bigger players are about to share the same playing field. GE Healthcare and Intel Corp. have announced plans to launch a new healthcare company focused on telehealth and independent living by the end of the year. According to representatives at both companies, the new entity will be a combination of assets of GE Healthcare's Home Health division and Intel's Digital Health Group, and will be owned equally by GE and Intel. The new company will develop and market products, services and technologies that promote healthy, independent living at home and in assisted living communities worldwide; GE Healthcare and Intel will contribute assets in remote patient monitoring, independent living concepts and assistive technologies, such as the Intel Health Guide, Intel Reader and GE Healthcare's QuietCare. The deal is still subject to regulatory approval. No financial terms were released. [Full Story](#)

### FDA considers toughening 510(k) approval process for medical devices

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is attempting to tighten up its procedures for granting marketing approval for new medical devices in the United States. Recommendations in a 120-page report from the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) - one of two issued by the department on its 510(k) program - aim to better define what devices can and can't apply for approval through the program, and when applications would require medical evidence. CDRH Director Jeffrey Shuren said the agency is "ready to make necessary improvements to support device innovation while assuring patients receive safe and effective devices." The FDA also wants to clarify its rarely used authority to rescind prior device approval. And, the agency proposed creating a subset of Class II devices, ones that are considered a "moderate" risk to patients and which are substantially equivalent to an already-approved product. [Full Story](#)

### Bill Gates named keynote speaker of 2010 mHealth Summit

Microsoft Chairperson Bill Gates will be the keynote speaker at this fall's 2010 mHealth Summit, organizers announced. The summit, presented by the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health, the National Institutes of Health and the mHealth Alliance, will be held Nov. 8-10 in Washington, D.C. On Nov. 9, Gates, co-chair and trustee of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), will keynote an interactive discussion on the ways mobile health (mHealth) technology can help improve health in developing nations. Discussion participants will include leaders in health, government, academia, philanthropic organizations and the private sector. Gates, who in the mid-1980s co-founded BMGF with his wife, Melinda, has long been an advocate of the technology's potential to strengthen healthcare. [Full Story](#)

### Federal government eyes setting regulations for wireless sensor bandages

A key component of at-home patient monitoring - the sensor-based "Band-Aid" - may be coming under federal scrutiny because of the impact it has on other regulated patient care products. According to a report on NPR's "All Things Considered," wireless sensor bandages are effective at transmitting data such as cardiac health or blood pressure in real time from a patient's body to a doctor. But the report said that this form of technology is so new that federal regulators are still figuring out exactly what kind of rules are necessary to keep the public safe. According to Julius Knapp, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s deputy chief of engineering technology, the FCC is working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to develop new rules for the wireless medical industry. Knapp said the agencies want to "open the door to the promise of the new technology, but only if it doesn't jeopardize peoples' lives." [Full Story](#)

### Health insurers embrace at-home monitoring products for CHF patients

Health insurance companies are increasingly drawn to medical products that allow congestive heart failure (CHF) patients to monitor their conditions at home because they cut medical operating expenses. According to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*, four major health insurers-Aetna, Humana, UnitedHealth Group and WellPoint's Anthem Blue Cross in California-have announced programs that allow patients to wirelessly and remotely send data, such as weight, blood pressure and other vital signs, to a healthcare professional for tracking and follow-up purposes. The programs allow patients to stay in their homes and, over the long term, will reduce patient hospitalizations and re-admissions by ensuring that patients' health and vital statistics are regularly monitored. CHF is the leading cause of hospital admissions, the *WSJ* reports. [Full Story](#)

### WellDoc receives approval to market DiabetesManager System in U.S.

Baltimore-based health software firm WellDoc has received clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to begin marketing its DiabetesManager System in the United States. DiabetesManager, designed to treat persons with type 2 diabetes, allows patients and doctors to use cell phones and the Internet for transmission of glucose monitoring data. According to Suzanne Sysko Clough, M.D., founder and chief medical officer of WellDoc, the FDA's clearance is a "critical milestone" in diabetes treatment, given the increasing number of adults developing the disease. The company plans to commercially launch DiabetesManager in early 2011. [Full Story](#)

### Health information exchanges are 'imperative' cost-cutting tool for states

States are finding development of health information exchanges (HIEs) as a way to control rising healthcare costs "increasingly imperative," according to a report from the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) in Lexington, KY. The report, "Profiles of Progress 4: State Health IT Initiatives," notes that the type of HIE created by a state depends on the degree of government and public involvement desired. If the state expects a strong government presence, it will most likely be a government-led electronic HIE, the report states. A state that chooses to be less involved in overseeing the HIE and determining the business model can let other groups, such as a stakeholder-created

nonprofit entity, operate the HIE. The publication, which takes a state-by-state look at HIE development activities, is available for download on NASCIO's web site, [www.nascio.org/publications](http://www.nascio.org/publications). [Full Story](#) [Further Information](#)

#### **Elderly not quick to accept use of home health/safety monitoring systems**

Sensor-based technology is helping adults keep track of their aging parents and prevent injuries in and out of their homes - but there are acceptance issues. According to a report in the *New York Times*, various companies have developed systems such as medication reminders and fall alert detection devices as they move into a burgeoning market. While these are effective safety monitors for the elderly, the technology also gives people the ability to micromanage their parents' lives, the report notes. There's also resistance on the part of the elderly, who may not be attuned to using such technology - especially cameras. However, the parent-baby-sitting novelty may just wear off. Preliminary findings of a study by Indiana University's Center for Strategic Health Information Provisioning notes that recipients of parent monitoring information are not likely to review the data more than once a day. [Full Story](#)

#### **Hospitals, doctors favor mobile technology for more-efficient patient care**

Mobile technologies are becoming a favored way for doctors and hospitals to provide faster, more-efficient medical care. According to a report in the *San Jose Mercury News*, Apple's iPhone and iPad are the new tools of choice for doctors who wish immediate access to critical patient information. Stanford Medical School agrees as the school will be supplying iPads to all first-year medical and Master of Medicine students in the fall. Smartphones and PDAs are a favorite, too, with 70 percent of U.S. doctors now carrying them. Eighty percent say the products are "essential" to their work, Manhattan Research Vice President of Research Meredith Ressi said. The devices work both ways: at Duke University in Durham, N.C., more than 1,100 patients a month use the hospital's 100 e-tablets to give medical staff more in-depth-and sometimes intimate-information about their conditions and their perceptions of those conditions. [Full Story](#)

#### **Australians now expect EHRs, but not all want to pay for them**

Australians are overwhelmingly in favor of having electronic health records (EHRs) but are not willing to fully pay for the privilege, according to a survey from Sydney-based CSC. According to "a rising tide of expectations," 91 percent of Australians surveyed want all their healthcare data stored in one place, and 27 percent are willing to pay \$50 annually for it to happen. However, 70 percent are unwilling to pay anything. In addition, 63 percent of Australians regard private health insurers as also having some responsibility for financially contributing to the costs for EHR, despite the fact that less than half of Australians have private insurance. CSC Director of Health Services Lisa Pettigrew said consumers now expect to have EHRs and believe the basic foundations should be funded as part of the health system by the government, with contributions from others such as health insurers. [Full Story](#)

#### **Samsung, TeleHealth Services to provide TV-based patient education system**

Consumer electronics giant Samsung Electronics America Inc. of Ridgefield Park, N.J., and healthcare television products provider TeleHealth Services of Raleigh, N.C., have launched a program designed to help educate patients about illnesses during their hospital stays. Samsung's new LCD 458 Series televisions will include access to TeleHealth Services' TIGR patient education system, which makes an entire library of educational videos available on-demand in hospital rooms. The models offer USB autosensing side inputs, which enable patients to easily access content, such as music, movies, videos and games by connecting external devices via a USB port. TeleHealth Services President and Chief Executive Officer George Fleming said the product "combines the best entertainment features with the latest in healthcare television technology." [Full Story](#)

### **Movers & SHAKERS**

**David Gough**, lead researcher with GlySens, Inc. and the University of California-San Diego, announced the development of an implantable wireless blood glucose sensor... **Tom Ogg**, formerly corporate director and Chief Technology Officer of Oakwood Healthcare (Dearborn, MI), has been chosen as Chief Information Officer of Akron Children's Hospital... **Justin Neece**, formerly a partner at the Viability Company, has been named COO of Shared Health in Tennessee... **Susan McAndrew**, deputy director for health information privacy in the HHS Office for Civil Rights, announced that HHS has withdrawn a proposed version of its final rule for health data breach notification from administrative review... **Dr. Kevin Biglan**, associate professor of neurology at the University of Rochester Medical Center and research assistant **Nicholas Scoglio**, announced the Susquehanna Nursing & Rehabilitation Center is teaming up with the U of R and Johns Hopkins University for a telemedicine program specializing in Parkinson's and other neuromuscular disorders... **Dr. Frank Vozos**, Executive Director of the Monmouth Medical Center (Long Branch, NJ), testified before the House Energy and Commerce's Subcommittee on Health to discuss the medical center's use of health information technology... **Michael Boroch**, CEO of SmartRoom, announced how the company's "smarter" hospital rooms are currently in use in 24 rooms at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Montefiore in Pittsburgh... **Dr. John Bocachica**, chief of dermatology and teledermatology at the Alaska Native Medical Center (Anchorage, Alaska), discusses their teledermatology program in ModernMedicine.com ... [Please send us](#) your news on Movers and Shakers in the field.

### **Upcoming EVENTS**

- **The Forum 10**  
*October 13-15, 2010 - Washington, D.C.*  
[More Info](#)
- **Global TeleHealth 2010**  
*November 10-12, 2010 - Perth, Western Australia*  
[More Info](#)
- **Med-e-Tel 2011**  
*April 6-8, 2011- Luxembourg, G.D. of Luxembourg*  
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