

HIMSS '18 One Big Thing

Each year at the HIMSS Annual Meeting, themes emerge; topics which dominate the imagination and conversation of the attendees. A few observations from walking the tradeshow floor and participating in Venture Connect.

First, the presence of Uber and Lyft on the trade show floor. As anyone who has worked in public health will tell you, the access problem for elderly and impoverished generally is not an absence of health care or of coverage, it is an absence of reasonable ways to access health care. Uber and Lyft, along with other smaller health care transportation companies like recently funded RoundTrip, have identified health care transportation as a potentially fruitful market. To the extent that payers, public and private, agree to bear or share the cost of these rides for their beneficiaries, health care will be improved. Note also that the new Apple and Amazon/Berkshire Hathaway/JP Morgan health care endeavors all relate to making health care more accessible, either by creating physical or technological access. Improving access using technology requires a change in cultural expectation. Improving access by vehicle does not.

Second, Security. Just, Security. The breaches, intrusions, ransomware, and other cyber-attacks on health information systems exposed a new vulnerability: as health care information functions are integrated, an attack on, say, financial systems, may debilitate healthcare operations. Cyber-attacks in the past year have revealed that in an integrated health care world an attack on information becomes an attack on the ability to provide care: the c-scans, MRIs and other integrated devices are vulnerable. While there is no sense that a particular patient's health has been threatened directly, the attacks have an indirect and immediate impact on care.

Note that the winner of the Venture Connect competition, MedCrypt, has a solution which addresses these security issues. The MedCrypt solution provides device security as a service by securing devices data and commands at the application layer and monitoring device behavior in real time.

Finally, Solutions that support out-patient or ambulatory patient-provider interaction have shown remarkable strength. Fitbit's acquisition of Twine, a patient provider interaction solution, demonstrates the market potential for such companies. Another example is the award winning and clinically validated Wellpepper solution which continues to impress at the Mayo Clinic, Boston University and other places in which it is implemented.

Secure, accessible, interactive care: worthy themes for healthcare innovation. What do you think?