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It's Vegas baby!!

Written by Barry P Chaiken, MD, CMIO, Infor | February 29, 2016

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As we all know, Vegas is bigger than life. High rollers, over-the-top shows and extravagant restaurants. As HIMSS returns to the Strip, can we expect the conference to live up to what we all expect of Vegas?

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With over 40,000 health IT professionals expected to descend upon the Sands Convention Center, surely the focus will be beyond HITECH, meaningful use and EMRs. Popular hashtags of the past such as #personalizedmedicine will be replaced, but by what?

Interest in interoperability remains strong due to the challenges clinicians face obtaining complete medical records for their patients. Hackensack University Medical Center's (HUMC) use of the proposed HL7 FHIR standard opens a new technology front in the effort to forge true interoperability. Led by Dr. Shafiq Rab, MD, CIO of HUMC, implemented FHIR to exchange data between a mobile patient-focused app and an EMR. Look for the FHIR symbol plastered on many vendor booths at Sands.

As the nation monitors the back and forth between the FBI and Apple over unlocking the San Bernadino shooter's iPhone, health IT professionals face their own major security and privacy challenges. Michael Dell, CEO of Dell, Inc. will keynote the opening HIMSS16 session. With more than 30 years in the computer industry, Mr. Dell must possess strong opinions on cybersecurity and privacy. It will be interesting to hear from Mr. Dell on how he views the FBI vs. Apple controversy and what ideas he has to address the issue.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, hacks are on the rise as data thieves increasingly focus on stealing medical records. The growth in the deployment of health IT systems coupled with the merging of hospitals into larger entities, presents an attractive target for Internet criminals focused on stealing patient information (mostly financial data) to use for identity theft or ransomware threats. Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center's payment of a reported 40 Bitcoins, roughly \$17,000 - much less than the 9000 Bitcoins (\$3.4 mil) originally requested - may be the beginning of a wave of ransomware attacks.

Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Secretary of Health and Human Services, will have time during the opening keynote to address this issue. Perhaps she will offer suggestions on how the government and private industry can better work together to protect patient information.

Between threats of data theft and ransomware, health IT professionals have a lot to worry about as they try to protect patient data. Perhaps a week in Vegas will arm these professionals with valuable information they can use to bolster their IT defenses while securing additional funding to do this critical job.

Other items to look for at HIMSS16:

- **Office of the National Coordinator** – How does the ONC's recently released [interoperability roadmap](#) play among vendors and providers? How will the roadmap impact the [HIMSS Interoperability Showcase](#) effort, recently joined by HIMSS, but still without EPIC as a member? What are EPIC's interoperability plans and how do they address the ONC roadmap?
- **Argonaut Project** – Driven by HL7 and almost a dozen other organizations including EMR vendors, the project looks to encourage the use of the FHIR standard to enhance the exchange of personal health information among electronic health records. The [HIMSS Interoperability Showcase](#) is the first stop to learn more about the latest

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technology forging Interoperability. In addition, on Thursday, March 3rd, HL7 will present a [one year review of the Argonaut Project](#) (Sands Expo Convention Center HIMSS Theater, 4-5PM PT).

There is much more happening at HIMSS16 this week – this was just a glimpse at what will be covered during the conference.

While the Vegas convention bureau likes to tell visitors "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas," this does not apply to HIMSS16 attendees. For us, we need to bring back new knowledge to our organizations and share it with our colleagues.

Follow me on Twitter at [@bchaiken](#) and [@infor](#) as I engage with and learn from some of the people driving change in the HIT industry. Check [#chaikencheckup](#) for all HIMSS-related updates.

Have a fun trip, learn much, and safe travels. See you on the Strip!

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