

Federal Telemedicine **NEWS**

CEO and President of the Parkland Hospital System Addresses Challenges

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Editor

July 30, 2007 - According to Ron Anderson M.D., CEO and President of the Parkland Health and Hospital System in Dallas Texas, the increasing demand for services resulting from patient and poverty populations puts a strain on the current system. Speaking at the 2007 Public Health Congress held on July 16-18 in Washington D.C., he elaborated on the need to erase cultural barriers in treating patients, develop a strong public health service, and the necessity to develop a wellness system.

According to Dr. Anderson, the future for the healthcare system with increasing patient loads and strains on facilities demands a new paradigm. Information systems must be initiated and maintained, there must be better ways to treat childhood obesity and early onset diabetes, educate patients, families, and communities on primary and tertiary preventive strategies, realign the financial incentives in both the public and private sectors, do a better job of coordinating care, provide access to care for all, build the community capacity to stay healthy, and support the public health infrastructure financially.

Dr Anderson described how Parkland as the busiest hospital system in the area operated in 2006. The hospital has 940 hospital beds, and in 2006 admitted 42,682 patients, delivered 16,489 babies, treated 442,716 outpatients, treated one in four trauma cases in the area, and treated 146,210 individuals in the emergency room. Providing all of these services has put an enormous strain on the facility.

To help the situation in the Emergency Department, the department recently launched a new self-service check in for emergency room patients. The department recently received three new MediKiosks available to patients in both English and Spanish and that are now located in the triage area. The kiosks were made available through grant funding from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and produced by Galvanon in Florida. Using a computer touch screen, patients enter registration information with a body diagram and brief definition to describe the nature of the visit. The information is sent to a main computer system where a nurse is in constant view of the patient's information. Emergency technicians and paramedics are available to patients should they have any questions or emergent medical needs.