

Presidential Town Hall Meeting at Cleveland Clinic Foundation
Cleveland, Ohio

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President Bush and his administration chose the Cleveland Clinic Foundation to highlight his commitment to the development of a national health information infrastructure in the next 10 years.

Prior to the President's arrival, I was able to spend time with Dr. David Brailer, the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

I was part of a panel to meet with the President, which consisted of:

- Martin Harris, M.D., Ph.D. - Chief Information Officer for the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and a member of the President's Health Information Infrastructure Workgroup.
- Myself, as a Cleveland Clinic Primary Care Internal Medicine Physician, who practices at the Willoughby Hills Family Health Center about 15 miles East of the Main CCF Campus, and who has been actively involved with the implementation of e-Cleveland Clinic MyPractice and MyChart, portions of the EMR. I have functioned as a site champion for both of these products throughout the implementation and lead a group of superusers at my site and participate in a regional group of site champions to continue to improve the use of the EMR in our Regional Medical Practice sites.
- Mrs. Patricia McGinley, a patient of mine at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation Willoughby Hills Family Health Center who had been interactive with the secure patient portal, MyChart and the EMR that we have used in our practice over the past three years.
- Dr. Jorge del Castillo, M.D., associate chief of emergency medicine from Northwestern Medical Group, Evanston, Illinois
- Mr. Barth Doroshuk, an administrator for a six physician ENT group in Washington, D.C. . This group had implemented an EMR and are now "paperless".

After the President arrived on site, he witnessed a demonstration of the EMR in the setting of a pre-anesthesia suite.

The President then came to our room and met with our panel for approximately ten minutes prior to us moving out to the set. The President is very personable and made each of us feel at ease. He did outline that he was there to hear what each of us had to say about health information technology and looked forward to having a conversation

with each of us as part of the Town Hall Meeting. We each spent a few minutes summarizing our comments for him and then we were off.

This was the first official meeting for Health and Human Services Secretary, Michael Leavitt, who introduced President Bush.

The President opened the meeting and highlighted the following issues:

- 1) Increasing the number of community health centers to care for the indigent.
- 2) Health Savings Accounts where expenditures for health care would be tax deductible and use of lower cost catastrophic insurance programs.
- 3) The ability of small businesses to enter national risk pools to lower insurance costs for their employees
- 4) Another strong statement about the need for PLI reform and the need to get rid of junk lawsuits

He then introduced Dr. David Brailer who has been appointed by the President to be the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology under HHS. Dr. Brailer outlined the four major goals of the Framework for Strategic Action:

- 1) To inform clinicians in the use of the Electronic Medical Record
- 2) Interconnectivity of clinicians which insures the security of patient records
- 3) Personalized Care- The PHR(Public Health Record) to empower patients to change their lifestyles and improve preventive care)
- 4) Improve Public Health
 - a) Quality Measurement and Research
 - b) Advanced Biosurveillance Methods (Syndromic Surveillance)

Dr. Martin Harris then outlined an overview of the HIT operations and implementation at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

I presented the EMR from the perspective of a primary care internist prior to and then after implementation of the EMR. I also introduced MyChart, which is a tool to allow patients to view portions of their records, receive test results and recommendations from me, request or cancel appointments, request prescription refills and review health maintenance requirements on a secure encrypted web site.

One of my patients, Mrs. Patricia McGinley, then gave her experience of interacting with me, as her PCP who uses an electronic medical record. She spoke of the increased impact of me presenting data to her in a way she was quickly and visually able to help give her information about her test results which helped her to make lifestyle decisions to improve her health. She felt that being able to have copies of that information at the end of the visit was also helpful. She also discussed her ability to access materials on MyChart. She felt she was able to trust the information that she was able to access on the links for information after receiving electronic notification of her test results and recommendations from me, so that she could ask more focused and intelligent questions the next time she would come to the office.

It was very humbling to speak about the impact that you have had on them to make lifestyle changes to improve their health.

Dr. del Castillo, an EM physician stressed the efficiency of easily retrieving data on patients in the ER and the cost savings in not having to repeat tests and the time savings of having data available at the bedside.

Mr. Doroshuk, discussed the decision of the ENT practice, which he administers, to proceed with a paperless office. He said the initial investment was significant, but the cost savings and efficiency have made the costs of opening another office incremental and have markedly improved their efficiency.

The President stressed themes of:

- Efficiency/Cost Savings (20% savings with a national EMR)
- Preventive Care and medications to prevent future illness
- Interconnectivity
- The need to have all physicians on EMR and all Americans to have their electronic medical records on a card (PHR)

Discussions with Dr. Brailer suggested that the administration is working to allow large systems with the EMR to be able to offer connectivity to other physicians at the cost of connectivity to their system and will be working with congress regarding any limitations of current regulatory issues.