

ATA Gears Up for Telehealth 2.0 Conference



If it feels like technology is moving fast, think about how fast technology-dr

telehealth is moving. In the spirit of that advancement, the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) is readying for its [Telehealth 2.0 conference](#) next month, a function touted as “the world’s largest telehealth innovation and networking event.” And the ATA is assuring attendees that they’ll get a glimpse into a future that has arrived.

Jon Linkous is the CEO of the ATA, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that’s nearly a quarter-century old but that has arguably seen more change in the last few years than in all the previous combined. He told mHealth Intelligence that whereas in the not-so-distant past the focus in telemedicine circles was on what could be possible in healthcare with cutting-edge technology, now the focus needs to shift to what’s working in reality and how those resources can be put to work for medical professionals.

Linkous called the move from education to integration “a pretty significant change.” He added that in light of the “acceleration in the industry, there’s a need for a more solutions-based environment.”

The ATA’s website mentions a projected telehealth market of \$30 billion by 2020.

Less time informing, more time utilizing

Linkous said that practitioners’ main need around telemedicine is not to continue to be informed about the available technology, but to learn how to use the telehealth resources they’ve already incorporated into their practices more efficiently and effectively. “We’re at a point where we need to de-emphasize academics and focus on providing a toolkit,” [he said](#).

Among some of the specifics Linkous said physicians are looking for in that regard: how to utilize tools fueled by artificial intelligence, how to strengthen and streamline the management of patient care, how to develop BYOD (“Bring Your Own Device”) protocols, how to achieve integration with EMR (electronic medical records) platforms, and how to create a dedicated space for telehealth services within their practices overall.

Beyond the physical tools of the telehealth trade, though, the conference will address the important issue of how telemedicine services are paid for. “The payment question is different than it used to be,” Linkous said.

The trend in healthcare is moving away from fee-for-service and toward value-based care. To that end, clinicians need to know how to mesh remote patient care with the value-driven approach. This will require knowledge of not only how the value-based structure affects healthcare overall, but also, the way it is changing Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements.

Linkous predicts much of the talk at the conference to zero in on the aspect of remote healthcare that directly affects the patients themselves—for instance, through portals, mHealth apps, or direct-to-consumer telehealth systems.

“We’re changing the way healthcare is delivered,” Linkous said. “Convenience has become a driver for healthcare, and that’s

something many [providers] hadn't thought about before.”

Conference speakers offer different perspectives, backgrounds

The conference's featured speakers reflect the many facets of the telehealth industry.

Slated to discuss the economics of telemedicine is Dr. Pamela Peele, the Chief Analytics Officer of UPMC Insurance Services Division.

Author and Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman will speak to: “The Big Trends Shaping the World Today: Economics, Technology, and Geopolitics.”

Former member of the U.S. House of Representatives (RI), Patrick J. Kennedy is the son of the late Senator Ted Kennedy. He is the founder of the Kennedy Forum and co-founder of One Mind for Research (the former seeks to unite the mental health community, and the latter is a significant collaborator in brain science). Since his father's death, he has focused his career on advocating for individuals with brain diseases. Kennedy was a lead sponsor of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. His talk is on “Delivering Care to Those in Need.”

As Linkous reminded, “Technology is a tool, but the focus of telehealth should be on the human touch.”

The Telehealth 2.0 conference will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, from April 23rd to the 25th.

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