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Find out more at www.lifelinks.net**June 25, 2010****Mayo Clinic, University of Illinois form alliance on telemedicine research**

The Mayo Clinic and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are partnering on research into technology-based healthcare, including personalized medicine, point-of-care diagnostics, and telemedicine. According to Franklyn Prendergast, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Mayo Clinic Center for Individualized Medicine, initial projects will include those in genomics, the microbiome, bioinformatics and other computational science, such as the use of petascale computing, imaging, nanotechnology and tissue engineering. The joint work will also combine new applications for healthcare based on Mayo projects with the University of Illinois expertise in data security, including data privacy and the accuracy of data when used for medical research, point-of-care or telehealth applications, Prendergast said. The Alliance expects to be sustained long term by funding from federal grants and philanthropy, and from various entrepreneurial projects, he added. [Full Story](#)

Computer neural network from UPIM creates virtual heart attacks for study

A team of bioengineers from the University of Pennsylvania Institute for Medicine and Engineering in Philadelphia has created a computer neural network that accurately predicts how blood platelets respond to complex conditions found during a heart attack or stroke. According to Scott L. Diamond, professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering and the director of the Penn Center for Molecular Discovery, the system makes it possible to predict how an individual's platelets would respond to thousands of virtual heart attack scenarios. The model is capable of accurately predicting platelet responses from among 10 blood donors. "With this information we can identify patients at risk of thrombosis or improve upon current forms of anti-platelet therapies," Diamond said. The study appears in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*. [Full Story](#)

Wi-Fi adoption rates in healthcare climb 60 percent since 2009

The adoption and use of Wi-Fi within healthcare has grown by more than 60 percent over the past year in both wireless local area network and Wi-Fi RTLS (Real-Time Locations Systems) deployments, and high double-digit growth is expected to continue for at least the next few years, according to a report by ABI Research. The report, "Wireless Healthcare and Fitness Market Data," notes that other wireless technologies being adopted and deployed in healthcare, including cellular M2M and wearable wireless sensors, have also seen significant growth over the past 12 months. Wireless communications that continue to be adopted in healthcare applications range from Wi-Fi networks to wearable sensors that wirelessly transmit a patient's condition to monitoring applications. Wi-Fi adoption has "helped overcome initial concerns about complexity and reliability of wireless within healthcare," ABI Research principal analyst Jonathan Collins said. [Full Story](#)

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New FDA online database designed to find new uses for old drugs

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Office of Orphan Products Development (OOPD) has launched a new database based on the concept of repurposing - the finding of new ways to use products that have already been okayed by the FDA for some other use. According to OOPD Director Timothy Coté, products in the Rare Disease Repurposing Database have already shown potential to treat one or more of the diseases affecting 200,000 or fewer Americans. Testing these already-approved drugs as treatments for rare diseases has significant advantages. "For one, it's already been found safe by the FDA," Coté said. "And running trials on an existing drug is much cheaper than trying to develop a totally new compound." Thus far, however, only 350 such "orphan" drugs have been approved, while there are about 7,000 rare diseases in the U.S. [Full Story](#)



New non-contact body sensor can detect heartbeat from a meter away

Scientists at the University of Sussex have developed a non-contact body sensor that can detect a heartbeat from up to 1 meter away - something that can transform the way a patient's health is monitored. According to Dr. Robert Prance, Professor of Sensor Technology at the Sussex School of Engineering and Design, the Electric Potential Sensors (EPS) are the first electrical sensors that can detect precisely the electrical activity of the heart without direct resistive contact with the body. The EPS will offer medical and home health

professionals "the opportunity to develop patient-friendly, self administered systems to monitor their vital signs with the minimum impact on their mobility," Prance said. The team is currently working with Newbury, United Kingdom-based in-home smart technology company PassivSystems to evaluate whether the sensors could be used to help elderly and frail people live independently in their homes by monitoring occupancy in a room and even whether someone's heartbeat has changed. [Full Story](#)

EarlySense gains FDA approval for enhanced EverOn monitoring system

Ramat Gan, Israel-based medical device company EarlySense Ltd. has received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clearance to sell its EverOn Touch patient-monitoring system in the United States. According to EarlySense Chief Executive Officer Avner Halperin, EverOn is a patient-supervision system that goes underneath a hospital bed mattress. The device measures patients' vital signs, such as heart and respiration rates, as well as movements to alert caregivers about their medical condition. The new Touch version of the product includes an online display that alerts medical staff about a patient's motion level and verifies patient turns by nurses. The initial system already is approved for sale in the United States and Europe; EarlySense is pursuing European market clearance for the enhanced Touch system, Halperin said. [Full Story](#)

New pacemaker implant may help curb overeating, control obesity

An implanted, pacemaker-like device may help control obesity, according to a pair of studies by St. Paul, MN-based EnteroMedics Inc. The studies indicated that the company's Maestro System, which sends intermittent electrical impulses to the vagus nerve - which tells the brain when the stomach is empty - blocks impulses that make people overeat, EnteroMedics Chief Executive Officer Mark Knudson said. The device is also far less invasive than bariatric surgery, he added. One study using the second-generation device showed improved glucose and blood pressure levels in the project's 28 obese and Type-2 diabetes-afflicted participants. Weight loss was "clinically meaningful," according to the study. A second study shows a link between daily device use and weight loss among U.S. participants. The product is approved in Europe, and the company plans to launch it in the United States at a future date. [Full Story](#)

'Cloud' computing gains popularity among healthcare's decision makers

Nearly one-third of healthcare sector decision makers said they are now using "cloud"-based

information technology applications, and nearly three in four said they are planning to move more applications to the cloud system, according to a recent report by technology services firm Accenture. The findings show that healthcare is in line with other industries in adopting remote, Internet-driven information storage systems. As with the healthcare sector, 32 percent of decision makers in manufacturing now resort to cloud technology. Education (29 percent) and retail (35 percent) are also making strides, the report notes. According to Accenture Senior Research Scientist and report co-author Dadong Wan, healthcare is moving to cloud technology due to cost advantages and flexibility that cloud computing offers healthcare organizations, especially as they implement plans to meet the federal government's \$20 billion financial incentive programs for the "meaningful use" of IT. [Full Story](#)

Continuous growth ahead as Europe embraces health IT

The European Healthcare sector, led by the United Kingdom, "seems finally ready to embrace the synchronization of information and communication technology (ICT)" with regular patient monitoring, according to a report by Frost & Sullivan. The report projects that ICT adoption in the UK and other European countries will "grow continuously" in coming years, due to increased governmental support, and an aging population that will drive demand. According to Frost & Sullivan Research Associate Somsainathan C. Kamalasekar, remote monitoring has not gained a foothold in the European market yet, but there are innumerable activities on the research and development front. "With the remote patient monitoring market in its early stage of market development, this clearly paves the way for high growth in the future," he said. [Full Story](#)

Connected Care telemedicine network debuts in Colorado

Connected Care, a nationwide telemedicine network from insurer UnitedHealthcare and Englewood, CO-based healthcare provider Centura Health has gone live at four pilot sites in Colorado. According to UnitedHealthcare of Colorado Chief Executive Officer Beth Soberg, the state launch marks the first time Connected Care has been used anywhere in the United States. Pilot sites are at family practices, hospitals and community health centers in Buena Vista, Lamar, Del Norte and Leadville. Patients at the facilities will have remote access to physicians in Denver, Littleton and Pueblo for routine and specialty care services, Soberg said. As many as 4,800 patient visits are expected to be made each year in Colorado via the Connected Care clinics, she added. [Full Story](#)

At-home monitoring of pacemakers 'at least as effective' as conventional follow-up

Remote monitoring of pacemaker recipients is at least as effective as conventional follow-up in terms of safety, reduces the frequency of follow-up visits, and could be associated with a lower incidence of atrial arrhythmias and stroke, according to a study by researchers in France. The Comparative Follow-up Schedule with Home Monitoring (COMPAS) study is the first to review home monitoring of pacemakers - something that Americans take for granted, according to lead researcher Prof. Philippe Mabo from the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Rennes in northwest France. Whereas the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recognizes home monitoring as "just another follow-up method," no such regulations exist in France. The results of the COMPAS study "certainly won't dramatically alter standard practice, [but] they could have an impact on the application [of French] law in terms of the medicolegal and financial aspects," Mabo said. [Full Story](#)

EMRs can help pediatricians improve follow-up care, avoid errors

Electronic medical records (EMRs), better follow-up care and more collaboration with patients and their families would help pediatricians avoid errors in diagnosing illnesses, according to a study by researchers at Baylor College of Medicine and the Houston Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Center of Excellence. In the study, pediatricians from Houston and Cincinnati were asked about the types of errors in diagnosis they thought occurred most often in practice; how frequently diagnostic errors and resultant patient harm, if any, occurred; how and why such errors in diagnosis occur, and what measures could reduce errors in diagnosis. According to Dr. Hardeep Singh, a lead author and assistant professor of medicine and health services research at the VA's Health Services Research Center and BCM, physicians believed that EMRs would lead to improved patient follow-up and better diagnosis, which might relate to better care coordination and information availability. [Full Story](#)

Gary and Mary West, of The Gary and Mary West Foundation, announced an additional \$25 million commitment to the West Wireless Health Institute (WWHI), which focuses on commercializing wireless health solutions, bringing their total support to almost \$100 million...**Jan Kriebs**, director of midwifery and assistant professor at University of Maryland School of Medicine, and **Michael McCoy, MD**, chief medical information officer at Catholic Health East, have been named co-chairs of the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology's (CCHIT) Women's Health workgroup...**Pawan Goyal, MD**, chief medical officer at Hewlett Packard Federal Healthcare, and **Peter Yu, MD**, director of cancer research at Palo Alto Medical Foundation, have been named co-chairs of the Certification Commission for Health Information Technology's (CCHIT) Oncology workgroup...**Carl Dvorak**, executive vice president of Epic Systems, has been elected chair of the HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association...**Charles Jarvis**, vice president of NextGen Healthcare Information Systems, has been elected vice chair of the HIMSS Electronic Health Record Association...**Mark Goines**, former senior VP and general manager of the consumer division of Intuit, has joined the Board of Directors at Practice Fusion, a web-based electronic health record company...**Maurizio Vecchione**, CEO of CompuMed, announced they have made an agreement with Kids Come First Community Clinic (KCF) in Ontario, California to provide CompuMed's CardioGramKids electrocardiogram telemedicine technologies to the clinic...[Please send us](#) your news on Movers and Shakers in the field.

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