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August 10, 2010

IBM, Aetna's ActiveHealth to offer EHR service to larger-practice doctors

IBM has partnered with Aetna subsidiary ActiveHealth Management to develop and offer an electronic health record (EHR) service to larger-practice doctors who want to implement the systems and qualify for federal incentives that begin in 2011. The Web-based subscription service will include advanced features such as matching patients to specialists with the best measured record of results for similar patients. Physicians will not have to install new software in their offices; the system will run on computers in IBM data centers and be accessed by doctors with a Web browser on personal computers. Monthly fees will range from several hundred dollars to nearly \$1,000 per doctor, depending on the number of physicians in a medical group and on what features they use. For now, IBM will market its product to large- and mid-sized medical groups of 100 or more doctors, said Robert Merkel, vice president and healthcare industry leader for IBM Global Business Services. [Full Story](#)

Nanotechnology-driven contact lens could allow wearer to 'see' their health

Researchers at the University of Washington are developing a contact lens that could monitor a person's health and display the readings for the wearer to see. The contact lenses would use nanotechnology to track glucose, cholesterol, temperature, inflammation, infection or fatigue. Thus far, researchers have been able to design micro-sized radios, light sources and antennas for the contacts that are so small they resemble a grainy powder. To assemble the lenses, researchers cut shapes into the contact lens base, submerge it into a liquid and "wash" the tiny components over it. The pieces are locked into place by a drop in temperature. According to University of Washington associate professor, Babak Parviz, if the wearer does not want to see the information, the data derived from the contact could possibly be transmitted to the wearer's e-mail or cell phone. Major contact lens manufacturers and the video game industry are interested in the project. [Full Story](#)

Telemedicine project to help prevent eyesight loss in Native Americans

Researchers at Oregon Health & Science University and ophthalmologists at Legacy Good Samaritan Devers Eye Institute (LDEI) in Portland, OR, are using telemedicine to help prevent Native Americans from losing their vision to diabetes-caused retinopathy. Annual eye exams and early treatment are the keys to preventing eyesight loss in adults, but less than 50 percent of Native American diabetic patients receive annual eye exams. According to LDEI associate scientist Steve Mansberger, M.D., "Diabetic retinopathy is common in American Indians, but the tribes struggle with access to eye exams." Only two of the 43 federally recognized tribes in the Pacific Northwest have affiliated clinicians who can provide yearly eye exams, and the long distances between many rural reservations and urban eye-care centers complicate routine care. Under the program, community-based research assistants in Pendleton, OR and Wichita, KS photograph diabetic patients' eyes and transmit the images electronically to LDEI for reading and diagnosis. OHSU researchers provide data analysis and evaluate the program for efficiency and long-term sustainability. Data from the project will be presented to legislators to provide the framework for changes in national and statewide guidelines in addition to insurance reimbursement for diabetic eye exams, researchers note. [Full Story](#)

USDA awards \$1.2 billion for high-speed Web access for medical care, safety

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced \$1.2 billion in funding designed to help 126 medical care, public safety and housing projects across the country achieve broadband access and adoption through construction of fiber optic cable and fixed wireless service. According to Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack, 38 states and Native American tribal areas will receive funding to help bring them up to "the President's and Congress' vision of a high-speed, high-performance America." Awards range from \$275,000 to Utopian Wireless Corporation for WiMAX infrastructure in rural communities around Cairo, IL, to \$123.8 million to West Kentucky Rural Telephone Cooperative for a fiber optic communication network. The award is the USDA's second round of broadband projects stemming from the federal government's \$7.2 billion in stimulus funding for broadband access and adoption. A full list of recipients is available at www.whitehouse.gov. [Full Story](#)

New bill would allow hospitals to qualify for incentives before EHR certification

A Texas doctor – and Congressional Representative – has introduced a bill that would let a hospital temporarily qualify for federal Medicare and Medicaid incentives before its electronic health record (EHR) is certified. H.R. 6005 the "Ensuring Equality for Early EHR Adoption Act of 2010," by Rep. Michael C. Burgess M.D. (R-TX), would make the incentive payments available in 2011 and 2012 for early adopters of EHRs and prevent them from having to go through a second round of updates. Hospital EHR software must be certified by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. However, according to the American Hospital Association no certified products are currently available, meaning hospitals would have to rush to update their current EHRs or install new ones when they become available. This could burden the early adopters the program was meant to reward, the AHA said. [Full Story](#)

iPLATO to launch Britain's first online national telehealth catalog

London-based iPLATO Healthcare has received government approval to launch Britain's first online national telehealth, telecare and telecoaching products and services catalog. The company's evidence-based offerings include wellness, diagnosis, behavioral change and long term condition management solutions. iPLATO's mobile health (mHealth) solutions have "proven to transform patient services and reduce health inequalities across populations." The site, part of a framework agreement for assistive technologies, will be managed by Buying Solutions, the government executive agency charged with procurement management. [Full Story](#)

Nashua, NH-based iCAD Inc. has received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to market its virtual colonoscopy exam interpreter in the United States. According to Dr. Abraham Dachman, professor of radiology and director of fellowship programs at the University of Chicago, iCAD's VeraLook will help radiologists detect and highlight suspicious areas that could be missed during an initial review of a virtual colonoscopy exam. Already available in Europe, extensive use of VeraLook has improved reader sensitivity to all colonic polyps 6mm or larger in size in a "statistically significant manner," particularly for smaller, more-easily missed and pre-cancerous polyps, which can develop into malignancies over time. "More than 40 million individuals who are eligible for colon cancer screening do not undergo any screening," said Ken Ferry, President and CEO of iCAD. Virtual colonoscopy is a "breakthrough technology that may prompt a greater number of people to have this potentially life-saving test." [Full Story](#)

Medical companies study impact of 3D imaging on brain disease

The European Nanoelectronics Initiative Advisory Council (ENIAC) and more than a dozen public and private medical and technology companies have launched a three-year, \$19 million [USD] project designed to advance medical 3D imaging platforms through diagnosis and therapy of serious diseases of the central nervous system and brain. According to project partner STMicroelectronics, the multi-national, multidisciplinary research effort hopes to "enhance medical imaging technologies by means of improvement in sensors, equipment and computing platforms to boost early diagnostics and prevention capability while reducing total equipment cost." Research will cover different imaging technologies, such as positron emission tomography (PET), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and electroencephalography. [Full Story](#)

More people than ever are 'cyberchondriacs,' Harris Interactive poll says

The number of "cyberchondriacs" – persons who regularly go online to search for health information – has more than tripled over the past 12 years, according to a new poll by Harris Interactive. In 1998, when Harris first conducted its survey, there were 50 million do-it-yourself medical info seekers. By 2005, the number of cyberchondriacs had risen to 117 million. The total increased to 175 million this year – up from 154 million in 2009, the largest year-over-year increase since the poll began, according to Harris. The dramatic gain may be the result of the healthcare reform debate, the firm notes. It could also be results driven: Most cyberchondriacs are very happy with their ability to find what they're looking for online; only eight percent said the information they found was unreliable. Fifty-three percent of respondents say they've used online health information in discussions with their doctors and about half have also searched for information on the Internet based on discussions with physicians. [Full Story](#)

ExpressMD, Rotech enter distribution agreement for Electronic House Call

Chronic illness treatment services provider ExpressMD Solutions has signed a non-exclusive agreement with Orlando, FL-based Rotech Healthcare Inc. for national distribution of its Electronic House Call patient monitoring system. Rotech will provide the ExpressMD product to chronically ill patients who have been referred by a national health plan. The goal is to help reduce rehospitalizations for at-risk patients, as well as the severity of reoccurrences. The Electronic House Call allows providers to remotely monitor the vital signs of their patients using the Web, adjust patient care plans and intervene in a timely manner if their patients encounter any issues before they become an acute care incident. On-call providers are automatically notified if a patient's vital signs are outside of the limits pre-set by their care providers. [Full Story](#)

Accuray's latest robotic CyberKnife approved for marketing in Japan

Radiosurgery products developer Accuray Inc., headquartered in Sunnyvale, CA, has received Shonin approval from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) to market the company's CyberKnife G4 Robotic Radiosurgery System in Japan. The product is designed to treat tumors non-invasively anywhere in the body, including the head and neck. The CyberKnife System was approved for use in Japan in 2008 for the treatment of extracranial tumors, including tumors that move with respiration. This regulatory approval expanded the types of Japanese patients that could be treated with radiosurgery to include those with cancers of the spine, lung, liver, pancreas and prostate. [Full Story](#)

Digital imaging system for patient placement goes commercial in Europe

Radiation therapy product maker Elekta AB has received approval to market its iViewC digital imaging system in Europe. The imaging system uses charge couple device camera technology to offer images that verify if the patient is in the correct position at the time of treatment. In addition, iViewC can record imaging dose as part of the treatment dose. The product is already in use in the Philippines and will be available in certain parts of Europe in the early phases of marketing. [Full Story](#)

Movers & SHAKERS

Louis Burns, currently vice president and general manager of Intel's Digital Health Group, will become CEO of a new healthcare company focused on telehealth to be jointly developed by GE and Intel...**Omar Ishrak**, currently senior vice president of GE and president and CEO of GE Healthcare Systems, will become chairman of the board of the joint venture...**Howard Ady**, vice president of Stanley, Inc., announced the company had been awarded a two-year \$6 million contract by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator, to provide operation and infrastructure support for the Nationwide Health Information Network...**Dick Govatski**, CEO of New Mexico Software, Inc., announced that the company continues to gain new orders for its expanding telemedicine business...**Jan Root**, president of the Utah Health Information Network, announced they were the first health information exchange approved by the Electronic Healthcare Network Accreditation Commission...**George Hadeed**, research fellow and coordinator for the Southern Arizona Telemedicine and Telepresence Program, is among the incoming students who will enter University of Arizona College of Medicine during the annual White Coat Ceremony...**Thomas C. Lee, M.D.**, from The Vision Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, recently traveled to Armenia to utilize and demonstrate the Armenia Eye Care Project's international telemedicine program...**Prof. K. Ganapathy**, president of the Apollo Telemedicine Networking Foundation, spoke about India's mobile health challenges and accomplishments at the World Congress 2nd Annual Leadership Summit on mHealth...**Tom Vilsack**, U.S. Agriculture Secretary, announced \$90 million in federal stimulus funding to expand high-speed Internet service on Montana's Fort Peck Indian Reservation and in Gallatin County...[Please send us](#) your news on Movers and Shakers in the field.

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October 13-15, 2010 - Washington, D.C.
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- **Global TeleHealth 2010**
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- **Med-e-Tel 2011**

April 6-8, 2011- Luxembourg, G.D. of Luxembourg

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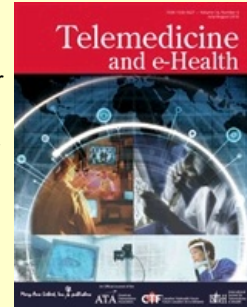
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