

Dates to remember:

- Nov. 8 MLA Teleconference webcast:
Moving at the Speed of Byte: Emerging Technologies for
Information Management.
2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Harborfields Public Library
LILRC members: Free of charge; nonmembers: \$25
Register through LILRC's website: www.lilrc.org
- Nov. 9 HLSP Annual Meeting
Prof. Nancy Tomes on the informed health consumer
9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Farmingdale Public Library
Includes continental breakfast, and lunch.
Pre-registration necessary. Go to www.lilrc.org
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The most recent Grey Literature Report (Vol. 8, No. 5, Sept. 2006) is now available at
<http://www.nyam.org/library/glrv8n5.shtml>

Issued by the New York Academy of Medicine, the report lists over 200 grey literature resources in the area of health services research and select public health topics. The report records relevant publications that are available at NYAM's library from such agencies as AARP, AHIP, Brookings Institute, Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, NY City Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene and more.

The site also indicates how you can be notified when new issues of the report are available.

From the field...

In a meeting in Raleigh, NC, in September, Michael O. Leavitt, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary, strongly supported implementation of a medical data network. He said that health care consumers deserve more and better information about the cost and quality of their medical care. But "the problem today is that nobody knows. People have no way of knowing if they're getting good quality or value."

In a series of meeting in several states, Leavitt is trying to drum up support for one of the federal government's top health care priorities, to provide consumers with more complete and open information about health care cost and quality. <http://www.newsobserver.com/64/v-print/story/492169.html>

At a meeting in Indianapolis in October, Leavitt described a system in which "a patient could easily compare hospital quality rankings, price ranges, and even get a breakdown of the portion the insurance company would pay."

The Secretary stated that "physicians and hospitals across the country need to be more interconnected

through information technology and electronic medical records, and systems need to be developed to measure and publish price information for patient care and procedures.”
(Daniel Lee in IndyStar.com for 10/13/05.)

Robert Kolodner, MD, was appointed interim national coordinator for health information technology on Sept. 20, following the resignation of Dr. David Brailer. Dr. Kolodner recently addressed the opening session of the 2nd Nationwide Health Information Network Forum. He emphasized the need to establish minimal baseline IT standards, to observe highest standards of privacy, and to help coordinate a network of state and regional networks, not relying solely on the federal government.
<http://www.healthcareitnews.com/story.cms?id=5730>

M.L. Baker, in an article in eWeek, describes increasing reliance on a technology that allows doctors’ offices to send prescriptions to neighborhood pharmacies electronically. Electronic medical records (EMR) let physicians store and record patient information electronically; EMR systems can automatically target patients needing special care and ensure that physicians have ready access to a patient’s medical history. Now, physicians using most EMRs can skip the paper-based step that requires a doctor to write a prescription for drugs and have that paper Rx carried or faxed to the pharmacy.
http://www.eweek.com/print_article2/0,1217,a=173357,00.asp

An article in *New England Journal of Medicine* presents the concept of personal responsibility in health care, and describes a controversial redesign of the Medicaid program in West Virginia. (Steinbrook, Robert. “Imposing personal responsibility for health.” *NEJM*, 355:8, Aug. 24, 2006, 753-756.)

Before such a program can be implemented, the problems of literacy and health literacy must be addressed. Eric Marcus offers a moving picture of the effects of illiteracy—often undetected and unrevealed. Low literacy may be described as a “silent epidemic: despite its high prevalence, many physicians and other health care workers remain unaware that their patients may have reading problems.”
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/355/4/339>

Similarly, DH Howard and others conclude that “Persons with inadequate health literacy incur higher medical costs and use an inefficient mix of services.”
(Howard DH, Gazmararian J, Parker RM “Impact of low health literacy on the medical costs of Medicare managed care enrollees.” *Am J Med* 2005;118:371-377 PMID:15808134)

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