

Healthcare Informatics Online

Backbeat

Short Takes

August 2004 - **Healthcare Informatics**

People in the news

Ronald Herberman, M.D., director of the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center cancer centers, appointed chair, board of directors, Pennsylvania Cancer Control Consortium, Pittsburgh

Patrick S. Steele, former executive vice president and CIO of Albertson's grocery and prescription drug retailer, Boise, Idaho, named senior vice president and CIO, Delta Dental, San Francisco

Family physician **Steven E. Waldren, M.D.**, chosen assistant director, Center for Health Information Technology of the American Academy of Family Physicians, Washington, D.C.

Online customer treatment

Many U.S. drug and healthcare companies could use lessons in how to treat online customers, says the Customer Respect Group, Bellevue, Wash., after a recent study of 78 of these firms' Web sites. Using a scale of 0 to 10 (10 being highest), the group measured the following online traits: simplicity of navigation, responsiveness to inquiries, respect of privacy, attitude (customer focus), transparency (openness of policies), and principles (respect of customers' data).

The average for all attributes among the 78 companies was 5.6. The highest rating was for simplicity at 6.9. The lowest was for responsiveness at 3.5, partly because nearly one fourth of the firms did not respond to any online inquiries; however, 51 percent responded to all inquiries. More than one third of the companies shared personal data with other businesses without permission.

For more information, visit www.customerrespect.com.

Tablets not handy at bedside

Are nurses enthusiastic about using tablet PCs at the bedside? Not according to a report from Spyglass Consulting Group, Menlo Park, Calif. More than 90 percent of the 100 nursing professionals interviewed nationwide said the devices are too fragile, heavy, and large and that the batteries need replacing too often to be convenient.

The study, second in the company's "Healthcare Without Bounds" research, also sought to determine how mobile computing could be used to improve workflow efficiencies for nurses. Despite benefits to nurses conferred by mobile initiatives, including purchase of computer carts, undertaken by 56 percent of organizations surveyed, challenges to widespread deployment remain, including inadequate funding, relatively low priority for nursing automation, and insufficient high-quality products for nursing.

Information about purchasing the study can be found at www.spyglass-consulting.com/spyglass_whitepaper.html.

State of Canadian healthcare

Nearly one fourth of Canada's adults say they or a family member has experienced a medical error, according to *Health Care in Canada 2004* by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), Edmonton, Alberta. One in nine adults reported receiving the wrong drug or dose in the last two years, and the same numbers said they contracted an infection while hospitalized. The report also highlights safe-care strategies that have been successful, such as use of electronic tools and implementation of procedures to reduce surgical errors. For more information, visit www.cihi.ca.

Drug safety No. 1

Like last year, medication safety topped the list of concerns among the 25 health system pharmacists attending the week-long Pharmacy Leadership Institute held at Boston University's School of Management in May. Rising drug costs, maximizing the use of automation and technology, and expanding clinical

pharmacy programs were other top concerns.

The Pharmacy Leadership Institute is a collaboration among Boston University, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Bethesda, Md., and Cardinal Health, Dublin, Ohio.

Each year, through a competitive application process, 25 pharmacists are selected to attend the executive forums, classroom presentations, analyses and discussions. For more information, go to www.ashp.org.

Books: Recent releases

Electronic Health Records: A Practical Guide for Professionals and Organizations

by Margret K. Amatayakul, American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), 2004;
www.imis.ahima.org/orders; AHIME members, \$48; nonmembers, \$60

2004 Disease Management Directory & Guidebook

National Health Information;
www.nhionline.net/products/disease5.htm; \$299

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