

Healthcare IT News

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Information technology could cure U.S. healthcare ills

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By [Diana Manos, Senior Editor](#) | 04/25/07

WASHINGTON – Information technology may be the best way to reform the ailing U.S. healthcare system, said a number of leading employers at a session of the Fourth Annual World Health Care Congress held April 23-24 in Washington, D.C.

Glen Tullman, CEO of Allscripts, repeated a common mantra that the U.S. healthcare system is “broken,” and many employers “are getting their hands dirty and jumping into the fray.

They see healthcare IT as part of the solution.”

“We’ve tried everything else,” Tullman said. “Every other major industry has been able to use IT to improve quality and reduce costs.”

Michael Critelli, chairman and CEO of Pitney Bowes, Inc. , said Pitney Bowes has been able to decrease healthcare costs among its employees by promoting healthy preventative behaviors.

“We are strong believers that people need to be spending money on healthcare every year,” Critelli said. “Zero spending is an alarm bell.”

Pitney Bowes provides incentives to employees who maintain their health. “We believe very strongly that plan design drives behavior and behavior drives costs,” Critelli said.

As part of that program, Pitney Bowes promotes what they term the four “Ps” in electronic health records. As “the lynchpin” to containing healthcare costs, EHRs need to be personal, portable, private and patient-controlled, Critelli said.

Linda Dillman, former CIO of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. , and now Wal-Mart’s executive vice president of Risk Management, Benefits and Sustainability, said Wal-Mart is interested in contributing to the improvement of U.S. healthcare by sharing its vast background in the successful use of IT in the marketplace.

“We believe IT shouldn’t replace people, but it can make their time more effective,” Dillman said.

Dillman urged taking the first step toward broader use of healthcare IT by defining standards and creating a movement. “We believe we can truly transform healthcare in the U.S. if we start working on this first step tomorrow,” she said.