

Interoperability Summit

Washington DC June 1-2, 2009

Establishing infrastructure for health assurance and disease prevention through healthcare transformation was the theme of this invitation-only event. The meeting was sponsored by the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) and co-sponsored by all major technical professional societies engaged in health information technology issues, from ethics and standards... to patient care and eHealth.

The International Council on Medical & Care Compunetics (ICMCC) was a co-sponsor and an invited participant. Michael L. Popovich, an ICMCC US Board Member, attended and participated on behalf of Dr. Lodewijk Bos, President of ICMCC, member of the Summit Advisory Board. Representatives from all major U.S. government agencies who provide data that can be used to support health and welfare compunetics issues were in attendance. This impressive, very diverse list of attending organizations included over twenty-five U.S. agencies, like the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Drug Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of State and the Department of Veterans Affairs but also the Department of Commerce, NASA, NOAA, USGS and the Department of Agriculture.

The welcome addresses were provided by Dr. Joachim Nagel, President of the International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine, member of the ICMCC Advisory Board and a noted expert in the field of practical applications of technology and medicine and Dr. Eugene Eckstein (AIMBE President) together providing the combination of US need and a worldwide issue. Dr. Luis Kun, the ICMCC 2008 key note conference speaker and member of the ICMCC Advisory Board, was the summit chair.

This two-day summit focused on the sharing of existing health-related medical data resources across a diverse community of federal agencies, with an emphasis on how to leverage these resources to support health transformation through improved use of technology to ensure that the patient and populations receive the greatest benefit. The attendees were tasked with providing specific input from their domain expertise to establish recommendations regarding the potential to reform healthcare through scientific improvements that will be provided to the President of the U.S. and his administration.

Through agency briefs and interactive panel discussions, an exchange of ideas throughout the two-day summit illustrated the significant value placed on health prevention as a key to healthcare reform. Use of technology and increased interoperability between data resources to provide information to support a variety of goals and objectives, from patient safety to integrated health record information, became the central theme around which recommendations would extend.

ICMCC represented in all panel sessions that the patient is to be the center of any transformation initiative. The ICMCC theme emphasized that value to a patient, measurable within populations, to assess the impact of technology or a specific healthcare reform project, is necessary to provide the value required. Over the course of the two days, the panels focused on this patient-centric theme, expanding it to personal empowerment and evolving the culture to wellness and prevention through innovation.

This summit was exceptional from the standpoint that agencies and the scientific community from multidisciplines and interdisciplines joined together, sharing resources and ideas to leverage the wealth of expertise that exists to improve healthcare of individuals and the quality of health to populations. The end result will be a report presented to the President of the U.S. and his administration that will likely focus on the ICMCC patient-centered and empowerment approach, the innovative use of technology and existing data resources, and supporting a new emphasis on wellness and prevention to reduce the impact of chronic disease.