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**July 9, 2010**

### **FDA approves nation's first eye-implanted telescope to treat blindness**

U.S. Food and Drug Administration officials have approved a first-of-its-kind technology - a tiny telescope implanted inside the eye - to counter incurable age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the nation's leading cause of blindness in older adults. According to Allen W. Hill, chief executive officer of Saratoga, CA-based VisionCare Ophthalmic Technologies Inc., the Implantable Miniature Telescope's magnification capability reduces the impact of the blind spot caused by end-stage AMD. Smaller than a pea, the telescope is implanted in one eye in an outpatient surgical procedure. In the implanted eye, the device renders enlarged central vision images over a wide area of the retina to improve central vision, while the non-operated eye provides peripheral vision for mobility and orientation. Ninety percent of patients in a 219-person study had their vision improved with the device; VisionCare will conduct a post-approval study to monitor patient outcomes under commercial conditions, Hill said. [Full Story](#)

### **Despite recession, medical imaging market to post 14 percent gain by 2012**

The medical imaging market is expected to recover from the adverse effects of the economic downturn and the significant decline in reimbursement, and generate more than \$6.5 billion worldwide by 2012, according to a report by market research firm Frost & Sullivan. According to Frost & Sullivan Research Associate Simone Carron, the revenue upturn - a 14 percent increase from the \$5.7 billion posted in 2009 - will be driven by "advancements in technology and new clinical applications for imaging modalities," including hybrid systems with innovative developments such as radiation reduction and better temporal resolution. Market segments covered in the report include computed radiography and digital radiography (CR and DR), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT), 3 dimensional (3D) and computer aided design (CAD), ultrasound, C-arms, imaging informatics, contrast media and auto injectors, mammography, molecular imaging and nuclear medicine. [Full Story](#)

### **New ECG sensor can detect heart and brain activity without touching skin**

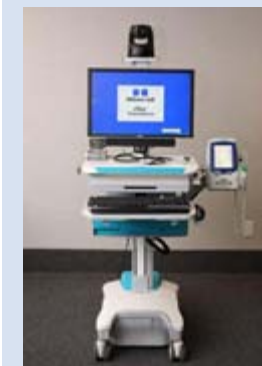
Researchers at the University of California at San Diego have developed a medical sensor that can read electrocardiogram (ECG) and other data through clothing, without ever touching the skin. According to UCSD graduate student Mike Chi, who created the device with UCSD bioengineer Gert Cauwenberghs, traditional ECG electrodes detect the time it takes for waves of changing polarity caused by heart-muscle contractions to travel to different sensors, which reveals the electrical activity of different parts of the heart. The sensors are messy, allergy-inducing, uncomfortable and motion-sensitive, and can't be

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- Electronic health record system has been developed in accordance with HITECH Certification Specifications as published on Dec. 31, 2009.

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used outside the clinic or for long periods of time. But the UCSD sensor, slightly larger than a quarter, can detect faint changes in capacitance and amplify them, while canceling out ambient electrical noise. Multiple sensors embedded in material and wired together create a portable monitor that patients can wear over clothing during their daily routine. This could mean increased monitoring time and better compliance from patients, Chi said. Incorporating the sensors into a headband could also make it possible to monitor electrical activity in the brain. Chi is creating a startup company, Cognionics, to develop the sensors further, and has already begun talks with medical-device companies. [Full Story](#)

### **Broadband projects awarded \$795 million in latest round of federal grants**

The Obama administration has announced \$795 million in grants and loans for 66 new broadband projects across the country, including \$62.5 million to a group of national research and education networking organizations to link libraries, schools, and other organizations and offer the capacity for high-bandwidth applications like telemedicine and distance learning. The funding, matched by \$200 million in outside investments, is part of the \$7.2 billion included in the 2009 federal economic stimulus package to expand broadband access nationwide. President Obama said tens of millions of Americans and more than 685,000 businesses, 900 healthcare facilities and 2,400 schools in all 50 states stand to benefit from the awards. About one-third of the funding has been awarded. A complete list of the newest recipients is available at [www.whitehouse.gov](#). [Full Story](#) [Further Information](#)

### **CDC awards \$2 million to Public Health Laboratories for e-data exchange**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has awarded \$2 million to the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) to help advance the use of electronic information exchange among APHL members. According to APHL President Patrick Luedtke, MD, the award is funded as a cooperative agreement through the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act. The agreement will support technical assistance to state health departments, public health laboratories and hospitals to help them link disparate laboratory reporting systems. The grant period extends for 24

months beginning July 1, 2010. The grant "brings us one step closer to the real goal of electronic exchange of lab data: healthier people," Luedtke said. [Full Story](#)

### **Berwick appointed new head of Medicare and Medicaid Services**

Bypassing the Senate's ongoing debate - and confirmation delay - President Obama this week has installed Dr. Donald Berwick as administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). According to White House Communications Director Dan Pfeiffer, Obama appointed Berwick, the chief executive officer of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Boston, while Congress was in recess because "there's no time to waste with Washington game-playing." Obama had nominated Berwick for the position in April, but his confirmation was delayed for political reasons. Because the appointment was made while the Senate is not in session, Berwick's term as CMS administrator will last only until the end of the next session of Congress, in late 2011. Berwick is also Clinical Professor of Pediatrics and Health Care Policy at the Harvard Medical School, and Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Harvard School of Public Health. [Full Story](#) [Further Information](#)

### **Neuros Medical receives \$1.5 million from DoD to treat amputee 'stump' pain**

Willoughby, OH-based neurostimulation medical device maker Neuros Medical Inc. has received a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to develop a drug-free treatment for chronic residual limb pain or "stump" pain, experienced by nearly 1 million amputees. According to Neuros Medical President Jon J. Snyder, the company's Nerve Block technology - consisting of a pacemaker-sized generator and electrode - uses high frequency alternating current stimulation to block chronic pain signals in the peripheral nervous system. Military casualties and amputations experienced by those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have increased the need to develop effective treatments for patients suffering from chronic residual limb pain, he said. [Full Story](#)

### **Domestic medical travel could derail telemedicine's market growth**

Telemedicine may have an unexpected barrier in its efforts to become a medical care method of choice. According to a report in *USA Today*, more employers and insurers are offering financial incentives to encourage workers to consider traveling to specialists for the care they need. The use of "domestic medical travel" - in which workers are sent to facilities with high-quality care and lower prices - can help employers reduce their costs 20 percent to 40 percent - more than enough to cover the travel expenses. Employers with domestic travel programs say they save money in part by negotiating a single rate, which includes fees for surgeons, anesthesiologists and all medical care up until the patient is discharged, according to the report. Although it is promising, the concept could backfire if employers and insurers focus solely on cost, rather than quality, *USA Today* notes. [Full Story](#)

### **Doctors, insurers using software to simplify medical jargon for patients**

Federal and state officials are encouraging public health professionals, doctors and insurers to simplify the language they use to communicate with the public in patient handouts, medical forms and health Web sites. According to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*, nearly 9 out of 10 adults have difficulty following routine medical advice, often because it's incomprehensible to average people. A new federal program called the Health Literacy Action Plan is promoting simplified language nationwide. And some health insurers, doctors' practices and hospitals have begun using specialized software that scans documents looking for hard-to-understand words and phrases and suggests plain-English replacements. Use of such products can help insured persons "better appreciate the importance of preventive services and recommended checkups," according to Jo Poorman, senior director of print and digital media for Chicago-based Health Care Service Corp., a Blue Cross and Blue Shield provider. [Full Story](#)

### **Health IT products expected to push sales of handheld devices through 2015**

Handheld device sales for healthcare use are expected to increase over the next five years as physicians and hospitals purchase new information technology systems, according to a report by New York City-based Kalorama Information. Already at \$8.2 billion globally in 2009, handheld sales are expected to increase by seven percent through 2015, according to "Handhelds in Healthcare: The World Market for PDAs, Tablet PCs, Handheld Monitors & Scanners." Stimulus incentives are a big factor, as are a growing and aging population, a shortage of qualified medical professionals, cost restraints, and medical error reduction measures, according to the report. The propensity of doctors and nurses to use the devices is also driving sales, Kalorama Information Publisher Bruce Carlson said. [Full Story](#)

### **PharmaTrust to expand use of pharmaceutical ATMs in Canada**

Oakville, Ontario-based PharmaTrust and the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) are expanding use of its ATM-like pharmaceutical drug dispensers in hospitals throughout the Canadian province. According to Steve Gesner, chief information officer at PharmaTrust, the deal with OTN will allow the company to quickly deploy its MedCentres - often described as a "pharmacist in a box" - at a number of the province's 1,000 hospitals. The application links a trained pharmacist to the patient through a two-way audio-video line. A scanner allows the pharmacist to read a prescription, which is then filled using drugs stored in the machine. The units have been tested at three locations in Ontario for several months, and the company recently signed a deal to provide MedCentre machines in Great Britain. Gesner said discussions are continuing with roughly 30 health facilities, and up to one-third are showing "strong interest" in adopting the new technology. [Full Story](#)

### **University of Rochester pediatric telehealth program to receive NOVA award**

The University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC)'s pediatric telemedicine program, Health-e-Access Telemedicine, will receive an American Hospital Association NOVA Award at AHA's annual forum in San Diego on July 24. According to AHA President and Chief Executive Officer Rich Umbdenstock, the award honors hospital community collaborations that improve community health. Launched in 2001, Health-e-Access Telemedicine uses Web-based telemedicine to connect youngsters in child care centers, schools, or community centers to a pediatrician or nurse practitioner who is part of the child's primary care medical home. The program encompasses 23 community-based sites, as well as mobile units and teledentistry. URMC is one of five programs to receive a NOVA award at the upcoming forum. The others are the Community-Based Alternatives to the Emergency Room in Fort Myers, FL, Healthy Futures in Traverse City, MI, Healthy San Francisco in San Francisco, and the

## Movers & SHAKERS

**Monte Gibbs**, former chief technology officer for MyLife.com, has been named CTO of Private Access...**Greg Hales**, program coordinator for telehealth at North Country HealthCare, announced they have registered with the FDA for a formal study to evaluate digital stethoscopes in telemedicine applications...**Daniel J. Webster Jr.** has joined The Computer Merchant (TCM) as senior vice president, Healthcare Practice...**Patrick K. Moore, JD**, has joined c3o Telemedicine Solutions as executive vice president for business development...**Mark Parkinson**, Governor of Kansas, established a not-for-profit organization to help the state's development of a health information exchange...**Dominic Mack, MD**, of Morehouse School of Medicine, announced they received \$19.5 million in federal stimulus funding and will be using it to help rural Georgian doctors and hospitals to set up and implement electronic medical record systems...[Please send us](#) your news on Movers and Shakers in the field.

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- **Global TeleHealth 2010**

*November 10-12, 2010 - Perth, Western Australia*

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