

THE EUROPEAN FILES

The Telemedicine challenge in Europe



The impact of telemedicine on the medical development of remote regions	24
Prof. Louis Lareng , Director of the European Institute of Telemedicine in Toulouse, and Dr Monique Savoldelli , CHU Toulouse	

Telemedicine actors

Telemedicine – Bringing health closer to citizens	27
Marina Geli , Catalan Minister for Health	
Making patient-centred Telemedicine happen – why involving patients matters	29
Walter Atzori and Liuska Sanna , European Patients’ Forum	
TeleHealth: Making House calls	30
Jeremi Bonfini , Senior Vice-President, Himss Global Services and Chuck Parker , Executive Director, Continua Health Alliance	
Favouring the development of telemedicine to respond to the issues of access to healthcare and quality of life for all	31
Dr Jacques Lucas , Vice President for Health Telematics, French National Medical Council	
Telemedicine, an issue for practitioners	33
Jean-François Thébaut President of the Syndicat National des Spécialistes des Maladies du Cœur et des Vaisseaux (French National Union of Specialists in Heart and Vascular Disease)	
Telemedicine: A Tool for Patient Empowerment	34
Nicole Denjoy , Secretary General of COCIR (European Coordination Committee for the Radiological, Electromedical and Healthcare IT Industry)	

Challenges of Telemedicine

Telemedicine for the benefit of patients, healthcare systems and society	36
Flora Giorgio and Ilias Iakovidis , Unit ICT for Health, DGINFSO, European Commission and former colleagues Christoph Steffen and Gérard Comyn	
Legal aspects of cross-border telemedicine	38
Prof. Peter M. Pattynama , radiologist President, UEMS radiology section UEMS- European Union of Medical Specialists Erasmus MC	
Legal issues on the agenda in telemedicine	40
Stephaan Callens , Professor of Health Law (KU Leuven) and lawyer at the Brussels bar, Belgium	
Telemedicine: from technology demonstrations to sustainable services	42
Arnaud Runge , Engineer for Life and Physical Sciences Instrumentation, Mechanical Engineering Department, Francesco Feliciani , Head of Section of demonstration projects (European Space Agency)	
Telemedicine and reimbursement, the way forward	44
Philippe Sweenen , Project Manager, International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM)	

Telehealth: Making House calls



Jeremi BONFINI

Senior Vice-President,
Himss Global Services

and **Chuck PARKER**

Executive Director,
Continua Health Alliance

In April 1924, “Radio News” magazine promised readers that the Radio Doctor would soon be arriving in their homes. Some eighty-six years later and telehealth is still seeking critical mass. Thanks to three organizations that are working to facilitate the widespread adoption of telehealth, the radio doctor just might finally make good on his promise: healthcare may soon be arriving in your home.

Continua Health Alliance, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) and Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) have partnered to promote global convergence of health information from clinical environments to the home via telehealth.

Until recently, the move toward telehealth has been somewhat inhibited by concerns regarding integration into the continuum of care, inclusion in healthcare payment systems, scalability, and interoperability. What is changing now is that most healthcare systems in the developed world are now simply unsustainable due to rising costs, an aging population, and chronic illness. Many advanced healthcare systems are taking extraordinary leaps to modernize the hospital and the general practitioner’s office. The home is next. What is even more encouraging is that in healthcare systems such as in Lothian, Scotland, the Spanish Region of Andalusia, and the U.S. Veteran’s Administration, there is demonstrated evidence that telehealth saves money and improves health.

Bringing the Hospital and the Home Together

Healthcare professionals and other industry stakeholders are becoming increasingly aware that in order to effectively and efficiently provide the quality of healthcare that is demanded by an increasingly aged population while coping with a shortage of physicians and keeping costs down, healthcare services must be extended to the home. Personal connected health solutions—telehealth, can deliver information and services outside of hospitals and directly to healthcare consumers in their homes, allowing an alternative method of care.

“Technology is allowing us to move toward a consumer-centric model that focuses on improving individual quality of life and controlling the total cost of healthcare. A host of personal connected healthcare services and devices have been and are currently being developed to extend care beyond the traditional hospital and clinic walls and into the home, empowering individuals to take responsibility in managing their own health and wellness as well as relieving the stress on the healthcare system due to extraneous visits to ERs and provider offices.” (Chuck Parker, executive director, Continua Health Alliance)

These solutions will allow advanced healthcare systems to cope with the growing shortage of healthcare professionals and skyrocketing associated costs, while addressing today’s most pressing healthcare challenge: improving healthcare consumer outcomes while enhancing access.

Combating Challenges

Payment systems, especially fee for service systems, have hampered clinician usage of telehealth solutions. Often healthcare providers are not rewarded for treating patients

unless there is an in-person consultation. This is changing, as recognition of the need for alternative healthcare solutions is becoming more widespread. Clinicians are often being offered additional options, even incentives to use telehealth solutions.

Telehealth equipment costs have also been historically high. Continua Health Alliance, an international industry organization formed in 2006, is working to develop interoperable devices that will allow more affordable personal connected health solutions. Continua Health Alliance has brought together more than 230 leading healthcare and technology companies to develop guidelines for a system of personal connected healthcare solutions. The Alliance defines personal connected health use cases and creates design guidelines based on open industry standards to provide framework for the development, certification and implementation of personal connected health solutions. Continua has drawn from the expertise and core competencies of its members to outline how to use existing standards to establish interoperability guidelines to build upon. The standards ensure that Continua Certified™ devices are interoperable, allowing for seamless data exchange and communication between individuals and physicians.

HIMSS, through its representation of clinical health IT managers and IHE through its Interoperability Showcases at HIMSS events has been leading the way in the adoption of interoperable IT systems. “Now, through Continua’s participation in Interoperability Showcases, we are proud to demonstrate what is possible when data flows from hospital, to home to healthcare consumer and back again. This is the sort of demonstration that will be repeated around the world and fulfill our shared goals of higher quality, efficient healthcare,” Bonfini added.