



Center for Health Transformation E-Newsletters

In the last few weeks we have seen major events and activities to advance transformation that will be considered historic milestones.

- At the Center, we have a “Right to Know” Project. We believe that prices and information about the quality of care delivered by healthcare institutions and professionals should be made available to the consumer. CMS took a giant step in this direction by launching the CMS’s drug card comparison system on the Internet which posts the prices of drugs under the different Medicare discount drug cards. The fact that they are posting prices for the first time ever is an historic step towards creating a buyers’ market in pharmaceuticals by making transparent information that was previously unobtainable.
- A transformed 21st Century intelligent health system is focused on prevention and wellness. Registration began this week for the Medicare discount drug card program finally giving seniors who rely solely on Medicare some relief in paying for their prescription drugs that can keep them from experiencing costly and painful hospitalizations. (Low income seniors get further assistance, receiving a \$600 credit for purchasing drugs.) CMS also advanced prevention by announcing a request for proposals for the implementation of 10 large scale chronic care management programs which were authorized in last year’s Medicare Law.
 - Dynamic leadership is making the vision of an electronically connected healthcare system that saves lives and saves money a reality.
 - President Bush gave 3 speeches in as many days that focused on the importance of electronic information connectivity in health. He charged that every American should have an EHR within 10 years. He also announced the creation of a new post at the Department of Health and Human Services-- a National Health Information Technology Coordinator. A few days later, HHS Secretary Thompson announced David J. Brailer, MD PhD will be assuming the sub-Cabinet level post.
 - EHR has gained such broad acceptance and is not a party line issue. Senator Hilary Clinton, Congressman Patrick Kennedy and I are all working together to advance IT in healthcare. ([See CHT In the News below](#))
 - I participated in an historic Health IT summit hosted by HHS Secretary Thompson that saw the fusion of purpose among leaders in academia, government, health professionals, consumers and the health IT industry around creating a 21st Century Intelligent, connected health system. At the meeting, the Secretary announced that the Consolidated Health Informatics Initiative has finished its work defining the data exchange standards for government agencies, such as the VA, DOD, and CMS—a vital part of achieving an interoperative electronic health infrastructure. Many believe

CHT
Founder
Newt
Gingrich

because of the purchasing power of the government agencies, these standards will become the de facto standards for the private sector as well. They also announced that SNOMED, a medical language, has been licensed by the US government for the purpose of making it free to everyone. This is a giant step towards achieving interoperability.

- To transform the health and healthcare system we must move away from the current third party insurance model to a more market mediated system. At the Center we have collected [case studies of companies](#) that successfully implemented these market based approaches. The adoption of [Health Savings Accounts](#) that was created in the Medicare bill, is an important step in transforming the system. Although many experts have said that offering an HSA in this year's open enrollment period is far too aggressive, Kay Coles James, who oversees the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, announced that Federal Employees this year will have the option of choosing an HSA for 2005.

Five years ago, a senior prescription drug benefit with transparent price information, a move to a more prevention focused care model, a pledge by the nation's President to obtain an EHR for every American, and access to a tax free, portable, health savings account seemed decades away. Now, they are becoming the new reality. There is still much more to do to transform the American system of health and healthcare but progress is being made and momentum is building.

The Center for Health Transformation would like to welcome our newest members of the Center: [SHPS](#), [American Medical Alert Corp.](#), [American Psychiatric Association](#), and the [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill](#).

Please visit the [list of members](#) often to keep abreast of who is joining the Center.

Member Meeting

The Center for Health Transformation's second quarterly meeting was both a celebration of recent successes and a meeting for future progress. Held at the Willard InterContinental Hotel on April 28th, this gathering of private-sector health managers and public policy makers provided strong signs that, despite the difficulties of change within the political system, transformation is happening through technical innovation and collaborative thinking.

The day featured appearances by a number of key public figures, and they provided a barometer of health transformation along both national and state lines. **Nancy Johnson, Connecticut Congresswoman and Chairwoman of the Ways and Means Committee's Subcommittee on Health**, stressed the importance of strong management and collective organization. **Sarah Bianchi, National Policy Director of the Kerry Campaign**, and **Megan Hauck, Deputy Director of the Bush-Cheney Campaign**, discussed their respective campaign's proposals for future reform, showing that health care transformation is a bipartisan concern. **Laura Linn, Director of the Center for Health Transformation's Georgia Project**; **Matthew Bassett, Chief of Staff for the Kentucky Cabinet for**

Health and Family Services; and **Texas State Team member John Gill, M.D.** all provided detailed analyses of how healthcare transformation is faring in their respective states.

Discussion centered on several key areas of change: Health Savings Accounts, Electronic Health Records and improved consumer choice. Spurred on by recent news about Bush's proposal to implement EHRs for every American, attendees had reason to believe that better outcomes at lower cost is finally becoming a top priority for the different sectors of health care.

"I was very impressed with the work done in the last 10 days," said Gold Standard Multimedia's Russ Thomas, who has attended CHT's two quarterly meetings thus far. "With policy initiatives coming out of the Presidential office and CMS, the themes that the Center has been promoting are now taking the form of public policy."

Handouts from the meeting may be found on the [Quarterly Events web page](#) on the CHT web site.

Newt Gingrich & Patrick Kennedy jointly authored an op-ed in the *New York Times*. They wrote, "Health care policy is a partisan minefield, with Democrats and Republicans differing on everything from Medicare changes to malpractice reform to strategies for covering the uninsured. Yet, while the two of us have been on opposite sides of most of those battles, we both believe that America's health care delivery system must be transformed." [Read more.](#)

Newt Gingrich & Laura Linn, Georgia State Project Director at the Center for Health Transformation, co-authored an op-ed in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. They write, "In order to help seniors stay healthy and active, Medicare will offer at age 65 a free benchmark physical that would enable seniors and their doctors to catch potential illnesses in their earliest stages and to discuss fitness strategies to stay healthy. But we must not overlook the potential this powerful prevention model offers. To capture that potential, we should insist that when the program is launched in 2005, it be integrated with an electronic health record (EHR) system." [Read more.](#)

HealthLeaders interviews Newt Gingrich on healthcare reform, technology, and the future of the industry. [Read more.](#)

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton remarks on Newt Gingrich's healthcare policy book. In her *New York Times* op-ed, Senator Clinton writes, "Newt Gingrich and I have disagreed on many issues, including health care, but I agree with some of the proposals he outlines in his book "Saving Lives and Saving Money," which support taking advantage of technological changes to create a more modern and efficient health care system." [Read more.](#)

The Center for Health Transformation applauds the leadership of Kay Coles James, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, for expanding the health freedom of federal employees by making available Health Savings Accounts (HSA) in the 2005 Federal

Employee Health Benefit Program." [Read more.](#)

Visit the [CHT in the News](#) section on the Center for Health Transformation's web site to read more!

The next monthly member teleconference will be held on Tuesday, June 15th at 4:00 p.m. Eastern. Access to this call is restricted to Charter, Premier and Associate members. If you would like more information about how to become a member of the Center, please contact us at **(202) 414-1800** or info@healthtransformation.net.

May 13th – Atlanta, GA – Newt Gingrich to present a Health Transformation Presentation to Georgia Association of Healthcare Executives

May 15th & 18th – San Francisco, CA – Newt Gingrich to speak to Ford Customer Service Division

May 20th – Chicago, IL - Newt Gingrich to keynote at Chicago National Governors Association meeting

May 28th - Tokyo, Japan – Newt Gingrich to speak to the American Chamber of Commerce

June 3rd – White Sulphur Springs, WV – Newt Gingrich to keynote at the Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers

June 15th– CHT Member Conference Call (see details [above](#))

June 17th – Washington, DC - June 20th – Newt Gingrich to participate at the American Enterprise Institute's World Forum

June 21st – Rhode Island – Congressman Patrick Kennedy has recruited Newt Gingrich to top the bill at his conference entitled "Frontiers of Healthcare" at Brown University

June 23rd – June 25th – Ireland – Newt Gingrich to keynote at the Transforming Healthcare Conference of the new Europe Conference

June 26th – June 28th – Brussels – Newt Gingrich to speak to the Brussels Institute

For more information on these events or to view other CHT events, please visit <http://www.healthtransformation.net/events>.

Transforming Example Spotlight

The Center for Health Transformation is constantly seeking solutions that improve quality and lower cost. You may find numerous transforming examples on our website by visiting <http://www.healthtransformation.net/cases/>. We encourage you to submit your own transforming example via the website.

This month's Transforming Example
Spotlight:

Polycom

Medical Missions for Children uses Polycom telemedicine technology to raise the standard of care for children in medically underserved countries

The statistics on the plight of children in medically underserved countries are staggering. In poor nations, children under five years of age bear 30 percent of the total burden of disease. Of the 11 million children under five years of age who die each year, more than 85 percent are from medically underserved countries. This translates to 40,000 children dying each day. And, according to the World Health Organization, in most hospitals in underserved communities the pediatric death rate ranges between 20 to 50 percent, compared to just 2 to 4 percent in the United States.

In response to this global health care crisis, Polycom partnered with Frank Brady founder of Medical Mission for Children (MMC). Through the use of an expansive telemedicine network based on Polycom video collaboration systems, Medical Missions dramatically improves the level of pediatric care available to children with severe medical conditions living in medically underserved areas, both in foreign countries and the United States.

The MMC Global Telemedicine and Teaching Network allows participating hospitals in developing countries to contact hospitals and medical specialists in the United States for assistance in diagnosing and treating children with severe medical conditions. The U.S. doctors, using video communications with data-sharing technology, see the patient, their test results and medical records in real-time and are able to consult face-to-face with the attending doctor, even though they may be several thousands of miles away.

The results of MMC's Global Telemedicine and Teaching Network have been tremendous,

providing direct aid to nearly 10,000 seriously ill children every year.

The MMC network of participating countries is well established and rapidly growing. Currently it includes 14 countries in Latin America; the Republics of Georgia and Uzbekistan in Eastern Europe, with plans to expand further in that region in 2004; India; Nigeria; and South Africa. The MMC Global Telemedicine and Learning Network is made possible through a group of volunteer physicians, hospitals and partners including the United Nations, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank and Polycom.

Fourteen major hospitals in the U.S., the U.K. and Spain participate in the telemedicine network, including Mount Sinai Medical Center and School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Medical Center, The Royal College of Pediatrics and Hospital Infatile Universitario Nino Jesus. MMC plans to add another eight hospitals in the near term.



If you would like to become a member of the Center or are interested in financially sponsoring a specific project, please contact us at 202.414.1800 or info@healthtransformation.net. Please also visit our website at <http://www.healthtransformation.net/>.

The Center for Health Transformation, founded by Speaker Newt Gingrich is dedicated to saving lives and saving money through driving transformational solutions and policies throughout the system. These e-mails from Newt are updates about the Center for Health Transformation, providing an insider's view of key events and opportunities for transformation. Some of you have already signed up for membership in the Center. Others are being sent this email as an invitation to membership.

The Center for Health Transformation does not provide lobbying services nor directly or indirectly participate in lobbying activities of any kind. The Center for Health Transformation further does not render legal advice, perform accounting services, nor act as an investment advisor or broker-dealer within the meaning of applicable state and federal securities laws.