



Get a Life!

April 24, 2007

World Health Care Congress

Bloggers had a field day this week at the [4th Annual World Health Care Congress](#), co-sponsored by The Wall Street Journal, in Washington. Blogs described, critiqued, and commented on speakers and topics. I dipped into the [blogs](#) and the conference, wondering what all the hoopla was about.

A blog by Matthew Holt had this comment from Centers for Disease Control Director Julie Gerberding: “We need to be functioning in a very networked environment. Technology allows us to connect with more countries but it also takes a network to solve complex problems, whether a pandemic or obesity.”

She also said CDC’s Web site directs people to best practices, including how to improve the health of teenagers and deal with violence such as that at Virginia Tech.

Just about everybody who was anybody in public or private health care leadership was a speaker or panelist at this conference, including Gerberding, Office of Personnel Management Director Linda Springer, and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Dr. William Winkenwerder. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Veterans Affairs Department were also well represented.

I saw a table piled high with Dell Axima PDAs, and wondered why. Participants were given the PDAs, for conference use only, to submit questions to speakers. A moderator would select the questions.

Springer, for example, was asked if the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program could be held up as a model for the private sector. Acknowledging that FEHBP is probably the gold standard, she said it would be very difficult for the private sector to replicate it. Springer also praised cost-conscious federal employees who were increasingly opting for the high deductible health plans.

This audience response system for questions and also for participant surveys was developed by VisionTree. It’s been used mostly at pharmaceutical and medical conferences. Who says health care lags behind? Not at the World Health Care Congress.

Judy Welles (08:44 AM)