

Nashville POISED For leadership in HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Few cities in the United States are as well positioned as Nashville to emerge as a hotbed of innovation in the field of Health Information Technology (HIT), according to the nation's first National Coordinator of HIT David Brailer, M.D., Ph.D.

Brailer, who was appointed national HIT coordinator by President George W. Bush and now serves as chairman of California-based Health Evolution Partners, addressed a crowd of nearly 400 health care executives during the Nashville Health Care Council forum [Thursday, June 25, 2009]: *Health Information Technology and the Economic Stimulus*. The forum, held at the Cool Springs Marriott, focused on the impact of the country's unprecedented \$36 billion investment in the adoption and use of HIT and the role of HIT in national health care reform.

The basis for such a position of strength, Brailer noted, is Nashville's history of health care innovation and entrepreneurship as well as strong leadership from Gov. Phil Bredesen and efforts already underway by HCA, Vanderbilt, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee and others.

Joining Brailer on the panel were Don E. Detmer, M.D., M.A., president and CEO, American Medical Informatics Association; William W. Stead, M.D., associate vice chancellor for Strategy/Transformation, Vanderbilt University Medical Center; and Dave Goetz, Jr., commissioner, Department of Finance and Administration, State of Tennessee. Moderating the panel was HCA's Jonathan B. Perlin, M.D., Ph.D., chief medical officer and president of Clinical Services. Perlin was recently appointed chairman of the Department of Health and Human Services Health Information Technology Standards Committee.

Vanderbilt's Stead said Washington's infusion of HIT money poses a real opportunity but that for meaningful innovation and change to occur in the health care system, everyone must be willing to "stop playing defense around a model that's not sustainable."

When asked what advice he would give Nashville's health-care entrepreneurs, Brailer said good technology gets you in the door, but "entrepreneurs must actually understand how the health care delivery system works to actually make a change in it."

Addressing the role of Tennessee government, Goetz said the state should build the infrastructure and the information sources necessary for the private sector to then use to drive value and innovation. **(Continued)**

“The solutions need to be simple, thoughtful and they need to meet clinical goals,” Goetz said. “We want to help facilitate that, but we also want to stay out of the way and let people innovate.”

Detmer echoed sentiments of the panel when he said he was optimistic yet skeptical that the infusion of billions of dollars in government money into HIT will move the needle much faster than it’s currently moving.

“I’m optimistic,” Detmer said, “but the workforce and the training issues associated with our current culture and our current use of HIT are very real. We all have a lot at stake, and what we seek to do at AMIA is transform health and health care with technology and the use of information.”

Nashville Health Care Council President Caroline Young said the panel discussion shined a national spotlight on Nashville’s health care industry and its pivotal role in the current health reform discussion.

“Nashville is known around the globe as the capital of health care entrepreneurship, and based on what we heard from these leading voices in HIT, we have what it takes to translate that reputation into the next generation of health care innovation,” Young said. “Our goal at the Health Care Council is to help position our members to do that very thing.”

The Nashville Health Care Council (www.healthcarecouncil.com) is an association of health care industry leaders working together to further establish Nashville’s position as the nation’s health care industry capital.

[end of NHCC public relations release]