

Volume 1 / Issue 4 Winter 2006 - Editorial

Letter from the Publisher



Dear Reader,

While healthcare organisations continuously move towards integrating their healthcare information systems and adopting electronic health records, prescription, laboratory and scheduling systems (amongst others), the scrutiny placed on medical errors increases. As healthcare organisations grapple with these challenges, many questions arise, such as:

- Who within the healthcare organisation has the responsibility for ensuring that patient data is protected and secure?
- What role does the patient have in this process, if any?
- As data is shared across organisations and networks, what methods should be used to protect patient information from internal and external threats?

As these issues are debated at an international level, we explore empowering patients and what responsibilities they could have in the protection of their own information. Continuing with the discussion, we present guidelines for ensuring the security of radiological networks and transmission devices.

Closely tied in with our Features section, we cover data storage and disaster preparedness and recovery. We also continue the discussions from Issue 3 on standards and interoperability with an article on new methods for consolidating, storing and reusing data across different entities in healthcare organisations.

Our EU section features the conclusion of our four-part series on the EU institutions with an overview of the European Court of Justice. We also highlight the Baltic eHealth Project.

Our Healthcare IT Sector Interview this month is with Dr. Karl A. Stroetmann and Alexander Dobrev, from empirica Communication and Technology Research in Germany, about their work on the eHealth IMPACT Study. Funded by the European Commission, the report presents a benefits analysis from ten eHealth projects across Europe.

Our country focus this month highlights Spain, with an interview with María Jesús Montero, Regional Minister of Health, Andalucía, about the frequently profiled eHealth developments in the Andalusian healthcare system. In our Best Practices section, we present the development of user experience guidelines for telecare services. Finally, our Management section contains a discussion on the development of an integration competence centre as a tool for helping organisations achieve success with their eHealth projects and strategies.

Last but certainly not least, be sure to check out the latest news from the European Association of Healthcare IT Managers on page 5! While you're there, be sure to fill out and send in your membership application.

Your opinions and suggestions are always important to us. If you have an article you would like to publish with us, an idea for a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue - we invite you to send a message to k.r@hitm.eu and let us know what you think!

Yours faithfully,

Christian Marolt

Publisher

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