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Health 2.0 sessions at Europe's Leading eHealth event

*Learn more about this topic at **eHealth week 2010**, 15-18 March in Barcelona*

BRUSSELS (December 10th 2009) – eHealth week 2010 thought leaders will challenge you to imagine a world where you don't need to travel across town to see a doctor. Instead the doctor would come to your doorstep, whenever it suited you. A fantasy world? Maybe not. The internet and in particular, Social Media, also known as Web 2.0, is transforming traditional healthcare practices and it is happening now.

Health 2.0 will be a topic of discussion at eHealth week 2010 in Barcelona, 15-18 March, 2010, a joint event between the World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition and the European Commission's High Level eHealth Conference. Leading experts will look at the benefits and challenges of using social networking in a healthcare environment. Could Twitter and Facebook replace a physical doctor-patient consultation? There are many supporters and skeptics alike. eHealth week 2010 offers an ideal forum for practitioners, users, government leaders and decision makers to discuss this pressing topic.

Health 2.0 is the popular name for a new industry which is changing the face of healthcare as we know it. The rapid spread of broadband has opened the door to a flow of endless amounts of information. Interactive websites allows you to pose your question to thousands of people. Unlike traditional websites, Web 2.0 applications allow people to interact, share experiences and knowledge. Where traditional healthcare facilities gives a patient access to one doctor; the internet, and especially the Web 2.0 applications opens the door to a vast number of healthcare facilities, and presents the possibility to interact with qualified doctors and patients from Greenland to Fiji. The internet has empowered the patient by granting it access to the wisdom of the crowds.

Saving time and money

Some argue that Health 2.0 could present endless cost saving features. Twitter, for instance, could allow doctors to provide instant answers to you and everyone else following the group on a medical topic. Dedicated patient forums are already virtual spaces where you can read about other people's experiences and familiarise yourself with treatments and doctors specialized in the subject. Health 2.0 can potentially save money, bureaucracy and time. Just look at the number of online patient forums. The number of hospitals and specialised clinics offering online consultations, are growing by the day. Handy, if you get ill on a trip abroad and want to consult with the doctor you trust.

The downsides

Clearly, there are many benefits associated with the rise of Health 2.0 applications. However, there are also downsides such as data security, credibility of sources and privacy issues. How can you know that the person you are talking to is actually an accredited medical doctor or hospital? Should one patient's personal experience be a guideline for everyone else? What about existing pre-conditions which are not always accounted for on an online forum?

Some argue that although there are many obvious downsides; the benefits hugely outweigh the risks. Health 2.0 is clearly a controversial topic which in one way or the other will influence the future of healthcare institutions and practices. What do you think?

Health 2.0 conference session

The Health 2.0 session titled: 'How hospitals and Healthcare organizations can address Web 2.0? Is Healthcare ready for open access to information?' will take place on March 18th at 9.30am.

The focus of the session will be to discuss how clinical transformation only can occur through changes in processes and how web 2.0 applications can be a solution to transformation. In the session attendees will learn the fundamentals of social networking; review the role of clinical transformation in improving healthcare; understand some basic web 2.0 concepts and technology and witness some practical experiences of Web 2.0 Social Platforms for Clinicians and Patients.

The session will be moderated by Miguel Cabrer, CEO & Founder of Medting.com who will also share his experience in the Web 2.0 field as a speaker, alongside other experts: Denise Silber (Organizer of Health 2.0 Conference in Paris) and Jen McCabe, from NextHealth.

If you want to know more about eHealth week 2010 sessions and learn more about the conference, please consult: www.worldofhealthit.org and www.ehealthweek2010.org

About the High Level eHealth Conference 2010:

Co-organised by the forthcoming Spanish Presidency of the European Union and by the European Commission, with the cooperation of the Regional Government of Catalonia and the Foundation TicSalut, the High Level eHealth Conference 2010 is a ministerial event, representing since 2003 an important annual milestone in the field of ICT for healthcare. The conference theme of this 8th edition – “eHealth for Sustainable Healthcare Delivery: global challenges through local actions” – acknowledges the pressing perspective of a rapidly ageing European society, where the progressively extended life expectancy and the consequent increase in the prevalence of chronic diseases are globally posing serious challenges to the sustainability of national health systems. The conference will present how and why eHealth can make the difference in facing such a global challenge. Visit www.ehealthweek2010.org for more information.

About the World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition:

The World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition is the leading forum for the advancement of Health IT in Europe. Addressing the needs of key stakeholders in the European eHealth Community, The World of Health IT Conference & Exhibition offers professional development sessions, vendor exhibitions, best practice exchanges, networking sessions, and debates and discussions on the issues that will shape the future of eHealth. The WoHIT Organising Committee comprises the EC (European Commission), HIMSS (Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society), EUROREC (European Institute for Health Records), COCIR (European Coordination Committee of the Radiological, Electromedical and Healthcare IT Industry), EHTEL (European Health Telematics Association) and EFMI (European Federation for Medical Informatics). Since its inception in 2006, WoHIT has welcomed over 5,000 attendees and 180 exhibitors from over 60 countries throughout Europe and Worldwide. Visit www.worldofhealthit.org for more information.

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